

# PH.D. IN TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

In line with a field of science that emphasizes multi-disciplinary, collaborative research, the doctoral program in Translational Science is offered as a multi-institutional joint degree program. The four UT System universities partnering in this effort are:

Joint Degree Institutions:

- The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
- The University of Texas at San Antonio
- The University of Texas at Austin

Collaborating Institution:

- The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health, San Antonio Regional Campus

This collaboration of four universities to offer a single joint doctoral degree is unique in the UT System. The program is designed to use the existing resources and expertise in specific key areas of each university to offer a strong, diverse, and competitive Translational Science Ph.D. The TS Ph.D. will prepare the next generation of scientists to lead the multi-disciplinary biomedical research teams of the future in increasingly complex research environments. These scientists will advance knowledge in areas across the translational research spectrum ranging from basic discovery, through human investigation, to population based and policy research. While working in depth in their dissertation content areas, TS Ph.D. candidates will all work toward the goal of translating scientific discoveries (whether at the bench or in the community) into strategies that will improve healthcare delivery, patient outcomes, and community health.

## Translational Science Admission Requirements

### Application Due Date

The TS Ph.D. program accepts applications once a year for fall enrollment. Applications are due **November 1** for program entry in the subsequent fall semester.

### Advanced Degree

The TS Ph.D. is a post-Master's program. Applicants must demonstrate at least one of the following: a) completion of an advanced **Professional Degree** (e.g., M.D., D.O., D.D.S., M.S.N., Pharm.D.); b) completion of a **Master's or Doctoral Degree** in a health-related, science, public health or social science discipline; c) enrollment in a doctoral or master's degree program with intent to graduate prior to the semester for which application is being made; or d) enrollment as a M.D./Ph.D. student with successful completion of the two-year preclinical curriculum. For the purpose of program eligibility, advanced degrees must be from an accredited college or university in the United States or proof of a degree at a foreign institution that is equivalent to the specified U.S. degree.

### University Faculty and Staff as Students

Residents or fellows in an approved residency or fellowship program may apply to the TS Ph.D. program as full-time or part-time students, as determined by the residency or fellowship program. Any faculty member (tenured or non-tenured) may pursue an advanced degree in an

institution of The University of Texas System other than the university that employs the faculty member. Non-tenured university faculty may pursue an advanced degree at their university of employment with the written recommendation of his/her department chair and approval of the appropriate Dean and the President. Faculty interested in applying to the TS Ph.D. program are advised to review the guidelines provided in their employment institution's *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)* and talk to their Departmental Chair prior to application. Approved faculty and staff may enroll in coursework only as part-time students and are encouraged to work with their College Dean, Department Chair, and/or Supervisor to determine availability and approval of release time for the completion of the educational and research activities required by the TS Ph.D. program. The amount of course work that can be taken by faculty or staff in a given semester is subject to the 'quantity of work' rules outlined in each university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*. In all cases, minimum Graduate School requirements must be met. Any approved release time should be in accordance with university policy.

### Documentation of Academic Record

For the purpose of evaluating the application, copies of all transcripts are acceptable for inclusion with the application. **If selected for admission, official transcripts will be required from all colleges and universities attended.** Transcripts must be sent from the college/university in a sealed envelope directly to the Registrar's Office at the Health Science Center or the Home institution. Transcripts from foreign colleges/universities must be officially translated into English, if needed, and must also be evaluated, including GPA and equivalent degree, by Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE) or World Education Services, Inc. (WES), which are members of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES - <http://www.naces.org/>). The evaluated transcript should be sent from the credentialing agency in a sealed envelope directly to the Registrar's Office at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio or the Home institution. The applicant should include a copy of the translated and/or evaluated transcripts as part of the application.

### Demonstration of Ability to Participate in an Advanced Academic Program

Official documentation of a satisfactory score for the combined verbal and quantitative portions of the **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)**, or an equivalent, is required. The GRE score will be considered along with the other admission criteria. Scores on GRE tests taken more than five years prior to the date of application are not acceptable. **Applicants are exempt from the GRE requirement if they provide evidence that they have earned a doctoral degree (i.e., M.D., D.O., J.D., D.V.M., Pharm.D., D.D.S., Ph.D., etc.) from an accredited U.S. institution or the equivalent from a foreign institution, as evaluated by either Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE) or World Education Services, Inc. (WES), are currently certified by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), have passed all three steps of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), or were previously enrolled in the Graduate School of one of the joint degree institutions. Consideration for a waiver of the GRE outside of these guidelines will be made on a case-by-case basis.**

### Demonstration of Proficiency in English – Foreign Nationals Only

Official documentation of a satisfactory score on either the **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)** or the **International English Language Testing System (IELTS)** is required for applicants from a country where English is not the native language. A minimum TOEFL score of 600 (paper test), 225 (computer test), or 86 (Internet-based Test),

or a score of 7.0 on the IELTS is required. Scores on tests taken more than two years prior to the date of matriculation are not acceptable.

**TOEFL or IELTS may be waived** for applicants whose post-secondary education was conducted in a country where English is the native language. ECFMG certified physicians will also be granted a waiver. Consideration for a waiver outside of these guidelines will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Personal Statement

Applicants must submit a personal statement (1-3 pages) that describes the applicant's past training and experience, future career goals and objectives, scientific research interest, and how the TS Ph.D. program will prepare them to achieve the stated research interest and career goals. The Personal Statement should include but is not limited to:

- A statement of the applicant's background and purpose for applying to the TS Ph.D. program
- Applicant's interest in and commitment to a translational science career
- Applicant's potential to develop into a successful scientist, as evidenced by research training/experience, prior publications, etc.
- Research interest and its applicability to the TS Ph.D. program
- Identification of a potential Supervising Professor
- Career goals and how the TS Ph.D. program will contribute to their attainment

The personal statement should be submitted/uploaded with the online application.

## Letters of Recommendation

Applicants must provide a recommendation form and a letter of recommendation from at least three (3) faculty or other individuals who are familiar with and can provide information about the applicant's academic, research, and/or professional abilities and performance. Personal references are not recommended. In addition, letters of recommendation should provide an assessment of the applicant's potential to succeed in a doctoral program and develop into an independent research investigator. These letters should be on letterhead and submitted/uploaded with the recommendation form in the online application.

## Curriculum Vitae

A current CV should be submitted with the online application.

## Copy of U.S. Health Professional License/Certificate

If applicable, a copy should be submitted with the online application.

## Translational Science Degree Requirements

A minimum of 72 hours of graduate coursework is required for the translational science doctoral degree candidate. Students must maintain a cumulative, university-specific, and combined TS PhD program 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) for all courses for which letter grades are given for program continuation and completion. The TS Ph.D. program and track structure is summarized in the following figure:

The plans of study and specific courses to be taken by students will vary, depending on the choice of the TS1 or TS2 translational science track, individual student interest, student background/discipline, and program goals.

All translational science doctoral students will be required to take a minimum of:

1. **24 hours of Core Curriculum:** Core courses will provide essential knowledge, skills, and training in the competencies necessary to conduct translational science research. Where courses are offered with similar content within multiple UT components, students may choose the course that meets their individualized needs.
2. **18 hours of Electives:** A **Directed Elective**, Topics in Translational Science, is required for two of the total elective hours and may be used to fulfill either the track or free elective requirement:
  - a. **12 hours of Prescribed Track Electives:** Prescribed track electives will provide additional depth and breadth specific to each student's track. If more than one course meets the requirements, as with the core courses, students will select the course that most effectively meets their educational needs.
  - b. **6 hours of free electives:** Additional elective courses are offered to meet the unique educational needs of individual students to successfully conduct their dissertation research and progress in their career development.
3. **30 hours of research/dissertation:** The TS Ph.D. is a research intensive program of study. For this reason, students are encouraged to become involved in research and may begin taking supervised Research credit hours in the first semester of enrollment, with approval from an advisor, Supervising Professor, or the TS Ph.D. Program Director. Enrollment in dissertation hours will begin after the student has selected a Supervising Professor, developed a research proposal, passed the Qualifying Exam, established a Dissertation Committee, and is admitted to candidacy (upon recommendation by the Dissertation Committee and TS Ph.D. Program Director, and approval by the Graduate Dean). A minimum of 30 hours of combined research and dissertation hours are required for completion of the TS Ph.D. degree, along with other requirements.

## Translational Science Plan of Study Academic Year

The TS Ph.D. program is a joint degree program, and the semester structures of the academic institutions are different from that of the health science center. The Health Science Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences operates under a "super semester" system, with two six-month semesters (July-December is the fall semester and January-June is the spring semester). There is no summer semester at the Health Science Center; however, students may/will enroll in summer courses at one of the other three participating academic institutions. As a result, the summer semester is included in the academic year for the TS Ph.D. program and in the example Plan of Study below. Students should refer to the Graduate Catalog of their Home institution to determine credit hour requirements for full- and part-time students. At the Health Science Center, full-time graduate students are required to complete a minimum of 24 semester credit hours each academic year; part-time students are required to complete a minimum of 12 semester credit hours per academic year.

## Curriculum Sequence

Students may attend the TS Ph.D. program as full- or part-time students.

There is no prescribed sequence of courses for the TS Ph.D. program, and courses may be taken at any of the four universities participating in the joint TS Ph.D. program. Some courses are offered only one time per year and some courses require prerequisites, so full-time students and their academic/graduate advisors or supervising professors must

develop the individualized education plan accordingly to maintain a three-year schedule to graduation as demonstrated below. Although a full-time student could complete the TS Ph.D. program in 3 years, we anticipate that many students will require more time (4-5 years) given the real world challenges of conducting translational research. Because the program design provides for numerous course choices based on research and career goals, only the educational domains are identified in this full-time student example.

#### First Year

##### Fall

Translational Science (Core) 1  
Responsible Conduct (Core) 2  
Research Design-Methods 1 (Core) 2  
Research Design-Biostatistics 1 (Core) 2  
Scientific Communication (Core) 2

##### Spring

Research Design-Methods 2 (Core) 2  
Research Design-Biostatistics 2 (Core) 2  
Leadership & Team Science (Core) 3  
Track Elective 2

##### Summer

Track and/or Free Electives 6

#### Second Year

##### Fall

Business of Translational Science (Core) 3  
Evidence-Based Policy & Implementation (Core) 2  
Track and/or Free Electives 4

#### Credit Hours

1

2

2

2

2

2

2

3

2

6

3

2

4

#### Spring

Cultural Proficiency (Core) 3

Track and/or Free Electives 3

Research 3

#### Summer

Track and/or Free Electives 3

Research 3

#### Third Year

##### Fall

Research/ Dissertation 9

##### Spring

Research/ Dissertation 9

##### Summer

Research/ Dissertation 6

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Total Credit Hours:

72.0

## Translational Science Objectives/Program Outcomes

The goal of the Translational Science Ph.D. Program is to provide an in-depth, rigorous, and individualized multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research education and training program in translational science that will prepare research scientists to integrate information from multiple domains and conduct independent and team-oriented research to improve human and global health. Eight educational domains form the foundation for the TS Ph.D. educational objectives:

- **Translational Science:** Students will articulate what constitutes T1 and T2 translational science and the inter-relationships between the two broad tracks.
- **Responsible Conduct:** Students will be knowledgeable about and be able to apply research ethics and work effectively with regulatory groups within their organization(s).
- **Research Design and Analysis:** Students will formulate research questions and appropriately design experiments and studies to test hypotheses. They will develop specific analytic strategies based on the study design and assure that their studies are adequately powered to test the hypotheses.
- **Team Science and Leadership:** Students will work effectively in and be able to lead interdisciplinary research teams to (a) identify health related problems and (b) design and conduct research to address the problems.
- **Multi-level Cultural Proficiency:** Students will be able to identify the different cultures that exist within and among (a) organizations and (b) communities (locally and globally). In recognizing these differences, students will learn to use cultural competence and work effectively to conduct research investigations in different settings.
- **Communication:** Since communication is a key domain of translational science, students will demonstrate oral and written competency in their ability to communicate research clearly to other translational scientists *via* journal articles and scientific

presentations. They will be able to effectively write abstracts and manuscripts, give oral presentations, and communicate the relevance of their scientific expertise. Beyond the core requirements, students will have access to training in grant writing and be encouraged to develop grant applications for career development (e.g., NIH F- or K-grant series) or other independent funding.

- **Business of Translational Science:** Students will become functionally informed about intellectual property licensing and the processes of developing products, drugs, or devices for human use. They will also learn to function within different legal, regulatory, and economic environments.
- **Evidence Based Implementation and Policy:** Students will be able to independently read and interpret the scientific literature in their content area. They will be able to systematically review a body of scientific literature to apply to policy implementation. They will be able to make data based decisions and inform policy and guideline development.

## Translational Science Program Policies

### Home Institution Designation

Each student in the TS Ph.D. program must declare a Home institution.

The Home institution will be the institution of record for admission, dissertation research, and graduation, and it will be the primary institution for fees, financial aid, student health services, and other student services. Change of a student's Home institution designation will be approved only for exceptional or necessary circumstances. *International students* may not change the Home institution if the change impacts the student's immigration status; however, a change of Home institution will be allowed if no immigration status impact is anticipated and if the transfer is necessary to maintain the student's status in the program. Please refer to the Student Handbook for additional information.

## Registration

### Concurrent Registration

Each semester, students may register and take courses concurrently at more than one of the universities participating in the joint TS Ph.D. degree program. Approval of the student's advisor or supervising professor for course registration is assumed. Registration for courses offered by the UT School of Public Health will require the student to apply and be accepted as a non-degree-seeking (NDS) student.

*International students* are limited to enrollment in no more than two partner universities, including the Home institution, at the same time, and the concurrent enrollment must be equivalent to full-time enrollment at the student's Home institution (24 semester credit hours per academic year at the Health Science Center). International students are also limited to one distance or online class (up to 3 semester-credit-hours) per semester. Concurrent enrollment for international students must be pre-approved by the Designated School Official (DSO) of both institutions before student registration and the census date of both institutions. The student is responsible for informing and providing documentation of the concurrent enrollment to both institutions. Any subsequent changes to the approved concurrent enrollment status must be approved, in advance, by the DSO of both institutions who gave the initial approval. Maintenance of full-time enrollment status will directly impact a student's eligibility for employment, scholarship, or other financial awards.

## Good Standing

A student must be in "good standing" at all institutions. Good standing may include GPA of 3.0 or better, having no unpaid tuition or other institutional debts, having no institutional holds, or any other restriction that would not allow registration. With the exception of specified requirements for all students, good standing is defined by each university. The TS Ph.D. program is a joint degree program. As a result, if a student is identified as not being in good standing at one university, based on the criteria listed above or as defined in the University and/or Graduate Catalog, that status will apply at all the institutions participating in the joint TS Ph.D. program.

## Registration When No Class Is Being Taken

Student status will be maintained each semester at each joint-degree institution. This will be accomplished on each campus according to the procedures of the individual Registrar's Offices. The procedures applied will not activate any coursework-specific tuition and fees but the institution may have the option to assess certain extraneous fees, such as parking, ID badge, etc. attributable to that institution's management or maintenance of certain services provided for all enrolled students. Every effort will be made to keep fees that duplicate services available through the Home institution to a minimum.

## Academic Year

The academic year for the TS Ph.D. program includes the fall, spring, and summer semesters (courses may be taken in the summer semester at one of the participating academic institutions). For the Health Science Center students, the academic year is the fall and spring super semesters (July to December and January to June), plus a trailing summer semester if summer courses are taken at another institution. **Full-time students at the Health Science Center are required to complete at least 24 semester-credit-hours each academic year, in total from all universities, and part-time students are required to complete at least 12 semester-credit-hours each academic year, in total from all universities. Students with another Home institution should refer to the Graduate Catalog of that institution for information about full- and part-time credit-hour requirements.**

## Academic Calendars

Students will comply with the calendar(s) of the institutions in which they are enrolled for the purposes of registration and course schedules. Please refer to the TS Ph.D. website and/or the Graduate School website of the individual universities for specific information about current academic calendars.

## Residency

Each TS Ph.D. student must establish domicile residency status for the purpose of assessing tuition and fees. This status will be determined by the Home institution. Once residency has been established, the residency designation will be the same for the enrollment in any of the universities that are part of the TS Ph.D. program.

## Tuition and Fees - Rates and Payments

TS Ph.D. students will enroll each semester at each university offering the course(s) selected by the student, in advisement of the student's advisor or Supervising Professor and in accordance with the student's individualized degree plan. Rates for in-state and out-of-state student tuition and fees are established by each institution, and payment of tuition and fees will be made to each university based on the number of semester credit hours selected. Please refer to the TS Ph.D. website

for links to current rates for Graduate School tuition and fees at the participating universities. Some non-coursework-specific fees paid to the Home institution may be waived by the other universities, but other non-coursework-specific fees (ID badge, for example) may be charged each semester to maintain the student's status and access to university facilities. Assessment of such fees is dependent on individual university policies. Tuition and fees are subject to adjustment. Students receiving any form of financial aid that is not automatically or fully distributed by the Home institution to cover the payment of all tuition and fees at the other universities are responsible for the payment of those additional tuition and fees.

TS Ph.D. students will follow individual university policies and procedures in regard to payment schedule date, refund dates, late fees, non-payment designation, etc. for each university in which the student is registered.

## Individualized Degree Plan

Prior to the start of the first semester, each student admitted into the TS Ph.D. program will meet with a TS Ph.D. Academic/Graduate Advisor at the Home institution to discuss research and career goals and establish an individual curriculum to meet those goals. In the first year, TS Ph.D. students will complete a Milestones Agreement, delineating an expected timeline for achievement of academic milestones. The individualized curriculum and milestones may be modified as the student's goals mature, subject to review and approval by the Academic/Graduate Advisor and/or Supervising Professor, as long as all course requirements are met.

## Grading, Grade Point Average, and Academic Standing

Existing grading systems will be utilized by each institution. Students will be given letter grades (A, B, C, D, or F), Pass/Fail, Credit/No Credit, +/-, or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, as per the policy of the institution's Graduate School and/or the program or department that offers the course. Students must maintain a cumulative, university-specific, and combined TS Ph.D. program 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) for all classes for which letter grades are given. University/Graduate School policy at each institution must be followed for the courses taken at that institution and course/grade related consequences will be assessed according to the policy of the institution in which classes are taken. The TS Ph.D. program is a joint degree program, and academic standing at one university applies to all the institutions participating in the program. A student who faces academic dismissal from one of the participating universities will face dismissal from the program. Please refer to the Student Handbook for additional guidelines related to grades, GPA, and academic standing.

## Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

The qualifying exam will be administered before the start of dissertation research, and admission to candidacy will be contingent on its successful completion. The qualifying examination should be completed near the end or following the completion of core coursework. It is recommended that the student, at the time of the Written Exam on Course Content, should have completed the bulk (at least 75%) of core course work, including at least one course in each domain. Students must have a cumulative, university-specific, and combined TS Ph.D. program 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) for all classes for which letter grades are given to take the Qualifying Exam.

The qualifying exam will include both written and oral components. The exam will be comprehensive and will include questions and/or assignments covering:

1. Knowledge/Information gained through the translational science coursework; and
2. The basic knowledge required for the chosen area of research.

The purpose of the qualifying exam is to identify students who can apply knowledge gained in coursework to solve problems they may not have seen before; therefore, students should be familiar with both their coursework and the current literature.

The format of the exam and composition of the Dissertation Committee is determined by the TS Committee on Graduate Studies (TS COGS).

Additional criteria may be set by an institution regarding committee structure and approval mechanisms. Students should verify the requirements of the TS Ph.D. program (Student Handbook) and the Home institution's Graduate School (Graduate Catalog of the Home institution).

## Supervising Professor

If not already established at the time of admission into the TS Ph.D. program, students are advised to identify and select a Supervising Professor for the dissertation research as soon as possible. At a minimum, the student must select a Supervising Professor prior to the initiation of the Qualifying Exam. The Supervising Professor will chair all steps of the Qualifying Exam.

## Dissertation Committee

The selection of the Dissertation Committee is required for the Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal components of the Qualifying Exam. See below for additional details about the composition of the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee must be approved by the TS COGS and possibly a Graduate Committee of the student's Home institution, so it is recommended that the selection of the committee members be accomplished in sufficient time to allow for the required approval(s).

## The Qualifying Exam

Every effort will be made to accommodate the individualized nature of the TS Ph.D. program, and scheduling of the qualifying exam will be individualized to promote student progress. The timing of the QE will be determined jointly by the candidate and the Supervising Professor, in collaboration with the Dissertation Committee and the instructors/ graders for the Written Exam on Course Content. If needed and agreed upon, portions of the QE may be tasked to be completed between semesters if all participants are in agreement. Since faculty participants in the QE will come from different institutions, attention must be paid to different academic schedules.

The Supervising Professor will utilize the results of all portions of the qualifying exam as the basis for evaluating the student's performance and will report judgment of performance to the TS COGS and the Home institution, following established policy and procedure. Students must receive an overall grade of "Pass" on each component to be admitted into candidacy.

## Components of the Qualifying Examination

The qualifying exam is composed of two parts: (1) the Written Exam on Course Content and (2) the Dissertation Proposal (written and oral). Please refer to the Student Handbook for requirements, procedures, grading, and other information related to the Qualifying Exam.

1. **Written Exam on Course Content:** The Written Exam on Course Content will test the student's background in translational science based on core didactic coursework. Because the TS Ph.D. student may select from multiple courses for most domains, every effort will be made to include questions specific to the course(s) taken by the student. All efforts will be taken to ensure that all students cover similar content in this portion of the qualifying exam. This will be a take-home exam and a time period will be specified for completion.
2. **Dissertation Proposal:** The Dissertation Proposal will consist of the Written Dissertation Proposal and the Oral Exam on the Dissertation Proposal. The Dissertation Committee, chaired by the Supervising Professor, will be responsible for evaluating and grading these components of the Qualifying Exam.

Students who fail to successfully complete all components of the comprehensive qualifying exam on the second attempt will be dismissed from the TS Ph.D. program. Any student wishing to transfer to a Master's program will be responsible for identifying an appropriate program and making application.

## Composition of the Dissertation Committee

Prior to the submission of the Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal, the student, with the help of the Supervising Professor, will establish a Dissertation Committee. **The Dissertation Committee will have at least four members, but may have additional members if required by the Graduate School of the student's Home institution.** All program-required Dissertation Committee members must be approved as Graduate Faculty for the TS Ph.D. program with the exception of the member from an outside institution. Additionally, if the student's Home institution requires additional representation, Graduate Faculty membership will be dependent on the requirements of the Home institution. Dissertation committee membership will include (at a minimum):

1. Supervising Professor (may be from any of the four participating UT institutions in this joint program and must have a faculty appointment at the student's Home institution)
2. Graduate Faculty from the TS Ph.D. program from the student's home department and/or institution
3. Graduate Faculty from the TS Ph.D. program from a second UT component institution participating in the joint degree program
4. A member from an outside institution who is an expert in the student's dissertation field and does not have a faculty appointment, either full-time or part-time, at any of the four institutions participating in the joint degree program

These are minimum requirements - the student and Supervising Professor must ensure that the Dissertation requirements for both the TS Ph.D. program and the student's Home institution are met. The proposed composition of the Dissertation Committee must be evaluated and approved by the TS COGS, and it is the responsibility of the student and Supervising Professor to present the proposed composition of the Dissertation Committee to the TS COGS for approval. Additional site-specific criteria may be set by the Graduate School of an individual institution, such as approval by a Graduate committee and/or Graduate Dean at the Home institution, in addition to approval by the TS COGS.

## Doctoral Dissertation

Each doctoral candidate must complete an approved body of research and submit and orally defend a dissertation as one of the requirements for graduation. The dissertation must be an original scholarly contribution based on the independent research conducted by the candidate, under the supervision and guidance of the Supervising Professor. A Dissertation Committee will provide additional advisement and assessment. The format of the dissertation will be in compliance with the rules of the student's Home institution.

The student must satisfy the research and dissertation course requirements, with respect to the number of semester credit hours (minimum of 30), number of semesters, and/or continuous enrollment requirements of the Home institution and as required by the student's research schedule and individualized degree plan. Following admission to candidacy, enrollment for the dissertation course will be required during any semester where a student receives supervision by the Dissertation Committee, utilizes assistance from a faculty member, or otherwise uses the resources of any of the UT institutions to further the progress of the dissertation. The format of the dissertation and oral defense must be in compliance with the rules of the student's Home institution. Please refer to the Student Handbook and the Graduate Catalog of the Home institution for additional information about the doctoral dissertation.

## Requirement for Semi-Annual Student Evaluation

Students who have successfully completed the Qualifying Examination and are proceeding with approved dissertation research will be evaluated by the Supervising Professor and Dissertation Committee at least once every six months throughout the remainder of their enrollment in the TS Ph.D. program. The Semi-Annual Progress Report will be submitted in a prescribed format and include a written report of progress on the student's research work, activities related to the research, and proposed direction of future work. Please refer to the Student Handbook for procedures and other information related to the Semi-Annual Student Evaluation.

## Other Program Policies and Requirements

### Release of Information

Because this is a joint degree program, it will be essential that the participating universities are able to share and access relevant and academically pertinent data; therefore, each Home institution designates all other institutions participating in the TS Ph.D. program as having a legitimate educational interest in the relevant educational records of the students who participate in the TS Ph.D. program. All participating institutions will maintain confidentiality of the educational records in accordance with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Accordingly, the sharing of relevant educational records among the participating institutions *will not* require a student release nor violate a student's FERPA rights.

### Student IDs

Students will obtain a Student ID number from each institution prior to first semester enrollment. Thereafter, each institution will activate and/or issue Student IDs according to individual institutional policy. The student ID card/badge must be carried by all registered students and must be presented to campus police upon request. The card/badge also allows access to certain campus facilities. A fee may be assessed for the

processing and creation of the student ID/badge on each campus. Due to the importance of this card/badge and the fact that students in this TS Ph.D. program may have to carry several cards/badges, all students should be encouraged to personally check the authenticity of all cards/badges with the appropriate institutional authority on a regular basis.

## Technology and Technology Support

The TS Ph.D. program encourages students to have a laptop computer or similar electronic device with the capacity to connect to the Internet *via* a wireless connection. Some universities require that laptops or similar devices be authenticated before accessing the campus' wireless computer networks. Please refer to websites or contact the telecommunications/networking departments for each university to determine their requirements prior to the start of classes.

## Student Email

TS Ph.D. students will have an email account on each campus. Some institutions designate the email address, and others allow the student to make a choice. Students are encouraged to provide the TS Ph.D. administrative office with a list of their official email addresses on each campus. Students will be responsible for checking all student-related email addresses on a regular basis.

## Conduct and Discipline

The TS Ph.D. program expects all students to exhibit the highest standards of conduct, honesty, and professionalism. Academic misconduct includes activities that undermine the academic integrity of the institution. The university(ies) may discipline a student for academic misconduct as outlined in the *Catalogs and Handbooks of Operating Procedures* for each of the universities participating in the joint Ph.D. degree program. Academic misconduct may involve human, hard-copy, or electronic resources. Policies of academic misconduct apply to all course-, department-, school-, and university-related activities including conferences and off-campus performances, as well as research work (including lab experiments, data collection and analyses). All cases of academic misconduct must be reported to the Dean of the Graduate School of the student's Home institution, and the seriousness of the violation may be taken into account in assessing a penalty.

Each university maintains policies regarding conduct and discipline for students. If one site is implicated, the policies and practices of the university where the infraction was committed will be followed. If two or more sites are implicated, the most stringent policy, practice or procedure, as determined by the TS COGS and/or the Graduate Dean(s), shall apply. Please refer to the Student Handbook for more detailed information about ethics, professionalism, and conduct.

## Graduation

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is awarded upon satisfactory completion of a minimum of 72 semester credit hours, submission of a dissertation, satisfactory completion of a final oral examination (defense of dissertation), and any other requirements of the TS Ph.D. program and the student's Home institution. Students will apply and be approved for their degree and graduation by their Home institution. The degree awarded is a joint degree with the other degree-granting institutions, and it is awarded on the official graduation date indicated to the University of Texas System and published by the Home institution. Students will attend the graduation ceremony of the Home institution. Please refer to the Student Handbook and Graduate Catalog of the Home institution for graduation requirements.