GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MOLECULAR MEDICINE

(The graduate program in molecular medicine is no longer accepting students and will be closed upon the graduation of all current existing students)

The Graduate Program in Molecular Medicine offers research training in the areas of biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology, with an emphasis on the molecular genetics of disease and development. The curriculum provides a program for those seeking the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

Requirements for Admission

Students beginning graduate study ordinarily matriculate during the fall session. Completed applications including scores on the Graduate Record Examinations Aptitude Test, certified transcripts of all college and/or postgraduate work, a letter from the applicant stating his or her objectives in graduate study, and three letters of recommendation must be received before the stated deadline to be considered for admission the following August, although late applications will be considered if positions are still available. Only in exceptional circumstances will applicants be considered for admission in January. Applicants must possess a Bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree and must have credit for the following courses:

Biology: Two years as required for science majors.
Chemistry: One year of general inorganic and a course in organic chemistry. Analytical and physical chemistry are strongly recommended.
Biochemistry, Molecular Biology or Genetics: One year
(The courses listed above should include laboratory experience.)
Mathematics: A minimum of one semester of calculus.

At the discretion of the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS), any of the admission requirements may be waived. In the event major deficiencies in undergraduate preparation exist, COGS may require that they be rectified within the first year of graduate study.

Administration of the Program in Molecular Medicine

The Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS), which is composed of departmental faculty and chaired by a duly elected member, administers the graduate Program in Molecular Medicine. The COGS is charged with monitoring the academic and research progress of each student as they progress through the program. In this capacity, the COGS work closely with the
student and his/her supervising mentor as well as various supervisory and examination committees during the tenure of the student in the program.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE

Course Requirements for Ph.D. Candidates

Students in Molecular Medicine are required to take a series of requisite core graduate courses. Four of the core courses, Advanced Molecular and Cell Biology, Graduate Colloquium, Modern Methods in Cellular and Molecular Biology and Molecular Medicine, must be taken during the student's first year of graduate study. Elective courses may be taken if desired by the student or at the request of the Dissertation Advisor, the Qualifying Examination Committee, and/or the Dissertation Advisory Committee. Students with credits in equivalent graduate level courses can petition the COGS for a waiver of any of the Curriculum requirements listed below except for Seminar, Research, Thesis and Dissertation. A total of 72 semester hours (including coursework, seminars, teaching and research hours) are required for the Ph.D. degree.

Core Curriculum:

Advanced Molecular and Cellular Biology, 5 hours (MMED 6016) Fall Semester
Graduate Colloquium, 1 hour (MMED 5019) Fall Semester
Modern Methods in Molecular and Cell Biology, 1 hour (MMED 5015) Fall Semester
Molecular Medicine, 3 hours (MMED 5001) Spring Semester
Seminars in Molecular Medicine, 1 hour (MMED 6091)
Ethics in Research, 0.5 hour (INTD 6002)
Supervised Teaching, 3 hours (MMED 6071)
Research, variable hours (MMED 6097)
Thesis, variable hours (MMED 6098)
Dissertation, variable hours (MMED 7099)

Electives:

The student and their faculty mentor will determine the specific optional electives.

Research Requirement During the First Year for Ph.D. Students

During the first year of graduate study, Ph.D. students will be required to participate in research in the laboratories of three different faculty members in the Molecular Medicine
Program (henceforth referred to as the Program). These research requirements will be satisfied by the student's participation in laboratory research in and registering for Research MMED 6097. The Chair of COGS will determine the duration and dates of these rotations. Generally, the first rotation takes place during the entire fall semester, while the second and third rotations take place for 8 weeks each during the spring semester. Each laboratory may accept a maximum of two students per rotation period. A grade of "Unsatisfactory" (U) for 50% or more of semester hours applied to this requirement shall be grounds for dismissal from the Program. Students may do additional laboratory rotations under special circumstances and with the approval of the COGS Chair. In this case, the department is not obligated to cover the stipend for the student past June 1 of the current academic year. Under exceptional circumstances, Ph.D. students may also petition the COGS to waive the laboratory rotation requirement and choose a permanent faculty mentor without completing three laboratory rotations.

New students may discuss their plan for laboratory rotations with the Graduate Advisor before they start each of their rotations. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for the Graduate Advisor to better understand the educational goals of the students, and to provide advice and guidance to those students who have difficulty deciding on a laboratory.

At the end of each laboratory rotation, students will orally report on their research at a meeting of students and faculty organized and conducted by the Examinations Chair. Faculty mentors will complete a written evaluation of the student at the end of each rotation. All rotation evaluations must be complete before the student is allowed to take the Comprehensive Examination.

**Research Requirement During the First Year for M.S. Students**

Prior to beginning the first year, each M.S. student must select a research area of interest and a Supervising Professor. During the fall semester, the student will begin participating in research in the laboratory of the Supervising Professor (Research in Molecular Medicine -MMED 6097). A grade of "Unsatisfactory" (U) for 50% or more of semester hours applied to this requirement shall be grounds for dismissal from the Program. First-year students shall take the required core courses and participate in research in the laboratory of the Supervising Professor.

**Teaching Requirement**

All second-year students are required to register for and receive a grade of "Satisfactory" (S) in Supervised Teaching (MMED 6071). Second-year students who successfully completed Advanced Molecular and Cellular Biology are eligible to serve as teaching assistants in the Advanced Molecular and Cell Biology (MMED 6016), Graduate Colloquium (MMED 5019), and Molecular Medicine (MMED 5001) courses.

**Seminar Requirement**

Graduate students are required to register for Seminar (MMED 6091) and attend all seminars in Molecular Medicine, as well as In-House seminars, first-year rotation reports and other departmental seminars. Students are required to sign in for each seminar, and are required to actually attend seminars, not just sign in and leave. Students missing more than 3 seminars in one semester will receive a grade of "Unsatisfactory" for Seminar (MMED 6091). Excused absences may be granted in special circumstances, provided the COGS chair has been notified in writing of the reason for the absence (and the reason is acceptable).
arrangements may be made for students working in laboratories on the main campus or at GCCRI, once they have passed the Qualifying Exam, been admitted to candidacy and formed their dissertation committee. They will be allowed to miss up to 5 seminars per semester instead of 3, providing their supervising professor certifies that the student is regularly attending an alternative seminar series in their home department. All students second-year and beyond, are required to present at least an annual seminar on their research progress.

**Grade Requirement**

Any student who receives less than a passing grade (B) in any of the core courses may be required to re-take the course and receive a passing grade during the next academic year. In the event of a second failure in the same course, a Special Committee may be formed to determine whether the student is to be dismissed from the Program. Students who receive less than a passing grade in any Core Course may also be required to re-take the course and receive a passing grade before taking the Qualifying Examination. A minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average ("B" average) must be maintained in order to remain in good academic standing. If the cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0, the student shall be placed on academic probation. While on probation, a student must maintain a "B" average in all registered courses and may not drop any courses. If the grade point average drops below 3.0 in any semester during the probationary period or remains below 3.0 for one calendar year, the student will be considered for dismissal from the Program.

**Student Evaluations**

Supervising Professors shall conduct an annual evaluation of each student throughout his/her tenure in the Program. This evaluation will take place after the summer semester of each academic year. Participation in required course work, research, seminars and other Program activities will be considered. A composite "grade" of satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) shall be given by the advisors and reported to the COGS. Failure of a student to show satisfactory progress toward his/her degree goal based on the outcome of these evaluations shall be grounds for dismissal from the Program. The Dean of the Graduate School shall be notified of any student who receives unsatisfactory evaluations in two consecutive periods.

**Milestones Agreement:** To establish the mutual expectations for degree progression, and to monitor and ensure adequate degree progression on a regular basis, the student and the advisor or supervising professor will review and sign the Milestones Agreement for the MMED PhD. This form is available for both full-time and part-time students.

**Compact between Graduate Student and Supervising Professor:** The Compact outlines clearly a set of guidelines in order to promote and support the development of a positive mentoring experience for the student and the supervising professor. Within one month of selecting a supervising professor, the student should discuss the topics outlined on the Compact with the mentor, and agreed-upon commitments should be listed. The Milestones Agreement Form will be attached to the Compact.

**SPECIFIC DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE**

**Procedural Sequence for Students Working Toward the Ph.D. Degree**
Students will follow the Sequence of Procedures as stipulated in the most current Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Catalog. The Graduate Advisor shall serve as the academic advisor for each first-year graduate student. First-year students shall take the required core courses (Advanced Molecular and Cell Biology, Graduate Colloquium, Modern Methods in Molecular and Cell Biology and Molecular Medicine) and participate in research in the laboratories of at least three different Program faculty members. Under exceptional circumstances, Ph.D. students may petition the COGS to waive the laboratory rotation requirement and choose a permanent faculty mentor without completing three laboratory rotations. By June 1 of the first year of graduate study, each student will have selected a research area of interest and a Dissertation Advisor. Students who have not yet passed their Comprehensive Exam at this time are not allowed to choose a laboratory until after they have passed their exam. Individual faculty members may become a Dissertation Advisor to a maximum of two students per academic year. Each student, in consultation with his/her dissertation advisor and/or the advisory committee will select elective courses from the approved list of courses.

**Request for transfer to Masters Program**

Ph.D. students wishing to transfer to the Masters Program in Molecular Medicine must first successfully complete a Masters level Qualifying Examination and then seek written approval from their Supervising Professor and the COGS Chair. The student must also request an approval for change in status from the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

**Vacation Policy**

Although graduate students are, for the purposes of benefits, classified as employees, they do not accrue time for vacation or sick leave. The Graduate School policy states that individual programs set rules regarding time off for students. In the Molecular Medicine Program, students may take off an average of ten working days per year with permission of their Supervising Professor. Students may take off more than two weeks at one time by submitting a written justification, which is subject to approval by the Supervising Professor and the COGS Chair. First-year students (prior to passing the Comprehensive Exam and joining a laboratory) are not eligible for vacation time except in cases of emergency.

**Doctor of Philosophy Examinations**

All Ph.D. students in the Molecular Medicine Program shall be required to pass an oral Comprehensive Examination and a Ph.D. Qualifying Examination with both a written and oral component. An Examinations Chair, who is appointed by the COGS Chair, will organize and administer both examinations, and report the outcome to the student and to the COGS Chair and Graduate Advisor.

**A. Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive preliminary examination shall be given once each year, no later than the first week of June. Except in unusual circumstances, students shall take this examination following completion of their first year in graduate school.

The purpose of this examination is to test the student's working knowledge of the basic concepts of cellular and molecular biology. Questions for the examination are to draw primarily on, but will not be limited to, knowledge gained from first-year graduate courses and molecular medicine seminars. Grading for the Comprehensive Examination will be Pass or Fail. In cases where a student has a deficiency in only one or a few areas, a Conditional Passing grade may
be given. In this case, additional tasks or study may be assigned to the student for remediation. Successful completion of these tasks will allow conversion of the Comprehensive Exam grade to Pass.

Students who receive a failing grade will be granted six weeks to prepare for a retake of the Comprehensive Examination. During this six-week period, the students will not work in a laboratory so that they can devote all their time to preparing for the retake of the Examination. No faculty member other than the Graduate Advisor will serve as the advisor of these students during this period. If the Graduate Advisor is unavailable during this time, another faculty member will be appointed by the COGS chair to serve as the advisor of this category of students. Failing the Comprehensive Examination a second time will constitute grounds for dismissal from the Program.

**B. Choice of Supervising Professor**

Students must notify the COGS Chair and Graduate Advisor of their choice for Supervising Professor no later than three days after completion of the Comprehensive Examination. Under guidance of their Supervising Professor, students will be develop a dissertation research project, and begin their laboratory work in preparation for the Qualifying Examination.

**C. Qualifying Examination**

The Qualifying Examination consists of an oral defense of a written research proposal. The Examinations Chair will provide specific information regarding its format. The topic of the proposal will be the student’s pending dissertation project. The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to test the ability of the student to: (1) develop an original hypothesis, (2) design feasible experiments to test that hypothesis, and (3) orally defend their proposal.

Students are required to submit their written proposals for the Qualifying Examination during the fall semester of their third academic year in the program. The student and mentor will initiate the examination by submitting a form to the Examinations Chair requesting that the examination be scheduled. At this time, the Committee may grant an extension of up to six months if the mentor and student need additional time to gather more preliminary data to support the proposal. The student must complete this requirement by the end of their third year in the program. In cases in which a student has switched labs/changed advisors, they may be granted an additional year to generate preliminary data and formulate their proposal.

A Qualifying Examination Committee for the student will be selected by the Examinations Chair, and shall consist of five members of the Program faculty. The Examinations Chair will also act as the Chair of each Qualifying Examination Committee. The Dissertation Advisor is not allowed to attend the examination. It is the responsibility of the Examinations Chair to distribute copies of the proposal to the members of the Qualifying Examination Committee and to keep the student informed of all subsequent decisions of the Committee regarding the time and place of the Examination.

The Qualifying Examination Committee will review the written proposal and determine whether it is suitable for defense. If the written proposal is deemed indefensible, it will be returned to the student with the written reviews for guidance in rewriting. A maximum of six months of additional time to rewrite the proposal and/or gather additional data will be allowed. The original Qualifying Examination Committee will review the rewritten proposal. Either an oral
defense will be scheduled or the proposal will be returned to the student for further revision and review until the proposal is satisfactory. The time and number of resubmissions allowed for this process will at the discretion of the Examinations Chair.

During the Qualifying Examination, the members of the Committee are free to question the student in depth, covering all aspects of the proposal. Upon completion of the questioning, the Committee will vote to either: (1) pass with no contingencies, (2) pass but with contingencies ("conditional pass") or (3) failure. The final decision shall be determined by a majority vote. The Examinations Chair will inform all parties (the COGS Chair, the Graduate Advisor, the student and mentor) of the decision, and the reasons for that decision, in writing, within 24 hours following the vote.

In the case of failure, a second opportunity to rewrite and orally defend the proposal will be available. This second defense will occur no sooner than six months after the first defense and will be conducted by the original Qualifying Examination Committee. A second failure of the Qualifying Examination shall be considered grounds for dismissal from the Program.

**Admission to Candidacy**

Upon satisfactory completion of all required core courses, Comprehensive and Qualifying Examinations, and with the approval of the Supervising Professor, students may petition the COGS for admission to candidacy. After receiving the approval of COGS, the student is eligible to submit **Form 32**, Petition of Admission to Candidacy to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Once admitted to candidacy, the candidate must register for Dissertation at least twice prior to graduation. The candidate shall remain in residence in the Program and participate in all activities normally required of full-time graduate students until the dissertation is completed and the Final Oral Examination has been conducted.

**The Dissertation and Final Oral Examination**

With the help of the Supervising Professor, students shall choose a Supervising Committee. In practice, this committee could be functioning on an informal basis during the second year of the student's tenure in the Program. Upon passing the Qualifying examination and entering candidacy, the candidate and Supervising Professor shall make recommendations to the COGS regarding the composition of the Supervising Committee.

The Supervising Committee consists of at least five members:

1. The Supervising Professor, who shall act as the chair.
2. At least two members from within the MMED Program graduate faculty.
3. One member from the HSC faculty in a supporting area, but outside of the Program.
4. One member from outside of the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio.

It shall be the responsibility of the Supervising Professor to present the list of committee members to the COGS for its approval. This process should be complete by the beginning of the 4th year of graduate study. The functions of the Supervising Committee are, with the Supervising Professor, to guide the candidate through the dissertation research, to certify to the COGS that the candidate has 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 COGS chair will submit to the Graduate School
Dean’s office, a completed Form 30, Recommendation for Approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal and Supervising Committee. Upon approval by the Dean of the Graduate School, the candidate may register for the dissertation course MMED 7099.

Within one month after approval of the supervising committee, and at regular intervals thereafter, the student shall submit to the Supervising Committee a written report of progress on the dissertation research work, including statements of objectives of the research, methods, major results obtained, conclusions drawn, papers published or submitted for publication, and proposed direction of future work. Each candidate is required to have annual meetings of their dissertation committee after passing the Qualifying Examination (by September 1 of each year). Each student is required to have at least two committee meetings prior to being approved to write the dissertation. The Committee shall evaluate the progress made by the student and endorse both the progress and the direction of future work to be undertaken. The Supervising Professor acts as chair of the Supervising Committee and directs the meetings. The Supervising Professor should follow up each meeting with a detailed memorandum to each member specifying the committee’s decisions, and must inform any member of the Dissertation Committee not in attendance, including the outside member, of all decisions of the Committee regarding progress and future work of the student. It is also essential that the COGS chair and Graduate Advisor receive the reports from the Supervising Committee. In the case of unsatisfactory progress, the Supervising Committee shall discuss the reasons for this decision with the student. Based on this input, the student may present a revised or new proposal to the Supervising Committee. The Supervising Professor, with the advice and consent of the Supervising Committee, shall decide when the student’s progress is sufficient to permit writing the dissertation and conducting the Final Oral Examination. To be eligible for graduation, the student must have made a significant contribution to the peer-reviewed literature. It should be noted that this decision is not up to the student; it must be determined by the Supervising Committee and the Supervising Professor.

The Supervising Committee under the leadership of the Supervising Professor shall conduct the Final Oral Examination. All interested persons may attend. Form 40, Request for Final Oral Examination shall be submitted to the Graduate School for scheduling of the examination. The examination will be preceded by a seminar presentation of the research findings by the candidate. Immediately following the presentation, the members of the audience, exclusive of the Supervising Committee, shall be given the opportunity to ask questions. After these questions have been exhausted, the examination shall continue with the Supervising Committee and the candidate only. Following completion of the examination, the Supervising Committee shall vote on the candidate's performance. More than one negative vote shall constitute failure. In the event of a failing performance, the Supervising Committee shall submit to the COGS chair a recommendation regarding remedial action. In the event of a successful performance, the supervising committee submits Form 43, Report on the Final Oral Examination to the COGS chair for consideration. In the event of a successful performance, the COGS shall vote on whether to approve the recommendation by the Supervising Committee.

**Recommendation for Granting the Degree**

If the COGS approve the recommendation of the Supervising Committee, the COGS Chair shall so indicate by signature on Form 43. Form 43 and the Report to the Graduate Faculty Council is submitted the Graduate Faculty Council for consideration. The candidate will also submit the final electronic copy of the dissertation including the signed Approval page to the Graduate office.
**Time-to-Ph.D. Degree**

It is expected that the Ph.D. degree program should take no longer than six years to complete from the date of matriculation. If a Ph.D. student has not graduated in six years, the COGS Chair will form a special committee independent of the student’s advisory committee to review progress with the student and his/her advisor. The committee’s responsibility will be to either recommend a course of action to expedite completion of the Ph.D. training or to recommend termination of the enrollment of the student in the Program. Students who have been in the Ph.D. degree program for 6 years will no longer be eligible for a stipend. Exceptions to this rule will be considered in the case of health-related issues or other extenuating circumstances and will be decided by a majority vote by the MMED COGS.

**Dismissal of a Student from the Laboratory**

Violent or threatening behavior shall be grounds for immediate dismissal from the laboratory and the program.

Other reasons for dismissal from the laboratory include chronic absences (greater than the 10 day average per year), disruptive behavior, or a failure to progress in the research project. The mentor must document the problems and discuss them with the student, in order to give them the opportunity to address them. Three documents detailing the plan are required before the mentor can dismiss the student. An ad hoc committee should be formed to evaluate the progress of the student if they do not yet have a Dissertation Committee formed (prior to passing the Qualifying Examination). Until this process is complete, the mentor is financially responsible for the student stipend.

Following dismissal from the laboratory, the student is given a specific period of time (2 weeks) to find another laboratory in the program. If the student is unable to find another laboratory to accept them, this constitutes failure to progress in the program and is grounds for a recommendation for dismissal from the program to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the student does find another laboratory during this period, the new mentor assumes financial responsibility for the student.

**Track 2 Student Policies**

A Track 2 student is usually defined as a student who has worked in the mentor’s laboratory as a Research Assistant for at least 1 year and who has shown a high level of commitment to research and a high degree of productivity. In certain circumstances, faculty may petition the COGS to accept a Track 2 student not meeting the above criteria. A Track 2 student may apply to the Molecular Medicine graduate program and be accepted into the program as a permanent member of the mentor’s laboratory. The Track 2 student is not required to perform other laboratory rotations, but must fulfill all other Ph.D. student requirements. If a Track 2 student is struggling academically and/or in the laboratory before his/her Dissertation Committee has been formed, an Ad Hoc committee will be formed to monitor the student’s progress. The Ad Hoc committee will include the mentor and at least 3 other Molecular Medicine faculty members. The student will be asked to give a presentation to the committee presenting the work completed and will repeat these presentations as requested by the committee, mentor or student. The mentor shall document and discuss with the student any problems as well as any goals and the timeline for completion. In the event that a Track 2 student must leave the original laboratory, it will be determined by the Ad Hoc committee (excluding the mentor) whether the Track 2 student will be given the opportunity to seek an
alternate laboratory. If the student is not given the opportunity to continue based on the student’s lack of commitment and low potential for success, the student must withdraw from the program or the student will be immediately recommended for dismissal. If the committee decides that the student should be given a chance to find an alternate laboratory, the student will have up to 2 weeks to find an alternate laboratory willing to have the student rotate (and willing to pay the student’s stipend during the rotation). If the student is unable to find a suitable laboratory, the student will be recommended for dismissal from the program or given the opportunity to withdraw.
COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES (COGS)
Evaluate Membership in the Program Selection of the Preliminary Examination Committee
Approval of Dissertation and Thesis Proposals and Advisory Committees Appointed by the
Chair of the Department of Molecular Medicine.

CHAIR OF COGS
Responsible for Administration of the Program Elected by COGS

GRADUATE ADVISOR
Responsible for Advising First-Year Students Appointed by COGS Chair

EXAMINATIONS CHAIR
Preparation and Administration of Comprehensive and Qualifying Examinations Selection of
Qualifying Examination Committees Appointed by COGS Chair

ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE
Responsible for Selection of Qualified Applicants for Admission into the Program Appointed by
COGS Chair

SUPERVISING COMMITTEES
Members include: Supervising Professor Two members from the Program Faculty One member
from the HSC faculty in the field, but outside the Program One member outside the UTHSCSA
(Ph.D.)

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR
Responsible for Day-to-Day Guidance and Progress of the Research Project
Milestones Agreement

Microbiology, Immunology & Molecular Genetics
Microbiology & Immunology Ph.D. Track Program

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

Academic Advising

Upon entering the M&I Track program, the Program Director, or the Director’s appointee, will serve as Graduate Advisor for all students in the program. Once a student is granted approval for entering the laboratory of a credentialed Graduate Faculty member, advising responsibilities will be shared between the Supervising Professor and the Graduate Advisor.

Academic advising includes the following elements that are designed to ensure that students remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress through the program. Advisors are responsible for the following:

- Ensure that meetings between the student and supervising committee occur each semester allowing review and reporting of student progress to the Executive Committee, and included in the program’s annual doctoral progress report.
- Ensure that required coursework is completed and provide suggestions with regard to elective course selections.
- Periodically review the student’s Plan of Study to determine if the student is making progress consistent with the expectations of the program; and work with the Program Director, the Supervising Professor, and student to determine if modifications are necessary.
- Present a clear timetable to the student for completing course requirements, examinations, and other requirements.
- Provide the student, when necessary, with clarification regarding the requirements for successful completion of dissertation research, the written dissertation, and defense of dissertation.
- Provide the student with assistance in assembling research, qualifying exam and dissertation committees.
- Provide the student with opportunities and information that will optimize the student’s future career success.
Requirements for all Ph.D. Students in the M&I Track Program

(Details of this Milestones agreement may vary from program-to-program)

**Milestone**

- Complete laboratory rotations and select Program and Supervising Professor
- Complete required coursework
- Discuss and complete Student-Mentor Compact and *Milestones Agreement* with Supervising Professor before the end of the Spring semester of Year 1 (review annually)
- Appoint Supervising Committee; approved by Program Executive Committee (DEC)
- Meet with Supervising Committee; evaluation reported to DEC
- Complete required coursework (and each semester thereafter)
- Complete qualifying exam successfully
- Complete advanced elective coursework
- Advance to candidacy by submitting required paperwork.
- Appoint Dissertation Committee; approved by DEC and Graduate Dean by submitting required paperwork
- Submit dissertation proposal with required paperwork for approval by Dissertation Committee, DEC, and Graduate Dean.
- Enroll for required 2 semesters of dissertation credit
- Complete dissertation research; dissertation written and successfully defended, and approved by Dissertation Committee
- Dissertation accepted by Graduate School
- File all paperwork required for graduation
- Submit exit survey to Dr. Blake in Graduate Dean’s Office

**Degree Completion Checklist for Students**

- Maintain active student status by registering for courses every fall and spring semester
- Complete *Milestones Agreement Form* with your advisor no later than the last class day of the spring semester
- Complete all required organized coursework
- Schedule and successfully complete required qualifying exams
- Form your dissertation committee in consultation with your advisor and dissertation Chair
- Have your committee approved by program COGS and Graduate School
- Prepare and successfully present your dissertation proposal
- Apply for Advancement to Candidacy
- Enroll in required dissertation hours and complete your dissertation
- Successfully complete your defense of your dissertation
- Submit required documentation to the Graduate School for completion and graduation

January 17, 2017
I have read this form and have had the opportunity to discuss the information contained in it with my advisor. I understand the academic milestones that I am expected to reach in order to successfully complete the M&I Track program, as well as the expected timeline for completing these milestones.

________________________________________  _______________________
Student’s Signature                          Date

________________________________________  _______________________
Supervising Professor’s Signature            Date

________________________________________  _______________________
Program Director’s Signature                Date
Graduate training entails both formal education in advanced scientific knowledge and theory as well as research training under the supervision of one or more investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. A positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and the supervising professor is a vital component of the student’s preparation for a successful biomedical career.

Individuals who pursue a biomedical graduate degree are expected to take responsibility for their own scientific and professional development. Faculty who advise students are expected to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor, including the provision of scientific training, guidance, instruction in the responsible conduct of research and research ethics, and financial support.

This compact offers a set of guiding principles intended to promote and support the development of a positive mentoring relationship between the graduate student and his/her supervising professor(s). (Ph.D. students only: this compact should also include the completed program-specific individualized Milestone Agreement Form. As mandated by the U.T. System, the individualized Milestone Agreement Form should be in an electronic form consistent with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and provided by the program for the purpose of informing students about the milestones that they are expected to reach to earn a Ph.D.)

Within 4 weeks of formally selecting a supervising professor, students should have discussed with their mentor each of the topics listed on pages 2 – 4 and submitted the form to the COGS chair. To tailor an individualized compact best suited for each student and mentor, specific commitments by both the student and the mentor, detailed processes, additions and specifications should either be added in the space below each topic or in an addendum as deemed appropriate.

With their signature, both the mentor and the students confirm that all topics listed have been discussed and they are committed to uphold the principles agreed upon in this individualized compact. Once approved by COGS, the compact will be placed in the student’s file held in the department’s office.

It is understood that various aspects of the student’s pursuit of their degree can change over time and therefore the compact should be reviewed regularly (at least once a year) and modified as needed. The Milestone Agreement Form is to be updated annually.
DEFINING STUDENT AND MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

January 12, 2017
Manuscripts expected for Graduation (Are there specific expectations for the number of manuscripts (published, submitted and/or in preparation), and the student's authorship position (e.g., first author on these manuscripts, required for the student to graduate?)

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

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

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

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

Time off for Illness or University Holidays – Vacation Policy (HOP 4.3.5; 4.7.14) (What is the laboratory policy for vacations, holidays, and personal days?)
Conflict Resolution and Student Complaint Policies (refer to Student Catalogues; GSBS website)

Additional Topics

Milestone Agreement Form
(insert the approved Milestone Agreement for the student’s program)
SIGNATURES:

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

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

______________________________________________
Student’s Name

______________________________________________
Signature of Student   Date

______________________________________________
Supervising Professor’s Name

______________________________________________
Signature of Supervising Professor   Date

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