

# GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Policies and Procedures

### Requirements and Regulations

A student enrolled in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu>) is subject to all established requirements and regulations of the Health Science Center, the Graduate School, and the respective graduate programs. Exceptions to these rules and issues not covered by previously determined guidelines will be decided by the Graduate Faculty Council.

### Attendance

Attendance requirements for regularly scheduled classes, laboratories, and clinic periods are the option and prerogative of the course instructor for that particular portion of the curriculum. The policy regarding attendance for each course is announced by the instructor at the first meeting.

Unexcused absences in courses in which attendance is required may be considered sufficient cause for failure. Excused absences may be granted by the course director in such cases as illness, personal emergency, or religious reasons. Such leaves are considered on an individual basis, and verification of the reason for the absence may be required. It is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative in arranging with the faculty to make up work that is missed, or may be specified in the course syllabus.

For student employees, refer to policy 4.3.5 in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* (<http://uthscsa.edu/hop2000/4-toc.aspx>).

### Course Syllabus Policy

All course instructors must provide a course syllabus to students and comply with the following:

- All course syllabi must be posted online, either in the course's learning management system, e.g. CANVAS, or on a GSBS web page. This policy is mandated by State law (HB 2504).
- Course syllabi must be made available to students online on the day web registration begins, but no later than the first class meeting of the semester. After the first class, no changes can be made to the syllabus except for changes to logistical information. If the logistical information is changed, the updated syllabus must be posted within 48 hours so that it remains current.
- The academic content of a course syllabus remains within the purview of each individual instructor, subject to the program's curricular needs. However, at a minimum, the following elements must be included in each course syllabus:
  - the course number and name
  - the instructor's name and contact information (including email address)
  - the instructor's official office hours and location
  - the course's learning objectives
  - the course prerequisites (if required)
  - a detailed grading scheme, including types of exams/assignments and their weight in determining the final grade
  - a schedule of assignments and exams
  - the textbook, reading assignments and/or reading list
  - the course policies the instructor wishes to impose, such as attendance policies, class participation expectations, late assignment policies, etc.

4. The following Health Science Center policy statements:

#### REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

In accordance with the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* (<http://uthscsa.edu/hop2000/4-toc.aspx>) policy 4.2.3, Request for Accommodation Under the ADA and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), any student requesting accommodation must submit the appropriate request for accommodation under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA, form 100) to his/her appropriate Associate Dean of their School and a copy to the ADA Coordinator. Additional information may be obtained at <http://uthscsa.edu/eoo/form100-Faculty-student-resident.pdf>.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline as prescribed by the UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, signing attendance sheets for another student, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such an act. Additional information may be obtained at <http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/academicdishonestypolicy/>

### Residence Required for Graduation

Each doctoral student must spend a minimum of two full semesters, or the equivalent, as a full-time student in residence at the Health Science Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu>). The residence requirement is based on the premise that the scholarship and proficiency necessary for the achievement of a graduate degree in the biomedical sciences are best acquired through endeavors devoted wholly to study and research in the university environment. A candidate for the Ph.D. degree must be registered in the dissertation course for at least two terms; a candidate for the M.S. degree must be registered in the thesis course for at least one term.

### Time Limits

The median time for completion of the M.S. degree and the Ph.D. degree is 3 years and 5.5 years, respectively, in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu>). The time to degree for the Doctorate in Medical Physics (DMP) program is 4 years.

**Ph.D. Degree:** Each program has a written policy on time-to-degree (Plan of Study) that will guide the student. Coursework or major examinations taken more than six years prior to the end of the candidate's final semester may not be accepted for credit and, if necessary for the degree,

must be repeated or specifically approved by the Committee on Graduate Studies.

**M.S. Degree:** Each program has a written policy on time-to-degree (Plan of Study) that will guide the student.

### **Credit Hour Requirements**

The majority of the total semester credit hours taken for an M.S. or Ph.D. degree must be earned at the Health Science Center (<http://www.uthscsa.edu>). Specific curricula requirements vary depending on individual programs. A minimum of 98 semester credit hours is required for the DMP degree.

**Ph.D. Degree:** A minimum of 72\* semester credit hours is required for the Ph.D. component of the dual degree programs. Doctoral students are required to demonstrate intellectual command of the subject area of the graduate program and capability to carry out independent and original investigation in the area. The specific curriculum requirements of each graduate program are defined in the individual programs. The curriculum of each student is supervised by the appropriate Committee on Graduate Studies.

**M.S. Degree:** A minimum of 30\* semester credit hours is required for the M.S. degree. The student must successfully complete at least 12 semester credit hours of coursework in addition to credit hours awarded in Research, Thesis, and Seminar. With the exception of dual degree programs, all work for the M.S. degree is ordinarily done at the Health Science Center's Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu>).

A maximum of six semester hours of graduate course work from another institution may be applied for credit toward the Master's degree, but only with the approval of the Committee on Graduate Studies in the student's program. In cases where such credit is approved, the student must still meet the residence requirement for two full semesters. For students participating in a dual degree program, usually six semester hours in the medical or dental curriculum may be credited toward the M.S. degree. As a rule, these semester hours will come from survey courses in the student's major area. Students in the doctoral Nursing Program should consult the Transfer of Credit policies under the Program Policies (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/schoolofnursing/phd/#programpolicies>) for the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Program (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/schoolofnursing/phd>).

*\*Some programs may require additional hours*

### **Transfer of Credit**

Credit for coursework taken at another institution may be transferred if the student submits a Course Waiver/Substitution Request Form available in the Office of the University Registrar. The same procedure should also be used to request transfer of credit from other schools within the Health Science Center (<http://www.uthscsa.edu>). The transfer of credit is subject to approval by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program in which the student is enrolled and by the Dean or the Dean's designee.

Students in M.S. programs may apply no more than 6 semester hours of transferred credit toward satisfaction of the 30 semester credit hours required for the degree. However, the request form should list all courses taken elsewhere, which are approved by the Committee on Graduate Studies to satisfy the course requirements for the M.S. degree set forth by the program in which the student is enrolled.

Students in Ph.D. programs are required to fulfill a minimum of 72 semester credit hours of coursework, and students in the DMP program are required to fulfill a minimum of 98 semester credit hours. Transfer of credit for Ph.D. students may be requested to provide evidence on the student's transcript of the completion of courses taken elsewhere which are approved by the Committee on Graduate Studies (1) to satisfy the course requirements for the Ph.D. degree or (2) to be appropriate to the specific course of study of the individual graduate student.

**Waiver of Courses:** With the approval of the Committee on Graduate Studies, graduate credit hours from other universities may be accepted in lieu of required courses. In addition, the Committee may waive certain required courses, based on the student's previous graduate course work. These hours will be accepted in the form of credit for the course material rather than by application of credit hours directly to the student's transcript.

### **Foreign Language Requirement**

Proficiency in a foreign language is not a requirement for either the M.S. or Ph.D. degree.

### **Ethics Course Requirement**

All doctoral students must take the course TSCI 5070 Responsible Conduct of Research or its equivalent, as a requirement for graduation. Master of Science students are strongly encouraged to take the TSCI 5070, but it is not a requirement for graduation.

### **Supervised Teaching**

Each graduate program will decide if supervised teaching is required for a doctoral degree in its respective program. If supervised teaching is required, the student must enroll in a program-designated teaching course for a minimum of one semester credit and receive a grade of S (Satisfactory) or H (Honors). BME students are required to enroll in three semester credit hours of supervised teaching. UTSA offers a supervised teaching course, in which students will receive a letter grade.

### **Student Employment**

Full-time doctoral students are strongly counseled against accepting any outside employment. Before seeking outside employment, graduate students are urged to discuss their plans with their faculty advisor.

Full-time graduate students may be awarded stipends as teaching assistants (TAs) or graduate research assistants (GRAs) when funds are available. Student stipends funded from federal sources are governed by federal regulations. Full-time students who are GRAs or TAs are discouraged from taking employment; as stipends serve as scholarships to meet financial need.

There may be circumstances under which part-time graduate student's desire gainful employment within the Health Science Center (<http://www.uthscsa.edu>) (or full-time employees desire to pursue part-time graduate studies), and the following guidelines should apply:

When funds are available, part-time graduate students who are gainfully employed part-time within the Health Science Center in addition to pursuing graduate studies may be paid prorated rates within salary scales of job classification for which they are qualified and/or to which they are assigned. This procedure is permitted primarily to allow gainful part-time employment in an area unrelated to the student's formal academic program. The Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) should be consulted in advance when a part-time student desires part-time

employment within the student's own supervising department, or when the student is employed in a work situation that exists whereby the employment will be of direct benefit in meeting the graduate degree requirements. The COGS should then recommend an appropriate part-time rate of pay consistent with the objectives of the graduate program in general with due consideration to the pay rates of other graduate students. Departments requesting employment of a part-time graduate student outside the supervising department (and in an area unrelated to the student's academic program) should determine the number of hours for which the student is registered prior to contacting the Office of Human Resources regarding appointment of such students. This will enable the Office of Human Resources (<http://uthscsa.edu/hr>) to provide proper salary rate information.

The present policy permits an employee to enroll in a 3-semester credit hour course without reduction in pay.

## Records

### Registration

The Office of the University Registrar (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/registrar>) will announce and provide the registration process to all students, Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) Chairs, Departmental Chairs, and their assistants prior to the start of each semester. For individual registration concerns, confer with your program's Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) Chair.

A student must register each semester that he or she is enrolled in a course. This includes courses in Research, Thesis, and Dissertation. No student can receive credit for a course for which he or she has not registered.

### Consequences for Non-Payment of Tuition and Fees

In graduate programs where students are responsible for paying their own tuition and fees, payment must be made by the census date of each semester (which is always the 12th class day). The fall semester has two official start dates for new students, and thus, two census dates are listed on the school's official Academic Calendar. Students should refer to the Academic Calendar to determine their census date based on their start date. Consequences of non-payment of tuition and fees are listed below. International students who fail to pay tuition by the census date must also contact the Office of International Services (<http://www.uthscsa.edu/ois>).

Failure to pay tuition will result in the following:

- Discontinued enrollment in the graduate program
- Termination from the program with loss of pay, benefits, and privileges.
- Necessity to re-apply for admission for the following semester.
- Barred from readmission for the current semester.
- Initiation of loan repayments (if applicable).
- Potential loss of visa status and possible deportation for international students.
- Withholding of a student's official transcript.
- Withholding of a diploma to which a student would otherwise be entitled.

**Waiver of Fitness Fee:** Graduate students enrolled at the Health Science Center are required to pay a fitness fee. Only students enrolled in distance

education programs are exempt. Students enrolled in a joint degree program (e.g. Translational Science, Biomedical Engineering) where the home institution is not the Health Science Center may request the fitness fee to be waived. Waiver requests must be submitted by the student in writing to the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School no later than 10 days prior to the beginning of classes. Students enrolled in final hours may also request the fitness fee to be waived. All waiver requests are forwarded by the Senior Associate Dean for review by the Vice President for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs, and require the approval of both the Vice President for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs and the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

If the waiver is approved, the GSBS will forward the waiver to the Bursar's Office with a copy sent to the Office of Veteran Services & Financial Aid. Waivers are valid for one year after which the student must re-apply.

### Full-Time Status

Doctoral students must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 semester credit hours each fall and spring semester in order to be considered full-time (equivalent to 24 semester credit hours for a full academic year). The minimum half-time course load for doctoral graduate students is 6 credit hours per semester.

Master's students must be enrolled for a minimum of 8 semester credit hours each fall and spring semester in order to be considered full-time. The minimum half-time course load for master's graduate students is 4 credit hours per semester.

Exception(s) to this policy include:

1. A student enrolled in a THECB-approved Certificate program
2. A student enrolled for Final Hours.
3. A student enrolled in the Ph.D. Nursing Science program.
4. A Health Science Center student enrolled in the **Translational Science Ph.D. program**; Credit hours earned in trailing summer semesters at other participating institutions will count toward the total required credit hours each academic year.
5. A Health Science Center student enrolled in the **Biomedical Engineering Ph.D. program** or **Biomedical Engineering M.S. program**; Credit hours earned in trailing summer semesters at other participating institutions will count toward the total required credit hours each academic year.

Students appointed in Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) and Teaching Assistant (TA) positions in the GSBS will be required to enroll in a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester, with the exception of a Health Science Center student in the Translational Science PhD and Biomedical Engineering PhD programs, which will require enrollment in a total of 24 credit hours over the fall, spring, and trailing summer semesters each academic year. GRAs and TAs are allowed to enroll in final hours and remain as full-time students per the Final Hours Policy (<http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/finalcredithourspolicy>) found in the catalog under General Academic Policies.

Students enrolling for less than half-time will be responsible for repayment of federal student loans.

### Adding Courses

Students may add courses during official add days as designated by the Office of the University Registrar (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/>)

registrar) each semester. Students are not permitted to add classes to their schedules after the census date, which is typically the 12th class day of the spring and fall semesters.

## Dropping Courses

A student who is not on academic probation may drop a course at any time during the semester provided the student is passing the course at the time and has obtained the signed approval of the course director and COGS chair.

The Registrar will record the symbol **W** if a course is dropped before the first evaluation period in that course. After that time, the course director will assign a grade of either **WP** (Withdrawn Passing) or **WF** (Withdrawn Failing). A student on academic probation will not be allowed to drop a course.

In case of illness and with the consent of the Dean, a student may drop a course without penalty at any time prior to the beginning of final examinations.

## Registration for Thesis

Students in M.S. programs may register for the Thesis course XXXX 6098 where XXXX represents one of the following: BIME, BIOC, CLSC, CSBL, DENH, IBMS, MEDI, MICR, MMED, MSDS, NURS, PHAR, PHYL, RADI, or TSCI. Registration for Thesis is only permitted after the following three actions have been taken:

1. Approval of admission to candidacy for the M.S. degree by the Dean;
2. Approval of the thesis research proposal by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program and the Dean;
3. Appointment of a Supervising Committee for the thesis research by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program and the Dean.

Candidates for the M.S. degree with thesis must register for the thesis course for at least one term, unless they participate in a graduate program with a non-thesis option.

## Registration for Dissertation

Students in Ph.D. programs may register for the Dissertation course XXXX 7099 where XXXX represents one of the following: BIME, BIOC, CSBL, IBMS, MEDI, MICR, MMED, NURS, PHAR, PHYL, RADI, or TSCI. Registration for Dissertation is only permitted after the following three actions have been taken:

1. Approval of admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree by the Dean;
2. Approval of the dissertation research proposal by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program and the Dean;
3. Approval of the membership of the candidate's Supervising Committee by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program and the Dean.

A candidate for the Ph.D. degree must register for the Dissertation course for at least two terms.

## Registration for Final Term

It is a requirement that a student be registered for the semester in which he or she graduates.

## Final Credit Hours

A student in his/her final semester registering only for thesis or dissertation course may register for "final hours". A Ph.D. student must register for a minimum of 3 semester credit hours; a M.S. student must register for a minimum of 1 semester credit hour. When a student declares "final hours" for a semester, the student shall be considered enrolled in a full-time course load for that semester. The student pays tuition based upon the number of credit hour for which he/she registers.

Because of requirements dictated by certain types of visas, international students must consult with their COGS Chair and the Office of International Services prior to registering for final hours.

A student may register for final credit hours only once during his/her degree program. The "Request for Designation of Final Hours" form is available in the Office of the University Registrar or on their website (<http://students.uthscsa.edu/registrar/2013/03/forms/>) and it requires the signature approval of the program COGS Chair.

## Registration for Audit

Permission to audit one or more courses is sometimes granted. Auditing conveys only the privilege of observing and excludes handing in papers or taking part in a class discussion, laboratory exercises, or fieldwork. An **AU** grade is given and no credit is reported. Graduate students must obtain permission to register to audit a course from the course director and the COGS chair of the program in which they are enrolled. Others who wish to register to audit a graduate course must apply to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School for admission as a Non-Degree Student.

## Grading System

Credit hours are earned in the graduate programs only for the grades **A**, **B**, **C**, and **S**. All letter grades except **H** and **S** are included in the computation of the grade point average. Grade points are assigned as follows:

- A** = 4 (above average graduate work)
- B** = 3 (average graduate work)
- C** = 2 (below average graduate work)
- D** = 1 (failing graduate work)
- F** = 0 (failing graduate work)

Grades of **D** and **F** are not acceptable for graduate credit. If a course is repeated, the last grade earned is used in computing the cumulative grade point average.

A grade of **S** (satisfactory), **U** (unsatisfactory), or **H** (honors) is not included in the computation of the grade point average. These grades are given in the following courses in all programs: Supervised Teaching, Research, Thesis, and Dissertation. **S/U** and/or **H** (Honors) may also be given in specific courses in specific programs.

Other symbols used in reporting the standing of students in their classes are: **WP** and **WF** (see "Withdrawal"), **W** (course dropped while receiving a passing grade with no penalty), and **I** (incomplete). The course director will record the symbol **W** if a course is dropped before the first evaluation period in that course. After that time, the course director will assign a grade of either **WP** (withdrew passing) or **WF** (withdrew failing).

An **I** is used only to report cases in which the student has not completed all of the assignments and/or examinations before the conclusion of the course. Unless the student has been granted a leave of absence, all

work must be completed within one year, at which time the grade of I (incomplete) will be changed to the appropriate letter grade.

The grading system described above applies to courses in the medical and dental curricula in which graduate students may be enrolled as well as to courses in the graduate programs. Grades for courses taken to satisfy a contingency or condition of admission or those transferred for credit are not included in computation of the grade point average.

## Student Academic Grievance Process

An **Academic Grievance** is a complaint regarding an academic decision or action that affects a student's academic record. For the definition of terms see: <http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/grievances/>.

As required by the University of Texas System and the policies of the Health Science Center, a formal grievance procedure is a process to allow students the opportunity to report any perceived act, omission, or issue of an academic nature which may adversely affect the student. The student grievance may include grade disputes or other academically related issues. All efforts should be made by the student and the faculty member involved to resolve the issue before proceeding through the grievance process. If the issue cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is encouraged to submit their grievance through the grievance process. The sequence of procedures involved in the grievance process is outlined below.

### Grievance Process:

1. The student has up to 10 business days from the date he/she was issued the grade or evaluation in question to file a formal complaint.
2. A formal complaint is filed by submitting the Student Complaint Form ([http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/current\\_students/forms](http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/current_students/forms)) to the COGS Chair of the Program with a copy going to the GSBS Dean's office.
3. A committee consisting of the COGS Chair, the Program Director and the GSBS Associate Dean (Academic Affairs) \*, will have up to 30 business days to investigate the grievance. The COGS Chair will chair the committee. If the Program Director serves as COGS Chair, the Program Director will appoint a senior graduate faculty member of the Program to serve on the committee. Documentation from the student and faculty will be collected as well as face-to-face meetings scheduled by the COGS Chair.
4. A written and signed summary of the decision rendered will be provided to the student by the COGS Chair and a copy of the signed summary will be sent by the COGS Chair to the GSBS Dean's Office.
5. If the student is not satisfied with the final decision reached by the COGS Chair, Program Director, and Associate Dean (Academic Affairs), the student may appeal the decision to the Dean of the GSBS within 10 business days of receiving the written summary (described below).
6. All documents (emails/memos/letters/written summaries) will be maintained by the GSBS.

\*If the formal academic grievance is filed against the COGS Chair or Program Director then the Associate Dean (Academic Affairs) or designee will serve as the chair of the grievance committee and will identify a senior faculty member as the third member to serve on the committee. If the Associate Dean is named in the complaint, then the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or his/her designee will represent the GSGS on this committee.

## Appeal Process

The student has up to 10 business days of receiving the written summary of the formal grievance process to file an appeal.

An appeal is filed by submitting to the Dean of the GSBS a letter signed by the student outlining the arguments for the appeal together with the Student Complaint Form and the written summary from the grievance process.

The Dean will have up to 30 business days following the formal grievance process to render a decision. The Dean's decision will be considered final and provided to the student in writing.

### Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

If a student exhausts all grievance processes in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the Health Science Center, then the student may file a complaint to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. For the types of complaints it investigates, processes and complaint form search their website <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/>

## Continuation, Probation, and Dismissal

Continuation in the graduate programs is dependent upon three requirements:

1. Satisfactory progress in removing any conditions imposed at the time of admission;
2. Maintenance of a minimum cumulative B (3.0) average for all courses taken while enrolled in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu>). A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation and warned by the Dean of the Graduate School that continuation in the graduate program is in jeopardy. A student will remain on probation as long as her or his cumulative GPA is below 3.0. While on probation, a student must maintain a B average in those courses for which he or she is registered or be considered for dismissal by the Committee on Graduate Studies. Except in the case of illness, permission to drop courses will not be given while the student is on probation. A student on probation may not be admitted to candidacy or awarded a degree. Grades achieved during enrollment as a non-degree student are not used to determine academic probation.
3. A satisfactory rate of progress toward the degree as determined by the Committee on Graduate Studies is required throughout the student's enrollment. The Committee, with the Dean's consent, may terminate a student's enrollment for lack of satisfactory progress. Any graduate student who receives two unsatisfactory (U) grades in consecutive semesters will be considered for dismissal by the program Committee on Graduate Studies. Any recommendation for dismissal requires final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

## Withdrawal

Permission for withdrawal from a graduate program may be granted by the Dean upon concurrence by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program. The student who wishes to withdraw must complete and sign the **Student Clearance Form** (available from the Office of the University Registrar), submit the form for signature to the COGS Chair and the Graduate School dean or designee, and then obtain authorized signature clearance from each area listed on the lower portion of the form.

In the case of withdrawal before the end of the semester (and thus the dropping of all courses), the grading symbol **WP** or **WF** will be recorded for each course not completed, depending on the student's standing on the last day of enrollment. In the case of withdrawal at the end of a semester, the appropriate grade will be recorded for each completed course.

An application for readmission by a student who has previously withdrawn is subject to the same requirements, procedures, and acceptance considerations that apply to first-time applicants.

## Leave of Absence

Permission for a leave of absence from a graduate program for a maximum period of one year may be granted by the Dean subject to prior approval by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the program. Such permission will be granted only for extenuating circumstances and indicates that the student will be allowed to return to the program within the one-year time limit. There is no guarantee that a stipend will be reinstated upon return.

The student should make a written request for a leave of absence to the Chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies for her/his program, including the reasons for the request and the expected time of return. If the request for leave of absence is approved, the student is so notified by a letter from the Dean and provided by the Graduate School Dean's Office. The student must then complete a **Student Clearance Form** available from the Office of the University Registrar. The student should then complete and sign the upper portion of this Form, obtain the signatures of the COGS Chair and the Graduate School Dean for designee, and obtain authorized signature clearance from each area listed on the form. The student should also drop any courses for which they are currently enrolled.

### *In Absentia* (INTD 1000)

Students must be registered for the semester in which they graduate and all fees and tuition apply. *In Absentia* status is a type of registration that allows students to maintain student status at the university while completing research elsewhere. *In Absentia* may also allow students who have completed all requirements for graduation to enroll for purposes of a degree conferral. Registration *In Absentia* is designated as a zero credit hour and the student is assessed a fee. Students using the *In Absentia* designation must successfully defend the dissertation or thesis within the 2 weeks prior to the final Graduate Faculty Council meeting of the semester. All forms required by the Graduate School and the final approved dissertation or thesis must be submitted in accordance with the timeline for the first degree conferral date of the new semester. Final approved version of the dissertation or thesis must also be electronically submitted in accordance with the relevant timeline.

The student who expects to defend the dissertation or thesis in this interval should register for one credit hour for the next semester. Following the successful defense of the dissertation, the student may drop the one credit hour and register *In Absentia* for the coming semester. This must be accomplished before the first class day of the new semester. Registration *In Absentia* is designated as zero credit hours and the student will be charged a \$25 fee.

## Non-registration

A student who fails to register for two or more consecutive semesters and does not elect to take a leave of absence or to enroll *In Absentia* will

be considered for dismissal from the program. The Registrar will notify the Committee on Graduate Studies and the Dean of the student's failure to register.

If dismissed, the student may reapply for admission. Such application is subject to the same requirements, procedures, and acceptance considerations that apply to first-time applicants.

## Transfer between Graduate Programs

Any student who wishes to change the course of study from one graduate program to another must submit an application to that program, and the application is subject to the same requirements, procedures, and acceptance considerations that apply to other applicants to the program. Students who are considering such a transfer must have an interview with the GSBS Associate Dean. Upon approval, a Change of Program form must be obtained from the Office of the University Registrar and submitted in order to complete the process.

## Graduation

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is awarded by the Board of Regents (<http://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents>) upon the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 72\* semester credit hours, the satisfactory completion of a prescribed program of study as documented by the Committee on Graduate Studies, recommendation of the Graduate Faculty Council, and certification of the candidate by the Dean and President to the Board of Regents.

The degree of Master of Science is awarded upon the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 30\* semester hours, the requirements particular to each graduate program as documented by the Committee on Graduate Studies, recommendation of the Graduate Faculty Council, and certification of the candidate by the Dean and President to the Board of Regents (<http://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents>).

The degree of Doctorate in Medical Physics is awarded upon the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 98 semester credit hours, the requirements documented by the Committee on Graduates Studies, recommendation of the Graduate Faculty Council, and certification of the candidate by the Dean and President to the Board of Regents.

*\*Some programs may require additional hours*

## Commencement

Graduation exercises are held each year in May.

The Graduate School Dean will be present to address the students and participate in the presentation of diplomas. Candidates for graduation in the Nursing Science Ph.D. program, the Pharm.D. program and the Master's in Dental Science and Dental Hygiene program also participate in the Graduate School (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu>) Commencement.

## Sequential Procedures

### Doctor of Philosophy degree

#### Phase I - From matriculation through admission to candidacy

1. **Assignment of faculty advisor:** The Committee on Graduate Studies assigns a member of the graduate faculty as advisor to each student entering a program. The advisor serves as counselor on academic matters and monitors the student's progress in (a) successfully

completing contingencies of admission and course requirements of the program and (b) selecting an area of research specialization.

2. **Selection of the supervising professor:** No later than three months after the student's admission to candidacy, the member of the graduate faculty of the program who will serve as the supervising professor of the dissertation research shall be decided upon by mutual agreement among the candidate, the faculty member, and the Committee on Graduate Studies. Normally, the research advisor who guided the student's preliminary research activities continues as supervising professor, but this arrangement is not obligatory.
3. **Approval of research advisor:** When the student selects the area of research specialization and the faculty member to serve as research preceptor, the Committee on Graduate Studies reviews the proposed selections. If the selections are approved, the faculty member is designated by the Committee on Graduate Studies as the student's research advisor in concert with, or in replacement of, the original faculty advisor. The faculty advisor may, of course, be selected as the research advisor. The student's potential for productive and independent investigation is assessed by the research advisor.
4. **Qualifying examination:** The Qualifying Examination is comprehensive in nature and may be written, oral, or both. The Committee on Graduate Studies determines the format of the examination and the composition of the Qualifying Examination Committee, with the proviso that one member is not on the graduate faculty of the student's program. The Qualifying Examination Committee administers the examination(s), evaluates the student's performance, and reports its judgment on whether the student passed (indicated by a grade of "Satisfactory") or failed (indicated by a grade of "Unsatisfactory") to the Committee on Graduate Studies.
5. **Admission to candidacy:** Recommendation by the Committee on Graduate Studies that the student be admitted to candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree requires the following:
  - a. Satisfactory completion of all required courses; in exceptional cases, permission to proceed to Phase II without having completed all required courses can be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School.
  - b. Cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in all coursework undertaken since matriculation in the program.
  - c. Report by the Qualifying Examination Committee that the student has passed the examination.
  - d. Report by the student's research advisor and other graduate faculty members, as appropriate, that the student has clearly evidenced the potential for productive and independent investigation.

If, in its overall evaluation of the eligibility of the student for admission to candidacy, the Committee on Graduate Studies is in favor of admission, it shall submit a Petition of Admission to Candidacy Form (GSBS Form 32) to the Dean for approval with documentation of satisfaction of the requirements listed above. Each research advisor is required to sign the form to certify her/his view of the student's potential for productive and independent investigation. The Dean may approve or disapprove the recommendation or request further documentation. When the Dean has approved admission of the student to candidacy, the candidate enters Phase II of the program.

#### Phase II - From admission to candidacy through granting of the degree

1. **Draft of dissertation research proposal:** The candidate shall identify a research question that will serve as a focus for the dissertation research. The candidate shall prepare a draft of a research proposal

that specifies the research to be undertaken, its significance in the scientific field, and the general methods and techniques to be utilized. The proposal shall be submitted to the supervising professor for review and modification. Subsequent drafts of the proposal should then be submitted for review and modification to members of the dissertation supervising committee. The final draft of the dissertation research proposal is subject to review and approval by the Committee on Graduate Studies, which may specifically designate a group of faculty members to review the proposal draft(s).

2. **Composition of the dissertation supervising committee:** After approval of the proposal by the Committee on Graduate Studies, the supervising professor and the candidate shall make recommendations to the Committee on Graduate Studies regarding the composition of the Supervising Committee for the dissertation research. Recommendations may include adjunct faculty members who have been approved as Graduate Faculty of a program at the UT Health San Antonio and are eligible to serve on a dissertation supervising committee. The Supervising Committee must consist of at least five persons, as follows:
  - a. The supervising professor, also a member of the program's graduate faculty, designated as Supervising Professor and Chair of the Supervising Committee;
  - b. One member must be from outside the Health Science Center and must be an expert in the field of the proposed dissertation;
  - c. Two members must be members of the graduate faculty of the program;
  - d. One member must be a faculty member of the Health Science Center in a supporting area outside the program but need not necessarily be a member of the graduate faculty.

The Committee on Graduate Studies may nominate additional members in categories (b), (c), and (d) if necessary. Nomination is contingent upon the willingness of the designated person to serve on the Supervising Committee. The composition of the Supervising Committee should, in principle, provide a group of research scientists who constitute an important resource to the candidate and her or his dissertation research. Their functions are, with the Supervising Professor, to guide the candidate through the dissertation research and to certify to the Committee on Graduate Studies that the candidate has, in fact, carried out a meritorious research investigation of the caliber appropriate for a Ph.D. dissertation and, in their opinion, defended it satisfactorily. Upon selection of the supervising committee, the chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) will submit to the Graduate School Dean's Office a completed GSBS Form 30 Recommendation for Approval of Dissertation Research Proposal and Supervising Committee. The student must provide the Graduate School Dean's Office an electronic copy of their dissertation proposal to accompany GSBS Form 30.

3. **Approval of the dissertation proposal and supervising committee:** The Graduate Faculty Council and the Dean will review the recommendation of COGS on the proposal and supervising committee. After approval by the Dean of both the proposal and the Supervising Committee, the candidate may register for their respective program's Dissertation course. Any subsequent change in the Composition of the Supervising Committee must be approved by the COGS and approved by the Dean, who will then report the change at a regularly scheduled GFC meeting.
4. **Supervision of the dissertation research:** Within one month after formal approval of the Supervising Committee, the Supervising Professor shall convene the Supervising Committee to discuss

with the candidate the progress of the dissertation research and the projected future work. At appropriate intervals thereafter (at least every six months), the Supervising Committee shall meet with the candidate for presentation of progress reports (written and/or oral), so that current status of the research may be evaluated and direction of future work planned. If the external Committee member is unable to attend these meetings, it is the responsibility of the candidate and the Supervising Professor to provide this member with progress reports for review and recommendations. It is essential that the Supervising Committee be fully informed of the research progress and be able to provide continued supervision throughout and that the Committee on Graduate Studies receive reports of the research progress from the Supervising Committee after each of its meetings with the candidate. The Supervising Committee and/or the Committee on Graduate Studies may approve or direct alterations in the research plans within the general context of the dissertation proposal. Major changes in the candidate's research status (such as selection of a new Supervising Professor, new Supervising Committee members, or a new research question) must be reported to the Graduate Faculty Council and the Dean for consideration.

5. **Submission of the dissertation:** After agreement by the members of the Supervising Committee that the research has progressed sufficiently for submission of the dissertation, a draft of the dissertation shall be submitted to the Supervising Professor and then to all other members of the Supervising Committee for review and recommendations for modification of content. An electronic copy will also be submitted via ProQuest to the Graduate School Dean's Office for review of formatting. It is the responsibility of the candidate to follow the guidelines of preparation of the dissertation provided by the Graduate School Dean's Office in *Dissertation/Thesis Workshop* and in the *Instructions for Preparation and Submission of Electronic Theses, Dissertations and Dissertation Abstracts* and associated rubric. If the alternative chapter format is preferred, the candidate must obtain approval for such format from the Supervising Committee and the Committee on Graduate Studies. The candidate also has the responsibility to ensure adequate time for review and modification of the dissertation in accordance with the schedule of deadlines provided each term by the Graduate School Dean's Office.
6. **Final oral examination:** When the Supervising Committee judges the dissertation to be suitable for defense, the Supervising Professor shall be responsible for submitting a signed *Request for Final Oral Examination Form* (GSBS Form 40) through the Committee on Graduate Studies to the Dean and request scheduling of the Final Oral Examination. A copy of the Abstract and Vitae should accompany the *Request for Final Oral Examination Form* at the time it is submitted to the Graduate School Dean's Office. Public announcement of the Final Oral Examination is made by the Graduate School Dean's Office. This examination is conducted by the Supervising Committee. All members of the Supervising Committee are expected to participate in the final oral examination. Interested persons may attend the public defense and have the right to question the candidate. After the public defense, the Final Oral Examination continues with an intensive oral examination by the Supervising Committee that is not customarily open to the public. The Supervising Committee members vote on the candidate's success or failure on the Final Oral Examination; more than one vote for failure signifies failure on the examination. The Supervising Committee submits the *Report on Final Oral Examination Form* (GSBS Form 43) to the Committee on Graduate Studies. In the event of a failing performance by the candidate, the Supervising Committee shall also submit to the Committee on Graduate Studies and the Dean a recommendation

regarding remedial action; in such case, the Committee on Graduate Studies shall decide on the recommendation or other action to be taken. In the event of a successful performance by the candidate, the Committee on Graduate Studies shall vote on whether to approve the recommendation by the Supervising Committee for granting of the degree.

7. **Recommendation for granting of the degree:** If the Committee on Graduate Studies approves the favorable recommendation by the Supervising Committee, the Chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies shall so indicate by signature on the *Report on Final Oral Examination* and submit the Report to the Graduate Faculty Council for consideration. The candidate shall submit to the Graduate School Dean's Office the final electronic version of the dissertation via ProQuest. The dissertation Approval Page signed by the Supervising Professor and Committee members must also be submitted to the Graduate School Dean's Office. When the Report, the Approval Page, the electronic dissertation approved in ProQuest and the Survey of Earned Doctorates have been received in the Graduate School Dean's Office, the Graduate Faculty Council will consider the recommendation for granting of the degree. If the Council does not approve the recommendation, it will refer the matter to the Committee on Graduate Studies with a recommendation for remedial action. If the Council does approve the recommendation, the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences will notify the Office of the University Registrar that the candidate has fulfilled all requirements of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Upon the candidate's certification by the President, the degree is conferred by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System. (See "Registration for Dissertation," "Registration for Final Term," and "Graduation" previously discussed in this section.)

## Master of Science Degree (Biomedical Sciences Programs)

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences offers Master of Science degrees with either a thesis or a non-thesis option. The Sequential Procedure for thesis-option Master of Science degree is listed below and currently only applies to the Master of Science degree in Medical Health Physics.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences does not require a comprehensive Qualifying Examination for the Masters of Science Degree. The thesis-option Master of Science degree in Cell Systems and Anatomy, Immunology and Infection, Biomedical Engineering, Dental Science, Dental Hygiene and Personalized Molecular Medicine as well as the non-thesis option Master of Science degree in Clinical Investigation and Translational Science, Biomedical Engineering, Cell Systems and Anatomy do not use a qualifying exam nor do they require the advancement to candidacy. The Sequential Procedures for these programs are modified to correlate with the curricula of these programs and submission of the Petition for Admission to Candidacy Form is not required. A copy of the appropriate Sequential Procedures may be obtained from the Graduate Advisor of those programs.

### Phase I - From matriculation to admission to candidacy

1. **Assignment of faculty advisor:** The Committee on Graduate Studies assigns a member of the graduate faculty as advisor to each student entering a program. The advisor serves as counselor on academic matters and monitors the student's progress in



- a. successfully completing contingencies of admission and course requirements of the program and
  - b. selecting an area of research specialization.
2. **Approval of research advisor:** When the student selects the area of research specialization and the faculty member to serve as research preceptor, the Committee on Graduate Studies reviews and documents the proposed selections. If the selections are approved, the faculty member is designated by the Committee on Graduate Studies as the student's research advisor in concert with, or in replacement of, the original faculty advisor. The faculty advisor may, of course, be selected as the research advisor. During this period, the student's potential for productive and independent investigation is assessed by the research advisor.
  3. **Qualifying examination:** The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences **does not** require a comprehensive Qualifying Examination for the M.S. degree. However, the Committee on Graduate Studies may require the student to pass a written and/or oral Qualifying Examination prior to consideration for admission to candidacy, or it may waive such examination.
  4. **Admission to candidacy:** Recommendation by the Committee on Graduate Studies that the student be admitted to candidacy for the Master of Science degree requires the following:
    - a. Satisfactory completion of all required courses;
    - b. Cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in all coursework undertaken since matriculation in the program;
    - c. Report by the Qualifying Examination Committee that the students passed the examination or that the examination has been waived;
    - d. Report by the student's research advisor and other graduate faculty members, as appropriate, that the student has clearly evidenced the potential for productive and independent investigation. GSBS Form 31 should be submitted to the Graduate School Dean's Office for approval.
  5. **Selection of the supervising professor:** No later than three months after the student's admission to candidacy, the member of the graduate faculty of the program who will serve as the supervising professor of the thesis research shall be decided upon by mutual agreement among the candidate, the faculty member, and the Committee on Graduate Studies. Normally, the research advisor who guided the student's preliminary research activities continues as supervising professor, but this arrangement is not obligatory.

#### Phase II - From Admission to candidacy through granting of the degree

1. **Draft of thesis research proposal:** No later than three months after admission to candidacy, the candidate shall submit a draft of a proposal for the thesis research to the supervising professor for review and modification. Subsequent drafts of the proposal may then be submitted for review and modification to other faculty members who have knowledge and expertise in the area of the research proposal. After approval of the final proposal draft by the supervising professor, the proposal is submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies for consideration of approval.
2. **Appointment of the supervising committee:** After approval of the thesis proposal by the Committee on Graduate Studies, the supervising professor and the candidate shall make recommendations to the Committee on Graduate Studies regarding the composition of the Supervising Committee for the thesis research. Recommendations may include adjunct faculty members who have been approved as Graduate Faculty of a program at the UT Health San Antonio and are eligible to serve on a thesis supervising

committee. The Supervising Committee must consist of at least four persons, as follows:

- a. The supervising professor, also a member of the program's graduate faculty, designated as Supervising Professor and Chair of the Supervising Committee;
- b. Two members must be members of the graduate faculty of the program;
- c. One member must be a faculty member of the Health Science Center in a supporting area outside the program or a person outside the Health Science Center who is an expert in the field of the proposed thesis.

Immediately upon selection of the Supervising Committee, the Chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies will submit to the Graduate School Dean's Office a completed GSBS Form 42, Composition of Supervising Committee-The Master of Science Degree. A copy of the proposed work in electronic form must accompany the form. Each member of the Supervising Committee is required to sign the form to certify her/his approval to serve on the committee. Any subsequent change in the Composition of the Supervising Committee must be approved by the COGS and approved by the Dean.

The composition of the Supervising Committee should, in principle, provide a group of research scientists who constitute an important resource to the candidate and her or his thesis research. Their functions are, with the Supervising Professor, to guide the candidate through the thesis research and to certify to the Committee on Graduate Studies that the candidate has, in fact, carried out a meritorious research investigation of the caliber appropriate for an M.S. thesis and, in their opinion, defended it satisfactorily.

3. **Supervision of the thesis research:** Within one month after appointment of the Supervising Committee, the Supervising Professor shall convene the Supervising Committee to discuss with the candidate the progress of the thesis research and the projected future work. At appropriate intervals thereafter, the Supervising Committee shall meet with the candidate for progress reports (written and/or oral) so that current status of the research may be evaluated and direction of future work planned. It is essential that the Supervising Committee be fully informed of the research progress and be able to provide continued supervision throughout, and that the Committee on Graduate Studies receive reports of the research progress from the Supervising Committee after each of its meetings with the candidate.
4. **Submission of the thesis:** After members of the Supervising Committee agree that the research has progressed sufficiently for submission of the thesis, a draft of the thesis shall be submitted to the Supervising Professor and then to the other members of the Supervising Committee for review and recommendations for modification of content. An electronic copy will also be submitted via ProQuest to the Graduate School Dean's Office for review of formatting and recommendations for modification. It is the responsibility of the candidate to follow the guidelines for preparation of the thesis provided by the Graduate School Dean's Office in *Dissertation/Thesis Workshop* and in the *Instructions for Preparation and Submission of Electronic Theses, Dissertations and Dissertation Abstracts* and associated rubric. If an alternative chapter format is preferable, the candidate must obtain approval for such format from the Supervising Committee and the Committee on Graduate Studies.

The candidate also has the responsibility to ensure adequate time for review and modification of the thesis.

5. **Final oral examination:** The Graduate School requires that the thesis be defended by the candidate in a Final Oral Examination conducted by the Supervising Committee; the format in which this examination is conducted (see Options 1 and 2 below) shall be decided by the Committee on Graduate Studies and it is recommended that it be uniform for all M.S. candidates in that program. All members of the Supervising Committee are expected to participate in the final oral examination.
  - a. **Option 1:** If the Committee on Graduate Studies does elect to require that the thesis be defended in formal Final Oral Examination scheduled through the Graduate School Dean's Office and open to all interested persons, then the procedures in number 7 (see Phase II of Doctor of Philosophy Degree) for Ph.D. candidates should be followed.
  - b. **Option 2:** If the Committee on Graduate Studies chooses a less formal format, without public notification through the Graduate School Dean's Office, the following procedures apply. The *Request for Final Oral Examination Form* (GSBS Form 40), signed by the Supervising Committee members, should be submitted to the Chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies, who shall indicate approval by signature and transmit the Request to the Graduate School Dean's Office for approval by the Dean.
  - c. A copy of the Abstract and the Vita should be submitted with the request for the candidate's file in their respective department, the Office of the University Registrar, and the Graduate School Dean's Office.
  - d. The Supervising Committee members vote on the candidate's success or failure on the Examination; more than one vote for failure signifies failure on the Final Oral Examination. The Supervising Committee submits the *Report on Final Oral Examination* (GSBS Form 41) to the Committee on Graduate Studies. In the event of a failing performance by the candidate, the Supervising Committee shall also submit to the Committee on Graduate Studies and the Dean a recommendation regarding remedial action or further examinations; in such cases, the Committee on Graduate Studies shall decide upon the recommendation or other action to be taken. In the event of a successful performance by the candidate, the Committee on Graduate Studies shall vote on whether to approve the recommendation by the Supervising Committee for granting of the degree.
6. **Recommendation for granting of the degree:** If the Committee on Graduate Studies approves the favorable recommendation by the Supervising Committee, the Chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies shall so indicate by signature on the *Report on Final Oral Examination* and submit the Report to the Graduate Faculty Council for consideration. The candidate shall submit to the Graduate School Dean's Office the final electronic version of the thesis in ProQuest. The thesis Approval Page signed by the Supervising Professor and Committee members must also be submitted to the Graduate School Dean's Office. When the Report, the Approval Page and the electronic thesis approved in ProQuest have all been received in the Graduate School Dean's Office, the Graduate Faculty Council will consider the recommendation for granting the degree. If the Council does not approve the recommendation, it will refer the matter to the Committee on Graduate Studies with a recommendation for remedial action. If the Council does approve the recommendation, the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences will notify the Office of the University Registrar that the candidate has fulfilled all requirements

for the degree Master of Science. Upon the candidate's certification by the President, the degree is conferred by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System.

### Sequential Procedures Forms

The following forms, required for the sequential procedures described above, are available online at: <http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/main/currentstudents/>.

### Form procedure

- Petition for Admission to Candidacy for M.S. Degree
- Petition for Admission to Candidacy for Ph.D. Degree
- Recommendation for Approval of Dissertation Research Proposal and Supervising Committee (Ph.D.)
- Request for Final Oral Examination (Ph.D. or M.S.)
- Report on Final Oral Examination (M.S.)
- Composition of Supervising Committee (M.S.)
- Report on Final Oral Examination (Ph.D.)
- Survey of Earned Doctorates (Ph.D.)
- Students must complete the *Graduation Application* online in the Student Center via The Portal (<http://inside.uthscsa.edu>).

### Instructions for Preparation and Submission of Electronic Theses, Dissertations, and Dissertation Abstracts

The candidate should obtain these instructions online at [http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/current\\_students/graduation-information](http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/current_students/graduation-information) before writing the thesis or dissertation.