

# CELL and MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

## PhD, MA

### Graduate Program

#### Student Handbook

#### 2025-26

Tracks:

Bioinformatics & Computational Biology  
Cell & Developmental Biology  
Chemical Biology & Drug Discovery  
Molecular Genetics  
Neurobiology  
Biomolecular Structure and Function  
Plant Molecular Biology

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## **Welcome!**

This handbook has been designed to assist students as they progress through their academic career in the Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) Graduate Program at the University of Texas. We have made every effort to include all pertinent information, but for further information please utilize the resources listed below. This handbook is made available to CMB graduate students to explain important policies of the CMB Graduate Program. The Graduate Catalog is the official record of this University's graduate policies and requirements. **This handbook contains guidelines applicable to the class entering in Fall 2025.** Students who have entered the program at other times should consult the version of the handbook relevant to their entering class.

## ***Responsibilities of a CMB Graduate Student***

**Each student is 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](http://catalog.utexas.edu). The policies and requirements governing graduate education are dynamic. **Each student is well advised to stay in frequent contact with the Graduate Advisor and/or Graduate Program Staff, and default to them whenever they have questions.**

### **Required Grade Point Average**

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 the student 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 Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program has set additional requirements that include:

- Performing required laboratory rotations during the published rotation periods during the first academic semester. 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 *Disability Services and Accommodations* for more information.)
- Fulfill all degree requirements outlined in the Graduate Program Handbook.

**Failure to satisfy the degree 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 their degree. If the student fails to take the corrective actions, the Cell and Molecular Biology GSC Executive Committee will be notified and may then recommend termination from the Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program.

## ***The Graduate School***

Graduate students are admitted to both the Cell and Molecular (CMB) 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 100 Graduate Studies Committees. The Graduate School can be reached at (512) 471-4511 or [GradStudentSvc@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:GradStudentSvc@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 GSC sets policy and supervises its graduate program.

Approximately 30 faculty members from various GSCs, 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). Any graduate student is welcome as a member.

### ***The College of Natural Sciences (CNS)***

Dr. David A. Vanden Bout is the Dean of the [College of Natural Sciences](#). The Dean's office is located in W.C. Hogg 3.134 and can be reached at (512) 471-3285 or [cnsdean@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:cnsdean@austin.utexas.edu).

CNS is home to a number of 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](http://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](#) (ILSGP) are a university-wide research unit that supports the Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB), Biochemistry (BCH) and Microbiology (MIC) Graduate Programs. ILSGP 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 became the administrative home for the ILSGP. An Executive Committee composed of the Associate Chair for Graduate Education, GSC Chairs, Graduate Advisors, Graduate Program Manager, faculty representatives from different disciplines, and a student representative provide oversight and guidance for graduate education within the ILSGP.

#### U.S. Mailing Address:

The University of Texas at Austin  
The Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Graduate Programs  
100 E. 24th St.

NHB 2.600  
Austin, TX 78712

Campus mailing address:

Mail Code A5000

Email: [ILSgrad@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ILSgrad@austin.utexas.edu)

ILSGP administrative offices are located in the MBS Administrative Suite, NHB 2.600

***The Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program (CMB)***

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

U.S. mailing address:

The University of Texas at Austin  
Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program  
NHB 2.600  
100 E. 24th St.  
Austin, TX 78712

Campus mailing address:

CMB Graduate Program, A5000

Email: [ILSgrad@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ILSgrad@austin.utexas.edu)

***CMB Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)***

The CMB Graduate Program is administered through an executive committee that represents the approximately 130 faculty members of the CMB Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). These members are drawn from diverse departments, with faculty primarily from Molecular Biosciences, Chemistry, Neuroscience, Nutritional Sciences, Pharmacy, Physics, Biomedical Engineering and Chemical Engineering, and the Dell Medical School.

A list of GSC members is available at [utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ogs/auth/gsc/nlogon/gsc\\_members](http://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ogs/auth/gsc/nlogon/gsc_members).

*Graduate Studies Committee Chair: Jennifer Maynard, PhD*

[maynard@che.utexas.edu](mailto:maynard@che.utexas.edu) | 512-471-9188 | CPE 5.466

The GSC Chair oversees the Graduate Studies Committee, which is a committee of all CMB faculty members. The GSC Chair also chairs the CMB Executive Committee, which generally consists of 16 CMB GSC faculty members. The Executive Committee sets policies concerning academics and requirements for the graduate program.

*Graduate Program Advisor for First Year Students: Hong Qiao, PhD*

[hqiao@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hqiao@austin.utexas.edu) | NMS 5.114

*Graduate Advisor for Continuing Students: Vishwanath Iyer, PhD*

[vishy@utexas.edu](mailto:vishy@utexas.edu) | 512-232-7833 | MBB 3.212A

The Graduate Advisors are faculty members appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to advise Cell and Molecular Biology 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. The first-year advisor assists new graduate students with course selection, track requirements, and laboratory placements. The continuing student advisor supports students beginning in their second year of study through graduation.

**Graduate Program Staff:**

*Graduate Program Manager: Tiffo Carmichael*

[ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu) | 512-232-3426 | NHB 2.608

*Graduate Program Coordinator: Susie Meadows*

[ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu) | 512-232-9488 | NHB 2.602

*Senior Academic Program Coordinator: Jonathan Vollmert*

[ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu) | 512-232-9488 | NHB 2.602

The Graduate Program Staff 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, fellowships, registration, and tuition processing, as well as maintaining program and student records. The Graduate Program Staff also implement the recruitment and admission processes. They are responsible for event planning, orientation activities, and supporting the administrative needs of new students. 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 Administration Team, who will consult with the Graduate Program Advisor and GSC Chair as necessary.

## **Degrees Offered**

The CMB Graduate Program is designed for students seeking a Ph.D.; however, under certain rare circumstances with the consent of the supervisor and Graduate Advisor, a Master of Arts with Thesis may be allowed. Dual degrees are generally not allowed and only under certain circumstances 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 CMB Graduate Program. The Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program expects applicants to have a degree in CMB or a similar area. Applicants are expected to have successfully completed at least one semester each of cell biology and molecular biology and one year each of calculus, organic chemistry and physics. Additional specialty courses and research experience in cell and molecular biology are highly encouraged. Students with any deficiencies in these areas should remedy them before applying to the program.



The Cell and Molecular Biology 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: [ls.utexas.edu/cmb/prospective-students/admission-requirements](https://ls.utexas.edu/cmb/prospective-students/admission-requirements).

### **Commitment to Access to Education**

The Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program is committed to providing educational opportunities to students from varied 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 the graduate program, the University of Texas at Austin offers a number of [fellowships](#) to promote graduate study. Please also see *Resources that Support a Safe Campus*.

### ***Admission to CMB from Biochemistry (BCH) or Microbiology (MIC) Graduate Programs***

The GSC Chair and the Graduate Advisor must approve transfers to the CMB program from BCH or MIC 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 CMB Graduate Program***

- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of the CMB core courses with a grade of at least a B or above
- Completion of Grant Writing Course in the fall of second year
- One or two additional electives required by track or PI
- Continuous membership in a permanent lab (after first-semester rotations)
- One semester as a Teaching Assistant (TA) (preferably completed by the end of the fourth year)
  - Note: In order to TA, students must have attended 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 and admission to candidacy (spring of second year)
- Concurrent enrollment in Dissertation Hours after admittance to candidacy every semester through graduation
- Annual meetings with Dissertation Committee (beginning in the third year through graduation)
  - 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 Cell and Molecular Biosciences Ph.D. requirements are referenced in the Graduate Catalog at <https://catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/areas-of-study/natural-sciences/cell-molecular-biology/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 ensuring they are on track to complete degree Milestones. The current CMB Graduate Program Degree Milestones are available at [gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/milestones](https://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 being dropped from the CMB Graduate Program due to failure to progress:

- Core courses not successfully completed by May of second year
- Qualifying Exam not completed by end of spring 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

## ***CMB Track Information***

As the faculty of the CMB Graduate Program represent a wide range of research interests, the CMB Graduate Program is organized into seven specialized “tracks”:

- Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (BCB)
- Biomolecular Structure and Function (BSF)
- Cell and Developmental Biology (CDB)
- Chemical Biology and Drug Discovery (CBDD)
- Molecular Genetics (MG)
- Neurobiology (N)
- Plant Molecular Biology (PMB)

Tracks in the CMB program are a way to organize a highly diverse program into smaller groups. The purpose of each track is also to designate track specific course requirements and electives. Students often become a member of the track to which their supervising advisor (commonly referred to as Primary Investigator or “PI”) belongs, however this is not required and students may affiliate with whichever track best reflects their interest. All PI’s belong to one primary track, while some are cross-listed in affiliated tracks. Students are advised to consult the Graduate Advisor and their PI about which track aligns best with their research interests. Regardless of the track that is joined, the conferred degree will be in Cell and Molecular Biology.

A track may also specify the courses that are taken as electives. If a student desires to take a course that is neither a CMB core course nor one of the approved electives listed for their track, they must get prior, written approval from their PI and Graduate Advisor, or Track Representative.

More detailed information on the tracks, including track membership and track-specific course requirements, can be found on the CMB Graduate Program website at <https://ils.utexas.edu/cmb/current-students/program-requirements-and-timeline#tracks>.

## ***Laboratory Rotations***

Students are required to perform rotations in the laboratories of at least three ILSGP-affiliated faculty during the course of the Fall semester. These rotations broaden laboratory experience and will help students find the research area and permanent laboratory that best suits them. Each Fall rotation is approximately 5-6 weeks long.

**Fall Rotation Dates and deadlines are provided in the 1<sup>st</sup> year welcome packet and can be found on our website, <https://ils.utexas.edu/cmb/current-students/program-requirements-and-timeline#rotations>**

Students are required to spend at least 20 hours per week working in their rotation lab. 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 Advisor and determine whether the student will receive credit for research hours.

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 start contacting PIs to ensure a rotation placement 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 affiliated with the Biochemistry (BCH), Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) or Microbiology (MIC) program to accept a BCH student for a rotation. **Changes to an assigned rotation may be made only with permission of the Graduate Advisor.** Students may choose to attend two consecutive rotations in the same lab. Students are expected to remain in their chosen lab for the duration of the rotation and cannot leave or start another rotation outside of the normal rotation period dates, unless approved by the Graduate Advisor prior to action. Failure to participate in or to complete the required lab rotations may result in termination from the program. **If issues arise during a rotation period, the student should consult with their 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 Administrative Staff. The *Rotation Agreement* form is due to the Graduate Program Administrator a week before the start date of the rotation period.

## ***Permanent Laboratories***

Near the end of their final rotation, students will choose which laboratory to work in on a permanent basis. This is done after careful consideration and consultation with the supervising professor (PI) of the lab. Due dates for [Permanent Lab Agreements](#) and associated information will be provided in the 1<sup>st</sup> year welcome packet.

It is program policy that first-year students may not be appointed as a Teaching Assistant (TA), therefore, PIs are expected to support their first-year CMB student as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) once they join the lab in the Spring semester.

If students have not made arrangements to join a permanent lab by the end of their 3<sup>rd</sup> rotation, they have the option of performing an optional 4<sup>th</sup> rotation. Students must petition their Graduate Advisor to perform a 4<sup>th</sup> rotation and to receive financial support during the 4<sup>th</sup> rotation.

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. The *Permanent Lab Agreement* form is due within a week of the end of their final rotation, students will be notified via email of the deadline to submit.

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

The Fall Core Courses for first year students are:

- MOL 290C Introduction to Biostatistics & Computational Analysis
- MOL 190C Responsible Conduct of Research
- MOL 395J Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression

In Spring (2<sup>nd</sup> semester), CMB students must take at least one of the following core courses:

- MOL 395H Cell Biology
- MOL 395F Genetics [CURRENTLY INACTIVE]

If students choose to take only one of the above courses, they must take one of the following core courses in accordance with their chosen track (see *Track Selection* below):

- BCH 394P Bioinformatics
- BCH 394 Structure and Function of Proteins and Nucleic Acids
- BCH 395G/MOL 395G Graduate Biochemistry

If a student earns less than a B 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.

### **Track Selection**

Prior to the Spring semester, students will self-affiliate with the CMB program track that is most relevant to their research interests. Each of these tracks has suggested or required courses for the spring semester. In the absence of student input, BIO 395F and BIO 395H are the default courses for the spring semester. Students who wish to take courses other than these default Spring courses should discuss this with the First Year Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Program Staff prior to registration.

## **Core Course Descriptions**

### **Fall Core Courses**

#### **MOL 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.

### **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.

### *Spring Core Courses*

### **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.

### **BCH 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.

### **MOL 395F Genetics [CURRENTLY INACTIVE]**

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, writing and communicating.

### **MOL 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.

### **BCH 395G/MOL 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***

#### **MOL 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 Ph.D. students 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.

#### **MOL \_92 Research Problems**

Students must enroll in research credit hours every semester through admission to candidacy. A student may enroll in MOL 392 (3 credits), 692 (6 credits), or 992 (9 credits), dependent upon the number of other credits they are registered for in each term.

### ***Track-Specific Core Courses that May Be Taken in the Spring***

Students in the following tracks may substitute track-specific course for either Genetics (MOL 395F) or Cell Biology (MOL 395H) (but not both), in the spring semester of the first year.

Please note that the approved track core course lists are constantly changing and students should consult with the First Year Graduate Advisor if they wish to substitute a track-specific course for one of the spring core courses. Students not in the following tracks may still be able to substitute a track core course in consultation with their supervisor and Track Representative.

Tracks reserve the right to modify and change track-specific requirements and will inform students of any such changes. For more information on track requirements and course listings, visit the [Program Requirements](#) section of the CMB Graduate Program website.

#### **Bioinformatics and Computational Biology**

##### **Fall:**

- CSE 380 Tools/Techniqs Computational Sci

##### **Spring:**

- EEB 382K Biology for Data Science
- BCH 394P Systems Biology and Bioinformatics

- CSE 383M Stat/Discrete Methods Sci Comput
- SSC 394C Parallel Comput for Sci & Engr
- SDS 385 Computational Bio & Bioinformatics

#### Biomolecular Structure & Function

- BCH 394 Structure & Function of Proteins and Nucleic Acids
- BCH 387D Phys Mthd in Biochem/Molec Bio

#### Chemical Biology & Drug Discovery

- BCH 394 Structure & function of proteins and nucleic acids
- PGS 397M Drug Design and Synthetic Strategy
- CHE 381Q Quantitative Molecular And Cellular Biology

#### Plant Molecular Biology

- **BIO 388E** Plant Growth and Development - INACTIVE

### **Course Requirements for CMB Tracks**

Below are track requirements and some courses that may be taken for an elective requirement. If students desire to take a course that is not a CMB core course or one of the electives listed under their track, they must get prior, written approval from their PI and Track Representative. Due to the constant changes in available classes, CMB encourages students to suggest alternative classes with the approval of their PI and Track Representative.

#### Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (BCB) Track Requirements

Track Representative: Can Cenik

Revised: March 2021

Computational analysis is now widely used in the vast majority of cellular and molecular biology. Students in the Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Track will have an increased emphasis on the computational aspects. What constitutes significant computation is dependent on the lab and project, with an allowance for a significant amount of diversity in scope. All computational student dissertations must address a topic in cellular and molecular biology (defined broadly, and including, for example, systems and synthetic biology, biochemistry, microbiology, developmental biology, etc.) and may involve the development of new software tools, computationally intensive statistical analyses, or theoretical modeling. Typically employed programming languages include Python, R, Java, C++, RUST, Julia, and Matlab. The balance between pure computer science and data analysis can vary and will be dictated by the nature of the project and the interests of the student and advisor, but it is expected that thesis projects will have some significant biological focus. Projects can emphasize the development of a new algorithm (e.g. protein folding), data processing, statistical analyses, or use of sophisticated database management systems for big data applications to name just a few examples.

All BCB students should take one class from the list below. Students are required to take one BCB elective that may be chosen from the pre-approved list below or in consultation with their PI and Graduate Advisor or Track Representative.

A partial list of these courses includes:



- EEB 382K Intro to Biology for Data Science
- BCH 394P Bioinformatics
- CSE 382M. Foundational Techniques of Machine Learning and Data Sciences.
- CSE 383M Stat/Discrete Methods Sci Comput
- CSE 380 -Tools/Techniqs Computatnl Sci
- SDS 380C. Statistical Methods I.
- SDS 380D. Statistical Methods II.
- SDS 384. Topics in Statistics and Probability
- SDS 385. Topics in Applied Statistics
- SSC 394C Parallel Comput for Sci & Engr
- CS 391L Machine Learning

In addition to the core courses taken in the first year, students must meet the following track requirements:

- Demonstrate competence in computer programming. It is expected that all BCB Track students can program in at least one language (e.g. Python, Julia, Java, R, Matlab, C, C++ etc.). This competency can be demonstrated through coursework or through practical experience. Contact the Track Representative and the student's PI with any questions.
- Demonstrate competence in the fundamentals of Biostatistics and/or Data Science (e.g. sequence analysis). It is expected that BCB Track students can interpret and perform basic statistical analyses and/or rigorous data analysis and communicate effectively with a statistician and/or domain scientist for more sophisticated analyses. This competency can be demonstrated through coursework or through practical experience.

#### *Biomolecular Structure and Function (BSF) Track Requirements*

Track Representative: Kenneth Johnson

Revised: May 2019

The BSF Track covers research involving the determination of structures of macromolecules and studies to define their functions which provides the basis of all biological function. Students in this track are required to take BCH 394 Structure and Function of Protein and Nucleic Acids (offered every spring) Other courses can be substituted with the approval of the Track Representative. A partial list of possible substitutions is listed below:

#### **Fall:**

- CH 391 Macromolecular Structure and Determination

#### **Spring:**

- BCH 387D Physical Methods In Biochemistry And Molecular Biology
- BCH 394P Systems Biology and Bioinformatics
- BCH 387D Adv Physical Methods For Biochem and Molec Bio
- PGS 384L Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology
- BCH 395G Advanced Biochemistry

Acceptable courses that may not be consistently offered:

- BCH 391L Macromolecular Structure Determination
- BIO 393 Microbial Functional Genomics
- CH 391L Synthetic Biology

- PGS 388C Introductory Bioorganic Chemistry

#### Chemical Biology and Drug Discovery (CBDD) Track Requirements

Track Representative: Kun Yang

Revised: August 2022

Track-specific elective course list - a minimum of one course from the following or from courses listed above (or as determined by supervising professor):

- PGS 396M Advanced Medicinal Chemistry
- PGS 384K Fundamentals of Toxicology
- PGS 388K Molecular Mechanisms and Methods in Nutrition and Cancer
- PGS 384L Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology

#### Cell and Developmental Biology (CDB) Track Requirements

Track Representative: David Stein

Revised: August, 2020

The CDB Track is for graduate students interested in the mechanisms controlling fundamental eukaryotic cell processes, genetics and development. Within these broad and interrelated disciplines the individual laboratories affiliated with the CDB track focus on understanding the molecular and cellular basis of cell division, growth, differentiation, and movement; spatial patterning and morphogenesis of developing embryos; and gene regulation. CDB researchers utilize both plant and animal model organisms along with state-of-the-art methods in molecular biology, biochemistry, proteomics, genetics, and genomics. ‘

Students that join the CDB track must successfully complete the following courses:

- MOL 395J Genes, Genomes and Gene Expression
- MOL 290C Introduction to Biostatistics & Computational Analysis
- MOL 190C Responsible Conduct of Research
- MOL 391 Grant Writing and Presentation Skills

In addition, CDB track students must take two of the following three courses:

- MOL 395F Genetics, Genomics and Epigenetics
- MOL 395H Cell Biology
- BIO-383K Developmental Biology (Stein – also cross-listed with his BIO 349 course).

Students will also take one graduate-level elective, selected in consultation with the student's faculty advisor and the CDB track representative. This elective can be the third of the three choices listed above or one of the courses on the pre-approved list shown below or another appropriate course offering. Courses that have not been pre-approved require the approval of the CDB track representative. Electives should be completed by the end of the third year.

Pre-approved Thesis-Oriented Electives:

- MOL 394L 1-Advanced Immunology (Ehrlich – Fall)
- MOL 381K Cellular and Molecular Bases of Neural Development (Agarwala – Spring)
- PB 381P Advanced Plant Physiology (Roux – Spring)
- BCH 349P Bioinformatics (Marcotte)

- SDS 385 Computational Biology and Bioinformatics (Wilke)
- MIC 394M Signal Transduction in Microorganisms (Harshey)

### Molecular Genetics (MG) Track Specific Requirements

Track Representative: Arlen Johnson

Revised: September 2017

The MG track is tailored to students interested in the molecular mechanisms of gene expression and genome structure and maintenance. Students in the MG track must successfully complete the following requirements: Genes, Genomes and Gene Expression (MOL395J); Responsible Conduct of Research (MOL 190C); Introduction to Biostatistics & Computational Analysis (MOL 290C) Genetics (MOL/BIO 395F; Microbial Genetics BIO 395M may be substituted with consent of the Graduate Adviser) and Cell Biology (MOL 395H); and Grant Writing and Presentation Skills (BIO 391). In addition, students must take 1 elective in consultation with the PI and the track representative. Suggestions for electives include:

#### **Fall:**

- MOL 391P Advanced Virology
- MOL 394L 1-Advanced Immunology
- SDS 328M Biostatistics

#### **Spring:**

- MOL 388M Plant Molecular Biology
- MOL 394M Genomics
- EEB 382K Intro to Biology for Data Science
- BCH 394P Systems Biology and Bioinformatics
- BIO 394M Human Infectious Diseases – INACTIVE, Undergrad Only
- MIC 394M Signal Transduction in Microorganisms
- SDS 385 Computational Biology and Bioinformatics

### Neurobiology (NB) Track Requirements

Track Representative: Nigel Atkinson

Revised: April 2, 2014

Students in the NB Track of the CMB Graduate Program must meet the following requirements in addition to the general requirements for all students in the program. In the fall of their second year, students complete Principles of Neuroscience I (NEU 482T), a course that deals with cellular and molecular neuroscience. In the spring semester of their 2nd year, students are required to complete an additional elective course, from the following, selected in consultation with the track representative and the research mentor. Note that this list is constantly changing, and students may have to refer to the Track Representative for a current list.

#### **Fall:**

- NEU 382T Principles Of Neuroscience I
- PGS 383D Neuropharmacology
- NEU 383C Functional Neuroanatomy
- NEU 384M Advanced Statistics: Inferential
- NEU 385L 8-Ion Channels/Neuronal Signl

**Spring:**

- NEU 383D Neuropharmacology
- NEU 380E Vision Systems
- NEU 383T Principles Of Neuroscience II
- NEU 385L Pharmacolgl Mechs Of Addictn
- NEU 381N Basic Processes Of Nerve Cells
- NEU 385L 9-Synap Phys/Plasticity In Cns
- NEU 385L Computational Neuroscience
- NEU 394P 1-Curr Tpcs In Behav Neurosci
- NEU 394P 3-Neurobiol Of Learning/Memory
- NEU 396D Clinical Psychopharmacology

Courses that may not consistently be offered:

- NEU 385L Brain, Behavior, and Evolution (Fall)
- NEU 385L 12-Quantifying Brain Structure (Fall)
- NEU 384C Bootstrap Statistics
- NEU 394P Tpcs Statistics/Neural Coding

Beginning their third year of graduate training, students must enroll and actively participate in the presentation and discussion of the current scientific literature in neuroscience. A list of appropriate journal clubs is available from the track representative. As faculty, we strongly recommend (and students' PIs may require) that students serve as a teaching assistant in a graduate or undergraduate course in neuroscience, neurobiology, or neuropharmacology at least once in their graduate career.

**Plant Biology (PB) Track Requirements**

Track Representative: Mona Mehdy

Revised: August 2017

There is one elective requirement for the Plant Biology track. Students may choose from the following list:

**Fall:**

- MOL 388M Plant Molecular Biology (Herrin)
- PB 381P Advanced Plant Physiology (Clark)

**Spring:**

- BIO-388E Plant Growth And Development (Huq) - INACTIVE

***Track Elective Courses***

One or two additional track specific elective courses are required that may be taken in the second or third year and completed no later than the fourth year. Students must consult their PI, Track Representative and the [CMB website](#) about the requirements for their specific track. Courses for each track should be selected in consultation with the student's PI and Track Representative. Journal club courses are NOT suitable as electives, although note that some tracks may have additional journal club or seminar course requirements.

## **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 general knowledge and fundamental understanding of cellular and molecular biology and the student’s ability to design, articulate, explain and defend the proposed aims and research approach of their dissertation research. The ultimate 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 CMB 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 completed 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. If a student has not passed all the core courses with a grade of B or above, or, if they are an international student and are not yet “certified for employment with student contact,” the Qualifying Exam will be delayed to within 3 months of completing these requirements. The Qualifying Exam is normally taken in the spring semester of a student’s second year. Students who have not taken the Qualifying Exam by the end of their second year must write an explanatory letter of appeal to the GSC Chair 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 each year. At this meeting, students will review the timetable and guidelines of 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 to the Graduate Program Staff (i) a one-paragraph summary (100-200 words) of their intended research proposal (abstract), and (ii) a ranked list of four CMB GSC faculty members who might be appropriate to serve on their examination committee. This list should be developed in consultation with the student’s faculty advisor. It is acceptable to include collaborators in this list. However, the student must indicate that the faculty member is a collaborator and include a statement regarding the nature and extent of the collaboration. The GSC Chair will use this information to form the student’s Qualifying Exam Committee.
  - 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. Upon finding a time when all members can attend, the student must reserve a room for the exam and notify the Graduate Program Staff and their exam committee members of the date, time, and location of the exam. If the student’s PI cannot attend

the exam, they will be required to provide the committee chair with a short statement on 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 individual deadlines.**

### Qualifying Exam Format

The Qualifying Exam consists of **written** and **oral** components. The written component is submitted **two weeks prior** to the Qualifying Exam and will form a large basis of the oral exam.

### **Written Proposal:**

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**.

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. For formatting compatibility, the proposal should be submitted as a pdf document.)

1. 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. One aim or sub-aim must be an independent idea, and should be indicated as such with an asterisk. This is limited to one page.
2. 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.
3. 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. It is expected that the thesis project will be developed by the student and the PI. While it is acceptable for a large fraction of the proposed work to reflect ideas of the PI or others, an identifiable portion of at least one aim should reflect the ideas of the student. The student should be able to state to the committee which part of the proposal was developed independently.

**Whereas students may seek input on their Written Proposal, the STUDENT MUST WRITE THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT. The student is responsible for being knowledgeable about and defending the entire contents of the Written Proposal. Faculty advisors, and other faculty members, may**

**read, discuss, and make comments on the Written Proposal but may not write or in any way directly prepare a student's materials. Faculty and peers may provide edits for grammar, clarity, style, and spelling, but they cannot write de novo any part of the document.**

#### **Oral Exam:**

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 written proposal, 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. 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 twenty-minute presentation, with a maximum of twenty slides.** The brief presentation will introduce the background material, and the proposed research goals and project. 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 project, 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 before the exam.**
3. No more than 24 hours prior to their Scheduled oral exam, students must initiate their Qualifying Exam form in DocuSign. This document is where the Exam Committee will provide their grading and feedback for the exam. The student can download a completed copy of the form from DocuSign once all parties have signed. The form can be found on the ILS website under resources, [forms](#).
4. During and after the presentation, the examiners will question the student in order to assess the student's depth of knowledge in the topic area and understanding of the experimental approaches. The committee will ask general questions as well as questions pertaining to the specific topic area. 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 composed of three faculty members. Ideally, two of these faculty will be members of the “Committee of 15” (a select group of CMB GSC faculty, also referred to as “Q15”) and one faculty member (not a member of the Committee of 15) 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. One of the Q15 committee members will be assigned the role of Chair. If it is not possible to have two members of the Q15 on a committee, the committee will consist of one Q15 member, one faculty from the student’s list of four if possible, and one additional faculty member with appropriate expertise appointed by the GSC chair (who may or may not be on the student’s list of four). In this case the Q15 committee member will be the chair. 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 advisor 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 and the committee will deliberate. The committee will then call the student back into the room to convey its decision.

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.

As conditions in a conditional pass, the committee may ask for revisions of the written proposal 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 Rules and Procedure

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 the Qualifying Exam. A student given the option to repeat the Qualifying Exam must do so within three to four months of the original exam, except in exceptional circumstances requiring exemption by the CMB 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 CMB GSC Chair that one or two members of the committee be replaced. A student who fails to pass 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 in the CMB Program. A student advised to take a terminal Master’s degree may register only for those courses counted toward the Master’s degree and must complete the courses within a year.

### ***Admission to Candidacy***



Once a student successfully completes their Qualifying Exam, they will apply for, and be admitted to candidacy. Students are expected to do so by the end of their 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*, each student will need to form an official dissertation committee. The committee will have three primary responsibilities:

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

Students may retain Qualifying Exam Committee members as members of their Dissertation Committee, but this is not a requirement. Students should consult with their PI and Graduate Advisor to form a suitable permanent 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 must be made prior to application for candidacy.

Per the Graduate School's policy a student's doctoral dissertation committee must consist of

- A minimum of four committee members (A student's supervisor and at least three others)
- At least three members from the student's GSC (Program of study/Major)  
[https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ogs/auth/gsc/gsc\\_search/](https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ogs/auth/gsc/gsc_search/)
- At least one member from outside of the student's GSC.
  - This member may be from another UT department or college or from another university entirely.
- 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 on their 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 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. This form should be completed and submitted to the ILS admin staff for review prior to submission of your candidacy application.

#### ***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 scheduling 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***

Beginning the first long semester after admission to candidacy, students no longer register for Research Problems and instead must be registered for Dissertation Hours. Candidacy students must enroll in Dissertation Hours with a course number ending with a "W" (e.g. MOL 399W, MOL 699W, or MOL 999W) in all subsequent long semesters until graduation.

## ***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. A student must be in good standing for their Annual Committee meetings for their candidacy to be approved for extension. See Annual Committee meetings below for more information. 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 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 who have not yet graduated after five years in the program must meet with their committees twice per year, with the first such meeting in the fall of their sixth year.

Students are responsible for coordinating a meeting date and time with faculty. Once a date for the committee meeting has been agreed upon students must email the [Graduate Program Staff](#) the date the meeting has been scheduled for.

No more than 48 hours prior to the meeting the student should initiate the Annual Committee Meeting Form, which can be found on the [ILS Resources Page](#). Following the meeting, the Acting Committee Chair will complete the 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.

Students who have not conducted or scheduled their meeting by **March 31<sup>st</sup>** each year will have a registration bar placed on their account. They will not be able to register for Summer or Fall classes until they have scheduled their committee meeting and conveyed this to the Graduate Program Staff. Students whose candidacy has expired will not be approved for extension if they are past due on completing their annual committee requirement until they have completed the requirement.

If a student has not completed their dissertation within three years of admission to candidacy, the results of the annual review will be presented with recommendations to the CMB 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 Cell and Molecular Biology. The application must be submitted by the published deadline during the semester in which the student intends to graduate. Visit the Graduate School website at [gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation](http://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation) for information about current deadlines.

### ***Ph.D. Thesis 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 to 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 Cell and Molecular Biology must successfully present and defend their dissertation to their Dissertation Committee in order to graduate. The defense consists of two parts. The first is a public seminar that is open to all faculty and students. The seminar is expected to be approximately one hour in total length, including the introduction and questions from the public audience. 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 of the committee members following the defense. **It is the student's responsibility to obtain all necessary signatures and to submit the completed report form to the Graduate School by the published deadline.**

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](http://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](https://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, known 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 CST 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](https://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**

Completion of required HR and safety onboarding requirements  
Attendance at Graduate Program Orientation and ILSGP Annual Retreat  
Completion of first-year fall core courses  
Completion of laboratory rotations  
Choose a permanent laboratory (December)  
October: Elect to join a CMB Track  
December 31<sup>st</sup>: financial support from ILSGP ends

##### **Spring Semester**

January 1<sup>st</sup>: newly assigned permanent laboratory assumes financial responsibility of student  
Completion of first-year core courses  
Enroll in Research Problems sufficient to get your total course hours to 9 (MOL 392, 692, 992)  
Complete ITA English-Language Certification (international students only)

##### **Summer Semester**

End of August: Complete TA workshop (if appointed as a TA in the Fall of the second year)  
Enroll in MOL 392 Research Problems

#### *Second Year*

##### **Fall semester**

Attendance at Qualifying Exam information session  
Completion of Grant Writing and Presentation Skills course  
Complete track-specific elective requirement(s)  
Enroll in Research Problems sufficient to get your total course hours to 9 (MOL 392, 692, 992)

**Spring semester**

Take and pass the Qualifying Exam

Complete track-specific elective requirement(s)

Enroll in Research Problems sufficient to get your total course hours to 9 (MOL 392, 692, 992)

**Summer Semester**

Apply for admission to candidacy (once all requirements are complete)

Enroll in MOL 392 Research Problems if Candidacy has not been approved by the Grad School,  
MOL 399W if Candidacy has been approved.

**Third Year****Fall semester**

Complete track-specific elective requirement(s)

Enroll in Dissertation Hours (399W, 699W or 999W) every semester through graduation

Conduct first annual meeting with Dissertation Committee (must be conducted within 6 months of passing the Qualifying Exam)

Completion of teaching requirement (may be completed any time after the student's first year)

**Spring semester**

Complete track-specific elective requirement(s)

Enroll in Dissertation Hours (399W, 699W or 999W) every semester through graduation

**Fourth Year to Graduation**

Present 15 min seminar on your research as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> year seminar series.

Complete track-specific elective requirement(s)

Enroll in Dissertation Hours (399W, 699W or 999W) every semester through graduation

Completion of TA requirement (may be completed any time after the student's first year)

Conduct annual meeting with Dissertation Committee (Committee meetings are required semesterly for CMB students in year 6 or beyond)

**Final semester**

Apply to graduate by the published deadline

Schedule final defense and submit *Request for Final Oral Examination* to Graduate School

Complete and defend dissertation

Submit Required Printed Pages to Graduate School

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 Cell and Molecular Biology GSC. This option is allowed only under certain circumstances and requires the permission of the student's PI 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 the Core Courses with a grade of at least a B and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- A total of 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 the MOL 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 coursework, they may then have up to 6 credit hours with a grade of CR/NC. Approval of the Graduate Advisor is required prior to registration for a credit/no credit course. No course counted toward any other degree may be counted towards a Master's degree.

### Master of Arts Thesis Committee

The student's PI and one other CMB GSC member will serve as readers of the MA 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 provides the thesis to the two 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](http://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation).

## **Financial Support**

Entering graduate students are supported for the first 4.5 months (**August 16-December 31**) by ILSGP as Graduate Research Assistants (GRA). Continued financial support becomes the responsibility of the permanent laboratory starting on **January 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.). These positions provide a stipend, access to university health insurance, and tuition remission for up to 9 credits during each fall and spring semester and up to 3 credits during the summer semester.

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***



It is the policy of CNS and the CMB graduate program for continuing students to maintain compensation in line with the stipend rate for first-year students. The Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program first-year student annual stipend rate for 2025/26 is \$40,000. 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 expectation of the CMB Graduate Program that PIs 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 states 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](https://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 CMB 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](mailto:MBS_HR@austin.utexas.edu)) and/or the Graduate Program Staff. Additional information is available at [gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment](https://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment).

### ***Graduate Research Assistants (GRA)***

Most faculty members have research grants that allow them to appoint students as graduate research assistants (GRAs). 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 GRA 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 Assistants (TA)***

The CMB 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.

The CMB 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).



Program policy states that CMB graduate students 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 CMB Graduate Advisor.

### ***ITA English Language Certification for International Students***

UT Austin conducts English-Language Certification for TAs whose first language is not English. The CMB Graduate Program requires this certification of all international students, regardless of whether they serve as teaching assistants. All international students admitted to the CMB 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](http://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 professional performance and satisfactory progress toward 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/Al 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](http://gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment/conditions).

### ***Additional Employment and Outside Employment***

CMB 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, a student 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. Failure to comply with employment regulations may result in loss of visa status.

Before accepting any additional on-campus employment a student should first consult their supervising professor and the Graduate Program Staff. Students are required to disclose all outside activity that may result in a conflict of interest with their appointment at UT Austin. Information about this can be found on the UT Human Resources website at [hr.utexas.edu/current/compliance/outside-employment](http://hr.utexas.edu/current/compliance/outside-employment).

## ***Internships & Curricular Practical Training (CPT)***

The ILS graduate programs allow graduate students in good standing with their respective programs to perform outside internships related to their major field of study with permission of their PI. Students interested in performing an internship should seek the permission of their PI prior to applying for internships. While perusing an internship offer, students are encouraged to talk to their graduate advisor and graduate program staff to ensure compliance with academic and administrative requirements respectively at least 8 weeks prior to the estimated start of the internship.

Participation in an internship creates several administrative issues that need time to be resolved on an individual basis prior to the scheduled start of the internship:

1) Visa: international students on an F-1 visa need to obtain temporary employment authorization called Curricular Practical Training (CPT), please visit <https://global.utexas.edu/iss/immigration/f-1/employment/cpt> for more information.

2) Financial Support: faculty are **not** required to provide the standard financial student support during the semester of an internship.

3) Enrollment & Insurance: during a long semester (Fall/Spring) students must be enrolled to qualify to purchase academic insurance. Domestic Students who do not require insurance through the university may request a Leave of Absence for the semester of their internship and forgo enrollment for that semester. Domestic Students who have not yet entered candidacy have the option of enrolling in EXP 000/080: Internships & Career Experiences, a free, zero-credit course which will allow them to maintain enrollment and purchase UT student insurance for the semester.

Per the international office rules, International students will be charged for insurance unless they complete the needed ISSS waiver showing that they have insurance for that time period from another source. ISSS waiver information can be found at <https://global.utexas.edu/iss/advising-services/insurance/waivers>.

4) Conflict of Interest: the student needs to declare any potential conflict of interest created by their participation in the internship, please visit <https://research.utexas.edu/ors/conflict-of-interest/>

## ***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. Supervising professors will nominate students based on research accomplishments and promise of research excellence. The Graduate Advisors evaluate nominees and determines which may be sent forward to the Graduate School. Recipients for these awards are selected by the Graduate School 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](https://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 strongly encouraged to apply for these awards during the second year of graduate study and are also encouraged to explore and apply to other external fellowship programs for which they may be uniquely qualified. Please visit [www.nsf.gov/funding](http://www.nsf.gov/funding) and [www.grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm](http://www.grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm) for more information.

## ***Other Aid***

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid ([finaid.utexas.edu](http://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.

Should further funding opportunities become available during the academic year, announcements will be shared by the Graduate Program Staff.

## **General Information**

### ***Contact Information***

#### **Mailboxes**

All student's 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 located 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. Students must list a phone number where voice mail messages may be left. To update personal information, please visit [Texas OneStop](#).

#### **Email Information**

The CMB 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 current UT email addresses. Graduate students are expected to regularly monitor their email accounts and failure to check email may result in missing time-critical information. **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](http://get.utmail.utexas.edu). **Please notify the Graduate Program Staff of any changes in your email address.**

### ***Required Student Training***

The University of Texas requires safety training for laboratory employees, which includes all ILSGP graduate students. CMB students are required to be in compliance with these safety classes prior to beginning their first lab rotation. The required safety courses offered by the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHS) 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 (online or in-person options available)

Students may register for and complete the above courses online at [ehs.utexas.edu/training/lab-training-requirements.php](https://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](https://fireprevention.utexas.edu/fire-safety/portable-fire-extinguisher-training).

Animal Use Training, and Radiological Health are available 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 CMB Graduate Program. It is important that each student 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. [Academic dishonesty](#) (SEC. 11-401) is defined as any act that gives a student an unfair academic advantage. It includes cheating, [plagiarism](#), misrepresenting facts, falsifying academic records or data, unauthorized collaboration/collusion, the abuse of online resources, and multiple submissions. Authorized Disciplinary Sanctions are listed in [Sec. 11-701](#) of the University Catalog.

Plagiarism is the submission of another person's work as one's own. Ideas are considered intellectual property and, as such, cannot be used without giving credit to the originator of the idea. Content taken from a published work must be either quoted or paraphrased in a subsequent paper. In either case, proper credit must be assigned. To do otherwise is dishonest and the individual is subject to disciplinary action.

**The CMB 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.**

### ***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 (temporary incomplete) to the registrar in place of a grade. The student must then complete the course requirements by the last class day in their 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 CMB 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](http://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***

CMB students are not allowed to work toward or obtain a second degree outside of the CMB program (e.g., a Master's degree in a separate graduate program) without the written consent of their PI 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. Students are advised to read the following section carefully and consult the Graduate Program Staff if they have any questions regarding registration and course load requirements.

Additional information about registration policies is published on the Graduate School website at [gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies](http://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies). International students should also consult with International Student and Scholar Services for more information about registration and immigration requirements: [global.utexas.edu/iss](http://global.utexas.edu/iss).

### Full-time Student Status

The Graduate School at The University of Texas at Austin recognizes 9 semester credit hours during a long session semester (fall and spring) and 3 semester credit 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](https://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: MOL 399W, MOL 699W, or MOL 999W. Registration for MOL 999W fulfills the 9-credit requirement in fall/spring 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](#). Prior to registration, students should check their [Registration Information Sheet](#) (RIS) for information about specific dates and times when they access the registration 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. This will cause the student to have to reenroll and pay the associated late fee.**

### 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 periods and associated fees are published in the [Course Schedule](#). **Late fees may range between \$25 and \$200. Students are responsible for paying any late fees assessed by the Registrar.** 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 beyond this requires 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 Master's Students

During the last two semesters before graduation, master's students must be registered in thesis courses, MOL 698A (3 credits) and MOL 698B (3 credits). MOL 698A may only be taken once and must be taken before MOL 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 in order 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 are they 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 <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/leaves-of-absence>.

### **Withdrawal**

#### Early Withdrawal from CMB Program During First Year

Early withdrawal from the program may result in a requirement to pay tuition for the current 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 CMB Program

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](mailto: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 cancellations result in a 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](http://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](http://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. 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 fellows during these terms.

### ***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](http://utstudenthealthinsuranceplan.org) (Academic Blue) 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/iss/advising-services/insurance/waivers](http://global.utexas.edu/iss/advising-services/insurance/waivers).

### ***Student Records***

The Graduate Program Staff maintains the official program records of all CMB 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 CMB 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 student privacy may be found at [registrar.utexas.edu/staff/ferpa](http://registrar.utexas.edu/staff/ferpa).

Each student file may contain:

- Admission Documents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Laboratory Rotation Agreement forms
- Permanent Laboratory Agreement form
- Qualifying Exam Results form
- Annual Meeting of Dissertation Committee forms



- Fellowship Offer letters
- Other items that provide a record of the student's activities and progress.

### ***Disability Services and Accommodations***

The University of Texas at Austin is committed to providing every necessary resource to students with disabilities. Students 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 <https://community.utexas.edu/disability/>.

The CMB 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 (CNS) 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](https://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 Staff, 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](https://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](https://cmhc.utexas.edu). A confidential 24/7 Crisis Line may be reached at 512-471-CALL (2255).

The **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)** is a service that provides faculty, students and staff an opportunity to discuss their concerns about another individual's behavior. Trained BCAL staff will provide appropriate guidance and resource referrals to address the particular situation. Referrals to BCAL 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](https://besafe.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line).

**Texas Global and International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)** provides 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/issv](https://global.utexas.edu/issv) 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](https://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 advisor, Graduate Studies Committee chair, or department chair.*

The CMB 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 Manager 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

## **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: <https://www.utexas.edu/campus-life/safety-and-security>.

### **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 [parking.utexas.edu/transportation/walking](http://parking.utexas.edu/transportation/walking).

### **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/ut-night-rides](http://parking.utexas.edu/ut-night-rides) for more information.

## ***Emergencies***

For emergencies, the University also has a dedicated phone number, 512-232-9999, and website: [emergency.utexas.edu](http://emergency.utexas.edu). Students can also sign up for text message alerts for emergencies. **If there is 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](http://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](mailto:facilities@austin.utexas.edu).

## **Other Contacts & Campus Support Resources**

### ***The Office of the Dean of Students***

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

### ***College of Natural Sciences 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. Visit [cns.utexas.edu/graduate-education](http://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](http://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](http://research.utexas.edu/cbrs).

### ***Resources that Support a Safe Campus***

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

- [Campus Climate Response Team \(CCRT\)](#) (report a bias incident)
- [Division of Campus and Community Engagement \(DCCE\)](#)
- [Title IX Office](#)
- [Gender and Sexuality Center](#)

### ***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](mailto: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 at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/file-a-report>. 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 beginning of each Summer semester. To contact the ILSGP GSA Representatives, email [ils.gsa@utexas.edu](mailto: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](http://ils.utexas.edu/graduate-programs-home/resources).

## **APPENDIX**

## Graduate Student Quick Reference Chart

<u>Issue/Concerns Related to:</u>	<u>Who to Contact:</u>	<u>Where to Find Information:</u>
<b>ACADEMIC</b>		
Registration: Bars Access Periods Confirmation of Attendance	<a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">Registration Information Sheet</a> <a href="#">Course Schedule</a> <a href="#">MyTuitionBill</a>
Post-Registration: Non-Resident Tuition Waivers  Health Insurance Waiver (for international students)	<a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>  <a href="#">International Student Insurance Office</a>	<a href="#">UT Direct</a>  <a href="#">Texas Global</a>
Course Selection	Graduate Advisor: <a href="#">Graduate Program Advisor for First Year Students</a> (1 <sup>st</sup> Years) <a href="#">Graduate Advisor for Continuing Students</a> (2+ Years)	Graduate Program Handbooks
Lab Rotations Finding a Permanent Lab	Graduate Advisor: <a href="#">Graduate Program Advisor for First Year Students</a> (1 <sup>st</sup> Years)	Graduate Program Handbooks
Forming a Dissertation Committee	Graduate Advisor: <a href="#">Graduate Advisor for Continuing Students</a> (2+ Years)	Graduate Program Handbooks
Issues with PI/Supervisor or Dissertation Committee	Graduate Advisor: <a href="#">Graduate Program Advisor for First Year Students</a> (1 <sup>st</sup> Years) <a href="#">Graduate Advisor for Continuing Students</a> (2+ Years) (or other contact recommended by Grievance Policy)	<a href="#">Grievance Policy</a> <a href="#">Conflict Management Resources</a>
Degree Progress	Graduate Advisor: <a href="#">Graduate Program Advisor for First Year Students</a> (1 <sup>st</sup> Years) <a href="#">Graduate Advisor for Continuing Students</a> (2+ Years)	
Graduation & Defense Proceedings	<a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a> <a href="#">Graduate School Student Services</a>	<a href="#">Graduate School</a>
<b>FUNDING</b>		
Tuition Payments/Bills	<a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a> <a href="#">Tuition Billing</a>	<a href="#">MyTuitionBill</a> <a href="#">What I Owe</a>

Payroll Payments	<a href="#">MBS Human Resources (HR)</a> <a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">Payroll Services</a> <a href="#">Human Resource Service Center</a> <a href="#">Where's My Check</a>
Health Insurance: General questions	<a href="#">MBS Human Resources (HR)</a> <a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">AHP Website (AcademicBlue)</a> <a href="#">Human Resource Service Center</a>
Health Insurance: Benefits & Enrollment	<a href="#">Human Resource Service Center (HRSC)</a> AHP Customer Service: 1-855-247-7587 <a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">HRSC Website</a> <a href="#">AcademicBlue (AHP)</a>
University Fellowships: Applying for awards	<a href="#">Graduate Fellowship Administrator, Elizabeth Korves</a> <a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">Graduate School</a> <a href="#">CMB Program Website</a>
University Fellowships: Receiving Funds	<a href="#">Graduate Fellowship Administrator, Elizabeth Korves</a> <a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">Graduate School: Information for Current Fellows</a> <a href="#">Instructions for Non-Payroll Direct Deposit</a>
Academic Employment (GRA/TA)	<a href="#">MBS Human Resources (HR)</a> <a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">Graduate Program Handbook</a> <a href="#">Graduate School</a>
Teaching Assistant Positions	<a href="#">Graduate Program Staff</a>	<a href="#">Graduate Program Handbook</a> <a href="#">Handbook of Operation Procedures</a>
<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>		
Buildings: Access/Entry Facility Issues (safety, repairs) Room Reservations	Lab Manager(s) Building Manager + Lab Manager <a href="https://reservations.utexas.edu/emswebapp/">https://reservations.utexas.edu/emswebapp/</a>	<a href="#">Environmental Health &amp; Safety</a> <a href="#">Facilities Services</a>
Interpersonal Violence (physical or sexual assault, stalking, abuse)	<i>Emergencies: Call 911</i> <a href="#">Title IX Office: File a Report</a> <a href="#">UT Victims' Advocates</a> : 512-232-9699 UT Police Dept: 512-471-4441	<a href="#">UT Counseling &amp; Mental Health Center</a> <a href="#">Student Emergency Services</a> <a href="#">Title IX Office</a>
Campus Safety	<i>Emergencies: Call 911</i> UT Police Dept: 512-471-4441 Sure Walk: 512-232-9255 <a href="#">UT Night Rides</a> <a href="#">LiveSafe at UT Austin</a>	<a href="#">Campus Safety Office</a>
Mental Health Support	<a href="#">UT Counseling &amp; Mental Health Center (CMHC)</a>	<a href="#">UT Counseling &amp; Mental Health Center</a>



	UT CMHC Crisis Line: <a href="tel:512-471-2255">512-471-CALL (2255)</a>	
Mental Health/ Behavioral Health Concerns	<a href="#">Behavioral Concern Advice Line (BCAL)</a>	<a href="#">Campus Safety Office</a> <a href="#">UT Counseling &amp; Mental Health Center</a>
Personal Emergencies Emergency Funds	<a href="#">Student Emergency Services</a> <a href="#">Student Emergency Fund</a>	<a href="#">Dean of Students Office</a>

## **Forms**

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

The following forms are enabled for e-signatures via DocuSign Power Forms. 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](#)

### 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](https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/forms).

## ***Mentorship and Outreach Opportunities for STEM Graduate Students***

### ***In-Person Opportunities:***

#### **[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 also 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've had direct contact with scientists. The program aims to put a friendly face to science and make science 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 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](#) (Human Resources)

#### Resources for Training on Effective Communication

- [Student Employee Excellence Development Program](#)
- [Leadership and Ethics Institute](#)
- [Dealing with Difficult People](#) (Human Resources)
- [How to Prepare for a Difficult Conversation](#) (Human Resources)
- [Conflict Management & Dispute Resolution Office](#) (Human Resources)

#### Resources for Legal Issues and Grievance Procedures at UT

- [Legal Services for Students](#)
- Graduate School [Grievance Resources](#)