

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MICROBIOLOGY

Graduate Student Handbook*

2026 Edition

Department of Microbiology and Immunology Chair and DEO, Dr. Li Wu

Department of Microbiology and Immunology Vice Chair, Dr. Jon Houtman

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Dr. Mary Weber

Department Administrator, Angie Robertson

Graduate Advisory Committee

Dr. Jessica Tucker

Dr. Noah Butler

Dr. Craig Ellermeier

*This handbook has been written and edited by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Advisory Committee for the Graduate Program in Microbiology.

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PREFACE

The University of Iowa General Catalog (<https://registrar.uiowa.edu/general-catalog>) and the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College (<http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/graduate-college-manual>) contain useful information about requirements for advanced degrees at the University. Since regulations and practices vary among departments, this handbook provides specific information about graduate student training in the Graduate Program in Microbiology. The handbook is organized into the following major sections:

- I. The Graduate Program in Microbiology
- II. Detailed Description of Ph.D. Program Activities and Requirements
- III. Ph.D. Thesis Research
- IV. Master of Science (M.S.) Degree
- V. Performance in Teaching
- VI. Facilities, Equipment, and Logistical Matters

There is also an Appendix containing a suggested graduate training timetable and copies of various report forms.

I. THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MICROBIOLOGY

A. Introduction

- 1. Training and Degrees Offered:** The Graduate Program in Microbiology offers research training for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and Master of Science (M.S.). Students are typically admitted for Ph.D. training without the necessity of also writing a MS thesis. However, the M.S. can be a degree objective, a tool for improving writing skills, or a terminal degree for Ph.D. candidates who do not fulfill all of the demands required for the Ph.D. degree. Both degrees require the writing and defending of a thesis on a research topic. The objectives of the Graduate Program in Microbiology are to facilitate the education of students so that they:

- a. gain basic information about microbiology and immunology, and become experts in specific areas of microbiology and immunology,
- b. become technically able to investigate new problems and successfully acquire knowledge about new problems, and
- c. can communicate acquired knowledge to peers in the field.

Specific areas included in the program are: immunology, bacterial genetics and physiology, pathogenic bacteriology, host-microbe interactions, virology, parasitology, and bioinformatics. Several of these areas involve interdisciplinary training within and outside the Department, so that students receive a broad background of information during their course of study.

- 2. Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree:** To achieve the Ph.D. degree, a student must:
 - a. successfully complete the necessary course, rotation, and teaching requirements,
 - b. pass the comprehensive examination,
 - c. demonstrate research ability and write a dissertation,
 - d. present a research seminar before the faculty, and satisfactorily defend the dissertation research before the student's Ph.D. Committee, and
 - e. be a first author on a peer-reviewed research article accepted for publication, article must be accepted prior to scheduling the dissertation defense.
- 3. Student Teaching:** Since students are expected to become qualified in the teaching of microbiological topics, all students will serve as teaching assistants for at least part of two semesters during their graduate training. Students are typically placed in general courses for which all are expected to have academic competence. In some cases students will be assigned to specialized courses for which they have special aptitude and training. Graduate teaching assistant duties range from teaching laboratory sections in general courses, preparing laboratories in advanced courses, grading of examinations, and in special cases, presenting formal lectures. All teaching activities are evaluated and a report/evaluation may be added to the student's file (see page 21 and Form C, page 41).
- 4. Expectations and Performance during the First Year:** As established by the Graduate College and the Graduate Program in Microbiology, all Ph.D. students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 to continue study in the Ph.D. program (see page 9). An average of <3.0 will result in the student being placed on academic probation. If the probation status is not resolved within 6 s.h. the student will be dropped from the Microbiology Ph.D. program. Students that have been dropped may petition for completing a M.S. degree provided they have a mentor to support them.

Note on Departmental Variance: While the Graduate Program in Microbiology requires academic probation to be resolved within 6 s.h. of graded coursework, the standard University of Iowa Graduate College rule (Section IV) grants doctoral students 9 s.h. of graded graduate work to raise their cumulative GPA back to 3.00. Graduate College rules permit departments to establish standards that are more stringent than university-wide requirements.

All first-year students are required to satisfactorily complete three rotations. With prior permission from the DGS, two of these rotations may be in the same laboratory. Students entering with an M.S. degree or in the M.D./Ph.D. program can petition the Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) to do only two rotations. The opportunity to study in a particular laboratory, either as a rotation or as part of a degree research project, is a privilege that needs to be taken seriously. Rotating students are expected to keep regular and reliable schedules, and to be working in the laboratory between classes. Rotation evaluations are made by the mentor and an unsatisfactory rotation report can result in a "U" (unsatisfactory) grade in MICR:7261. Unsatisfactory performance in one or more rotations can lead to dismissal from the program.

- B. Advisory Services for Graduate Students:** The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will help incoming students plan a program of study for the first year, taking into account the student's background and scientific interests. To facilitate this process, it is important that new students arrive on campus at least one week before classes begin to attend an *Orientation Session* and meet with the DGS. The DGS will serve as the student's official advisor until the student selects a Ph.D. advisor. Prior to the *Orientation Session*, incoming students should familiarize themselves with the range of research interests of the departmental faculty. This information is available on the Departmental Website <http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/microbiology>. Students are encouraged to meet and become acquainted with faculty members and their research. This usually takes place by discussion sessions with faculty.

It is also permissible for first year students to be advised by Departmental faculty rather than the DGS. In such cases, the student must inform the DGS of the faculty member providing this service. While the DGS no longer serves as the student's official advisor after the first year, the DGS and the GAC remain the major advisory body throughout the graduate program. All progress and exam reports are monitored by this advisory body.

- C. Financial Assistance:** Financial assistance is available to students in the form of research stipends, tuition, and fees. Graduate students are required to maintain satisfactory performance, as determined by the student's Ph.D. committee and the DGS, to continue receiving financial support. Evaluation of student performance will be based on coursework, research, and teaching.

The Graduate Program in Microbiology limits the length of financial assistance to 5 years. Students must apply to the DGS for extension of this time limit. Students with research stipends are not permitted to work for financial support outside the Department unless they have specifically received such permission from their Research Advisor and their Ph.D. Advisory Committee. Such requests for permission must be made in writing, along with a rationale for the request, to the Advisor and Committee. A copy of the request, and the action taken by the Advisor and Committee, will be placed in the student's file.

- D. Health Insurance:** Health insurance is offered through the University. All incoming students will receive a letter describing this program and the options available. Arrangements for health insurance are made through the University Benefits office, not the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

E. Public Display of Student Information: The Department of Microbiology and Immunology values the accomplishments and contributions of its graduate students and may highlight student research, academic achievements, awards, publications, presentations, and departmental activities through University of Iowa, departmental, and affiliated laboratory websites.

In accordance with University policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the department will not post student information on publicly accessible websites without the student's voluntary consent. Information that may be shared publicly includes:

- Student name
- Photograph
- University email address
- Phone number
- Program or area of study
- Research or laboratory affiliation
- Brief biography or research description
- Information regarding academic, research, or professional accomplishments

Students will be provided with a Student Information Release Form that allows them to specify which information, if any, may be publicly shared by the department and affiliated research laboratories. Completion of this form is entirely voluntary and is not required for participation in the graduate program.

Consent and Revocation

Students may grant or withhold consent for any category of information listed on the release form. Consent may be changed or revoked at any time by submitting a written request to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Upon receiving a request to revoke consent, the department will make reasonable efforts to remove the student's information from department-managed websites and online materials. Students should be aware that information previously released or copied by external parties may not be fully retrievable or removable.

Student-Initiated Disclosures

Graduate students routinely participate in research publications, grant applications, presentations, and other scholarly activities. When students voluntarily provide their own contact information or biographical information for these activities, such disclosures are considered student-initiated and do not require separate departmental consent. However, when the department or a faculty member seeks to disclose student information on the student's behalf outside the normal educational context, appropriate consent will be obtained in accordance with FERPA requirements.

II. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PH.D PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Overview of Requirements for the Ph.D. degree

1. Complete the necessary course, rotation and teaching requirements.
2. Pass the Comprehensive Examination.
3. Demonstrate research ability culminating in:

- a. a written dissertation
- b. a formal seminar on the research
- c. a satisfactory defense of the dissertation before the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee
- d. at least one first author research publication in a peer-reviewed journal

B. Course and Semester Hour Requirements

1. **Rationale for coursework:** Lecture-based courses (didactic) are designed to fill in large bodies of needed information in the student's repertoire. Students entering the graduate program from major colleges and universities with certain degrees (e.g. microbiology, biochemistry, and cell and molecular biology) should require few additional didactic courses in graduate school (see 3, below). Students from small colleges with limited opportunities for advanced courses may be advised to enroll in courses that would normally be taken by University of Iowa undergraduates. It is the goal of the program to help students transition from the undergraduate didactic approach to the Socratic approach in graduate training as soon as possible. Although an encyclopedic background of information can be valuable, success in graduate school and science is largely based on mastery of the scientific method as an essential learning process. Consistent with that philosophy, performance evaluations in a Ph.D. program are based on the preparation and defense of the Comprehensive Examination Proposal and Ph.D. research accomplishments.
2. **Semester hour requirements:**
 - a. Graduation requirement. Graduate students normally register for 15 semester hours of credit each fall and spring semester for the first four semesters but are not required to register during the summer. Students will accumulate additional semester hour credits because of their need to: (a) maintain their enrollment, (b) enroll in required seminar courses, e.g., Graduate Student Research Seminar MICR:7263, and (c) enroll in special courses recommended by the student's Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee. The total semester hour requirement required to graduate is 72 s.h. and includes credits earned in courses, research, seminars, and special topics. Students typically initiate the Comprehensive Examination process before they have accumulated 72s.h.
 - b. Minimum course requirements. A minimum of 12 s.h. of credit in graduate level courses (for which letter grades are given) are required for a Ph.D. Credits received for research (Graduate Research in Microbiology MICR:7261), seminars, undergraduate courses, and courses graded "Unsatisfactory/Satisfactory", do not count toward the minimum requirement. Graduate level courses may be taken at Iowa or elsewhere and accepted toward fulfilling the graduate program requirements. Decisions on whether to accept credits earned at other institutions are made by the Graduate Advisory Committee.
3. **Course Levels:**
 - a. Graduate versus Undergraduate Courses. Graduate level courses are distinguished from undergraduate courses by number. Some classes may contain both graduate and undergraduates enrolled under different course numbers, e.g. MICR:3159 versus MICR:6259. Students enrolled in graduate level courses have additional requirements in the courses, such as discussions of primary literature or the preparation of mini-research proposals. None of the courses included in the undergraduate curriculum fulfill the 12 s.h. For example, a graduate student who has not taken biochemistry as an undergraduate could be required to take Biochemistry and Molecular Biology I and II (BIOC:3120 and BIOC:3130), but these courses *could not* be used to fulfill the 12 s.h. for the graduate program.

- b. Interdisciplinary and Non-Microbiology Courses. A number of Interdisciplinary Training Programs operate on campus and their course listings are given in the University General Catalog. The graduate level course requirements can be fulfilled by taking some graduate level courses in interdisciplinary programs outside the department.
- c. Considerations in Coursework Enrollment. First year students with limited background may need to enroll in a full year of undergraduate biochemistry (BIOC:3120 and BIOC:3130) at The University of Iowa. Students with previous graduate experience may wish to enroll in more advanced courses offered as modular courses during the first and second semester.
- d. Partial List of Courses. Listed below are the major courses available to first- and second-year students.

<u>Graduate Courses in Microbiology</u>	<u>Course No.</u>	<u>s.h.</u>	<u>Semester</u>
Graduate Immunology and Human Disease	MICR:6247	4	Fall
Exp Approaches to Molecular Microbiology	MICR:6255	2	Fall
Introduction to Grant Writing	MICR:6265	2	Fall
Graduate Viruses and Human Disease	MICR:6267	3	Fall
Graduate Bacterial Genetics	MICR:6270	3	Fall
Advanced Topics in Immunology	MICR:7207	3	Fall
Grad Applied Computational Biology	MICR:6282	3	Fall
Topics in Virology Literature	MICR:7265	1	Fall & Spring
Graduate Student Research Seminar	MICR:7263	1	Fall & Spring
Graduate Immunology	MICR:6201	3	Spring
Biology and Pathogenesis of Viruses	MICR:6268	2	Spring
Biology of Bacteria & Interactions with the Host	MICR:6310	2	Spring
Graduate Bacteria and Human Disease	MICR:6259	4	Spring
Graduate Bacterial Physiology and Cell Biology	MICR:6262	3	Spring
Graduate Research in Microbiology	MICR:7261	arr.	All semesters
Scholarly Integrity/RCR I	BMED:7270	na	Fall
Scholarly Integrity/RCR II	BMED:7271	na	Spring

4. **Guidance in Course Selection:** The selection of courses is determined by student interests and recommendations from the DGS, the Ph.D. advisor, and the Ph.D. Thesis Committee. The Comprehensive Examination Committee may also offer guidance, especially if deficiencies in training are noted. The DGS assists first year students in course selection in the week prior to the start of classes.

Sample Curricula for First Year Students

Sample A. Interest in Bacterial Pathogenesis/Physiology/Genetics

Fall Semester

Grad Bacterial Genetics	3 s.h.
Exp Approaches to Mol Micro	2 s.h.
Grad Student Research Seminar	1 s.h.

Grad Research x s.h.

Spring Semester

Grad Bacteria and Human Dis	4 s.h.
Grad Student Research Seminar	1 s.h.
Bio. Bacteria & Inter. w/ Host	2 s.h.
and/or	
Grad Bacterial Phys & Cell Bio	3 s.h.
Grad Research	x s.h.

Sample B. Interest in Virology

Fall Semester

Grad Viruses & Human Disease	3 s.h.
Exp Approaches to Mol Micro	2 s.h.
Grad Immuno & Human Dis (option)	4 s.h.
Grad Student Research Seminar	1 s.h.
Grad Research	x s.h.

Fall Semester

Grad Immunology & Human Dis	4 s.h.
Exp Approaches to Mol Micro	2 s.h.
Grad Student Research Seminar	1 s.h.
Grad Research	x s.h.

Spring Semester

Biol & Pathogenesis of Viruses	2 s.h.
Grad Immunology	3 s.h.
Grad Student Research Seminar	1 s.h.
Grad Research	x s.h.

Sample C. Interest in Immunology

Spring Semester

Grad Immunology	3 s.h.
Grad Student Research Seminar	1 s.h.
Grad Research	x s.h.

- 5. Academic Performance:** All students in the Graduate Program in Microbiology must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. If the GPA falls below 3.0 based on a minimum of at least 6 semester hours of GRADED (A, B, C, D, F) coursework the student will be placed on academic probation. Students have the next six semester hours of GRADED (A, B, C, D, F) coursework to raise their GPA to 3.0 or above. In the meantime, such students will be assigned an unsatisfactory status. Students who fail to raise their GPA to 3.0 may switch to the Master of Science Degree Program (see page 20) provided their GPA is at least 2.8. Students who transition to the M.S. program must immediately consult with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to review their transcript. Because Graduate College rules cap the amount of M.S. research credits (MICR:7261) that can count toward the 30 s.h. degree total at 9 s.h., transitioning students must complete at least 21 s.h. of non-research coursework, which may leave them with an immediate coursework deficit. All records are maintained in the student's file and are available for review by faculty.
- 6. Enrollment/Registration Procedure:** At the beginning of the registration period, ALL graduate students can register on-line after meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss plans for the coming semester. Students will not be able to register/enroll for coursework without prior authorization of the Director of Graduate Studies. Registration can be completed using MyUI on the University Website. In the case of MICR:7261 (Graduate Research in Microbiology), which is the course number used for rotations in the first year and for Ph.D. research later, section numbers are required. Students enrolling in MICR:7261 should use the faculty code of the DGS. After selection of a laboratory, students use the faculty code of their Ph.D. advisor.

The University of Iowa has a drop/add policy that allows students to drop their registration for a particular course and/or add additional courses. These changes require a form that must be signed by the instructors involved and the faculty advisor. For all first-year students, the DGS is the faculty advisor. There is a deadline for dropping or adding courses. These dates are published on the University Calendar.

C. Laboratory Research Rotations

- 1. Rationale for Rotations:** The Ph.D. in Microbiology is a degree given for mastery in conducting scientific research. Research training begins in year one when students spend ~12 weeks conducting research in each of three laboratories. Rotations are the primary mechanism for matching students and faculty mentors for a thesis project that typically takes about 4 years to complete. Rotations are designed to:

- a. facilitate the transition from undergraduate to graduate education.
- b. expose students to the breadth of research in the department.
- c. provide training in specific laboratory techniques.
- d. help students identify mentors, lab environments and research projects that are a good fit for them.
- e. help faculty identify students who are a good fit for their lab.

2. The timetable for the 2024-2025 rotations is as follows:

First Rotation: August 24 – November 13, 2026

Second Rotation: November 16, 2026 – February 12, 2027

Third Rotation: February 15 – May 7, 2027

Thesis advisors are selected the week of May 12th after completion of all rotations.

3. Selection of a Rotation Laboratory

- a. Incoming students can familiarize themselves with the research of various faculty by:
 - consulting the Departmental Website (www.medicine.uiowa.edu/microbiology),
 - personal interviews with faculty members at the time of recruitment or after admission
 - conversations with senior level graduate students in the program.
- b. Students arrange their three rotations during the first year. Following admission to the Microbiology Graduate Program, and prior to arriving at The University of Iowa at the beginning of the academic year, an incoming student may contact faculty members (e.g., by email and/or telephone) to arrange for their first rotation.
- c. When meeting with a professor to discuss the possibility of doing a rotation, students should ask about potential projects and whether that faculty member expects to take a new graduate student in the spring. Conversely, students should expect faculty to ask about the student's interests and research experience. Be prepared to make the most of these important conversations!
- d. Rotations are approximately 12 weeks in length, although extensions may be granted under special circumstances. The reason for this restriction is to allow an orderly exchange of rotation students since few faculty members can accommodate two rotating students at the same time.
- e. Because the overarching goal of rotations is to match each student with a faculty mentor for a thesis project, students should (with rare exceptions) only rotate through laboratories that are likely to accept new graduate students the following Spring. ***Students need to ask this important question during their discussion with potential rotation mentors.*** Under special circumstances, a rotation may be done primarily with the goal of learning about a discipline without further training aspiration.
- f. Placement of students into laboratories for pursuit of a Ph.D. or M.S. degree involves a matching process that takes several factors into account. First and foremost is the interest of the student. But faculty interests and resources are important too. The willingness of a faculty member to serve as the student's mentor will depend in part on the student's performance during their rotations. The Rotation Report (Form A, page 31) allows the faculty member to officially indicate their willingness to accept a student. It is essential that students make every effort to demonstrate curiosity, drive and aptitude during their rotations, especially in the case of popular laboratories that might have three rotators but resources to support only one new student at the end of the year. Other important considerations include the student's performance in didactic courses, whether those courses are well-aligned with the focus of the laboratory, and whether the mentor has funds, bench space and time to support and mentor a new student trainee. [Note that during year one student stipends are

paid by the institution, but when students join a laboratory for a thesis project the faculty mentor assumes this cost, in addition to the cost of supplies for the research project.]

- g. With permission of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), students may rotate in the same lab twice. The DGS will consider whether any other students are hoping to rotate in or join that lab and whether getting an early start on the thesis project outweighs the potential educational benefit of rotating in a different laboratory. Second rotations in the same lab will generally only be allowed in the Spring rotation period.

4. Rotation Evaluation

- a. Since the Ph.D. program in Microbiology is a research degree, student performance during rotations is perhaps the most reliable indicator/predictor of a student's potential. For this reason, rotations are evaluated by the research mentor in a serious manner.
- b. At the conclusion of each rotation, Form A (page 31) is to be completed and sent to the DGS, who reviews the evaluation and places it in the student's file. ***The mentor is required to review the evaluation with the student during an exit interview.***
- c. An important aspect of the evaluation is whether the mentor would accept the rotating student as a graduate student. Be advised that any such ***"acceptance" at this stage is hypothetical*** in so far as there will still be unknowns, such changes in funding and the interests of other students who might rotate in that lab in the future. Nevertheless, it is useful for students to know at the end of their rotation whether they are in the running to join that laboratory. Note that students can also express an interest in joining a laboratory without that being a commitment. For example, a student might like their first rotation only to discover they like their second rotation even more.
- d. The student's performance on rotations will be noted by the DGS. A letter will be filed and sent to the student in cases where major problems (deficiencies) are indicated. This information is available only to the faculty and, of course, the student.

- 5. **Matriculation into a Lab for Dissertation Research.** Neither students nor faculty members are allowed to divulge their choices until after completion of all three rotations. Students will rank their choice of lab while faculty will rank their choice of student, usually based on their rotation experience. Not every student or faculty member will get their first priority. Disputed issues will be resolved by the Department Chair and the GAC.

If after three rotations a student is unable to find a mentor, he/she can petition the GAC for the opportunity to do a fourth rotation. To petition, the student must have identified a mentor for the fourth rotation, and this mentor must be willing to accept the student if the rotation is judged satisfactory. The fourth rotation would typically be done immediately following the third rotation.

Students will be allowed a maximum of four rotations. If a student cannot find a mentor who will support them after four rotations, he/she may still petition the GAC to switch to a M.S. program, again with the provision that a mentor is available to accept and support them. **Students unable to find a laboratory that will accept them will be terminated from both the Ph.D. and M.S. degree programs.**

D. Seminars, Journal Clubs, and Lab Research Meetings

- 1. **Seminars:** Regular seminar programs are offered in Microbiology on a weekly basis. **All graduate students and faculty are expected to attend.**

Attendance of all students is required in Graduate Student Research Seminar (MICR:7263)

and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology weekly seminar. Each week during the Fall and Spring semesters, a graduate student will present his/her research to other Microbiology graduate students in MICR:7263. ALL students enrolled in the Microbiology Ph.D. program MUST attend the seminars presented by individual students in the Program when such a student defends his/her thesis research.

Various subdisciplines have their own seminar programs that may be relevant to Microbiology. These include the Immunology Seminar Program, Genetics Seminar Program, Biology Seminar Program, Bacterial Interest Group Meeting, ID Faculty and Fellows Conference, and Anatomy and Cell Biology Seminar Program. There are also many other seminars offered through the College of Medicine, e.g., Pathology Seminar and Biochemistry Seminar, as well as programs in other colleges of the University, e.g., Chemistry Colloquium. When relevant issues are involved, students are encouraged to attend seminars outside their own department.

2. **Journal Clubs:** Various discipline-related journal clubs meet regularly. All graduate students are encouraged to affiliate themselves with a journal club and to become a regular participant.
3. **Lab Research Meetings:** Most laboratories have a weekly lab research meeting.

E. Faculty Committees for Training Graduate Students

1. **Mentor:** Upon matriculation into the lab of a Microbiology and Immunology Faculty member (primary or secondary), the Principal Investigator of that lab becomes the students Ph.D. Advisor.
2. **Role of the Ph.D. Advisor:** The Ph.D. Advisor will be responsible for the day-to-day advice and guidance in the technical and intellectual aspects of the scholarly pursuit of the Ph.D. degree. The Advisor will play the major role in directing the student's Ph.D. research. Important input is also provided by the entire Ph.D. Committee.
3. **Composition of the Ph.D. Committee:** The Ph.D. Advisor and the student will select a Ph.D. Committee (also referred to as the Thesis Committee) prior to completion of the third semester of graduate study. The Ph.D. Advisor will serve as the Chair of the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee.

The Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee may be composed of **either four or five** members of the graduate faculty at The University of Iowa (four is the minimum required by the Graduate College). In either case, at least three members of the committee must hold primary or secondary appointments in Microbiology and Immunology (with the requirement that one member must be outside the student's subdiscipline). There is no requirement for an external member.

Departments may request the graduate dean's permission to replace one of the four members by a recognized scholar of professorial rank from another academic institution. Upon recommendation by the DGS, the graduate dean may also appoint additional qualified persons (not necessarily of the graduate faculty; see "optional member" on Form B, page 32) to serve as voting members of the Ph.D. Committee. In all cases where a potential member is from outside UI, the committee chair must first request and receive permission from the graduate college dean to include that person on the thesis committee.

- 4. Role of the Ph.D. Committee:** The Ph.D. Committee is the source of intellectual and research guidance for students. The Committee functions are to:
- annually review student's progress in research and overall performance,
 - review the Annual Progress Report/Individual Development Plan (APR/IDP)
 - meet for additional special sessions to review the student's progress,
 - make recommendations to the Department Chair regarding the means and basis for continuance of the student's stipend,
 - assist in the guidance and technical aspects of the student's research
 - judge the merit of the dissertation, final research seminar, final oral defense of the thesis research, and the overall fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree.
- 5. Composition of the Comprehensive Examination Committee:** The Comprehensive Examination Committee will consist of the Ph.D. Committee but with the Ph.D. Advisor replaced by another faculty member. The Ph.D. Advisor shall not be present for either discussions of the Specific Aims page or for the examination itself.
- 6. Role of the Comprehensive Examination Committee Chair:** The Chair for the Comprehensive Exam Committee will be selected from the ranks of the Comprehensive Exam Committee. Except under special circumstances, faculty members who are neither primary nor secondary faculty of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology *should not* be asked to become the Comprehensive Exam Chair. The Chair for the Comprehensive Exam Committee must then notify the departmental administration and the DGS of the committee make-up and of the designated Comprehensive Exam Chair. All subsequent correspondence regarding the Comprehensive Exam will be with this Chair.

The Comprehensive Exam Chair (hereafter called Chair) will receive the student's Specific Aims page and assure that it is distributed to the other two faculty members. Thereafter a decision should be made among the three regular committee members regarding selection of a fourth committee member. Since selection of the fourth member (or additional members) may depend on the nature of the proposal, the regular members need to review the Specific Aims page prior to selecting the fourth member. *Three-fifths of the committee must be Departmental members (primary or secondary appointees).*

In addition, the Chair will organize the activities of the Committee and assure that the appropriate collegiate documentation is completed and filed with the Department and Graduate College prior to the examination. **The Chair will notify the Departmental Administrative Associate concerning the time/date of the exam.** The Chair should keep the Ph.D. Advisor apprised of the student's progress at each stage of the examination process and upon its conclusion. After a positive committee decision has been made and the Report on Doctoral Comprehensive Examination has been signed and returned to the departmental office, the role of the Chair is complete.

- 7. Mandatory Annual Meeting:** Students are required to meet with the Ph.D. Committee at least once per year and file an Annual Progress Report/Individual Development Plan (APR/IDP) (Form B, page 32-38). The student is responsible for arranging the date, time, and location of the meeting, and notifying the committee members. One week prior to the meeting, students must provide each Ph.D. committee member with a copy of the APR/IDP with sections 1-3 completed (see below). Students typically make an oral presentation and the Committee provides comments and suggestions. Although it is recommended that the entire Committee meet, business can be conducted with a quorum. For a five-member

committee, business can be conducted with four members present as long as the fifth or additional members are polled to vote on critical decisions. For a four-member committee, business can be conducted with three members present as long as the fourth member is polled to vote on critical decisions.

The purpose of these meetings is both advisory and judgmental. The **advisory function** includes suggestions from committee members regarding experimental procedures or alternative directions for the research. Collegial sharing of ideas, techniques, lab equipment, and time is encouraged. The **judgmental role** of the Committee involves determining whether the student's research is proceeding on schedule. If the research is not progressing towards a publication, the Committee must decide whether the student's performance is inadequate or whether the experimental design or procedures used are inadequate. Decisions and evaluations by the Committee must be distilled by the Ph.D. Advisor in section 4 of the **APR/IDP** (Form B) and communicated to the student.

First year students typically do not schedule a meeting in year 1.

Second year students schedule a Comprehensive Examination Committee meeting Early January of the second year. The first Ph.D. committee meeting will typically occur in the fall semester of year 3.

Third year students and beyond are required to schedule annual meetings at least once every 12 months.

Although only one annual meeting is officially required, students nearing the end of their study may require 2-3 meetings/year with their Ph.D. Committee. Historically, students with infrequent Committee meetings have a protracted tenure.

Students are not allowed to provide food or beverages at committee meetings, comprehensive examinations, and thesis defenses.

8. Annual Progress Report/Individual Development Plan (APR/IDP). An APR/IDP (Form B) must be completed at least once every 12 months for students entering year 2 and beyond. The APR/IDP consists of four sections:

- a. Student progress towards fulfilling general graduation requirements (to be completed by the student)
- b. Student self-assessment of skills (to be completed by the student)
- c. Student research progress and development (to be completed by the student and Ph.D. advisor)
- d. Ph.D. Committee evaluation of student Progress (to be completed by the Ph.D. advisor and Ph.D. committee.)

Reprints of manuscripts may also be provided as evidence of progress.

An updated APR/IDP is required at least every 12 months until completion of the Ph.D. defense. The Ph.D. Advisor is responsible for submitting a completed copy of the APR/IDP to the DGS after each Ph.D. committee meeting. The APR/IDP will be placed in the student's file. This is very important in cases of grievances or any other situations in which a "paper trail" is valuable.



Students who fail to complete an APR/IDP updated within the past 12 months and signed by each Ph.D. committee member *will have an administrative registration hold placed on their university account, preventing them from registering for classes or research credits (MICR:7261) in subsequent semesters until the requirement is satisfied. Failure to comply can also jeopardize the student's stipend and opportunity to remain in the program.*

9. **Role of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):** The DGS will coordinate the yearly assessments of student's progress and submit a Plan of Study for second year students following completion of the comprehensive examination. The DGS will receive all APR/IDPs and monitor Ph.D. Committee activity through evaluation of the written report. Students who are delinquent in fulfilling scheduled demands must petition the DGS for an extension. The DGS will receive all student requests for extensions and waivers and bring the written requests to the attention of the GAC for action.

F. The Comprehensive Examination Protocol

1. **The Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination:** Since the Ph.D. is a research degree, the major objective of the graduate program is to train students in application of the scientific method to solve scientific problems. A student's ability to apply the scientific method involves preparation of and defending a research proposal and is evaluated the Comprehensive Examination Committee. The format of this proposal follows the guidelines of an NIH R21-style proposal.
2. **Timetable for Completing the Exam:** Students may take the Comprehensive Examination as they approach the accumulation of 72 s.h., but no later than the second semester of the second year. The timetable for completion of the Comprehensive Examination is outlined below. **Failure to meet this deadline will constitute an initial failure of the Comprehensive Exam (see below).** Requests for extensions must be made by the student to the DGS. Decisions concerning extensions will be made by the DGS in consultation with the GAC and the Chair of the Department.
3. **The Comprehensive Examination Process:** The process involves the following steps and timetable:

Step I. Summer/Fall

Ph.D. Advisor and the student select a Ph.D. Committee by October 1st.

Ph.D. Advisor and/or student identify 4-6 papers that the student would benefit from reading carefully, most likely because these papers are related to the student's thesis project, although that is not a requirement. The student will read the papers and use them to develop a research proposal that is distinct from the student's actual thesis project. **Mentor involvement in the process is limited to selection of the 4-6 papers and no further communication/discussions pertaining to the Comprehensive Examination should occur between the student and the mentor.**

Step II. January 1-20

Student schedules and meets with PhD Committee. One week in advance of the meeting the student should provide each committee member with the 4-6 papers that will serve as the general topic of the comprehensive exam

Meeting Objectives

- Student summarizes progress to date on PhD research and future goals.
- PI is dismissed from the meeting.
- Student briefly presents proposed topic for the comprehensive exam.
- Committee decides whether the proposed topic is acceptable and sufficiently distinct from the student's dissertation project.
- Committee selects Chair for the Comprehensive Exam Committee.
- Committee may identify a faculty member to replace the PhD mentor on the Comprehensive Exam Committee or defer that decision pending review of the Specific Aims page.

Step III. One month following the date of the PhD committee meeting (**February 1-20**) Student submits Specific Aims page to Comprehensive Exam Committee Chair, who will distribute it to the exam committee members.

Step IV. Within 2 weeks of receiving the Specific Aims page, the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will provide the student with written comments from the committee and one of three potential outcomes:

- a. Student is approved to write the Comprehensive Exam Proposal
- b. Student is requested to submit a revised Specific Aims page to the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee within two weeks. The revision is to be based on the written comments from the exam committee*
- c. Student is asked to schedule a meeting to discuss the Specific Aims page and is requested to submit a revised Specific Aims page to the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee within two weeks of the meeting date. The revision is to be based on both the written and oral comments of the exam committee*

* for outcomes b and c the process returns to Step IV. A Specific Aims page that is deemed unsatisfactory a second time constitutes a failure of the first attempt.

Upon approval of the Specific Aims page the student schedules a meeting for the Comprehensive Examination Defense, ~7 weeks from the Specific Aims page approval date

Step V. Student submits Comprehensive Exam Proposal to the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee within 5 weeks of the Specific Aims page approval date

Step VI. Student defends the Comprehensive Exam Proposal ~2 weeks after submission of the proposal. Following a successful defense of the proposal, a Comprehensive Examination Report will be filed with the Graduate College.

- 4. Specific Aims Page Preparation and Submission:** A Specific Aims page for the proposed research will be prepared by the student and submitted to the Comprehensive Exam Chair on or before the first day of the Spring semester (fourth semester in the program) (Figure 1, page 19). ***It is vitally important that the student demonstrates independence during the preparation of the Specific Aims page. After the general topic of the proposal has been selected the student shall have no further discussions with the PhD Advisor about the exam.*** Careful reading and thoughtful preparation by the student will facilitate the Committee's review of the proposal. The following Specific Aims page guidelines should be followed:

- i. Should not be more than 1 single-spaced page, including tables and figures but excluding citations.
- ii. Should use Arial font size of 11 with 0.5" margins.
- iii. Should summarize the research problem, state a hypothesis, state the aims, and summarize the impact on the field should the aims be completed as envisioned.
- iv. Failure to follow these guidelines can in itself result in rejection of the abstract.

5. Preparation of the Comprehensive Examination Proposal

a. General Guidelines

- i. The font and margin sizes should be as for the abstract. Citation lists can be extra.
- ii. The proposal must be entirely written in the student's words and all sources of information acknowledged. The problem and the proposed solution must represent original thought by the student. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.
- iii. The student should apply information from courses, seminars, journal articles and research experience to compose a technical solution to the research problem of the proposal.
- iv. The student may consult faculty about methods and other technical information, but not regarding hypotheses or experimental design. *Under no circumstances is a student to give his/her proposal to any faculty member for evaluation or proofreading.*
- v. Students are encouraged to use peer groups for advice, proofreading, and service on mock comps defenses. Only trainees (i.e., fellow graduate students and post-docs) may serve in that capacity. Associate Faculty members, Research Scientists, and Research Associates are not considered trainees and cannot serve as a member of the peer group.

- b. Scope of the Student Proposal:** Students are often uncertain of how ambitious to make their proposals, and proposals have varied in the amount of research proposed from one well-controlled experiment to projects that would keep a medium-sized lab busy for ten years. The first approach is much too narrow and does not require the student to understand and apply multiple approaches and techniques. The second approach is too broad and results in a written proposal that is necessarily short of detail. **You should propose a project that would keep two well-trained, full-time investigators busy for about two years. Such a project would probably produce two to three publications.**

c. Composition of the Student Proposal

The submitted proposal should consist of 7 pages + references in the style of an NIH R21 grant. Examples of funded R21 applications can be found at the NIH website: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/sample-applications#r21>

Page 1 is the Specific Aims page that was approved by the committee. Some minor editing of the Specific Aims page is to be expected because plans are apt to change when you expand your ideas into a full-length proposal. However, significant deviations from the approved Specific Aims page, such as changing the scope of the aims, should be discussed with Chair of the Comprehensive Examination Committee and may not be allowed. It is especially important to talk to the Chair if you discover that the plans you outlined in your Specific Aims page will not work as intended.

Pages 2-7 are the research proposal and should consist of the following sections (adapted from NIH descriptions).

- i. **Background.** The scientific premise is the knowledge upon which you are basing your hypothesis and aims. In a philosophical context, a premise is assumed to be true for the purpose of an argument upon which a conclusion is drawn. In science, however, the validity and accuracy of previous findings cannot necessarily be assumed as true. Instead, you are expected to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence you are using as the basis (or premise) of your proposed research. In other words, make it clear that you considered the strengths and weaknesses of the existing literature and/or your own unpublished data when developing your hypothesis.
 - ii. **Significance.** The Significance section should include information that describes *why* your research question(s) is important and the positive benefits of your planned research. Emphasize the importance of the question being asked as it relates to health or new knowledge. The Significance section must clearly convey what is currently known, what remains to be discovered, and who will benefit from that discovery.
 - iii. **Innovation.** Describes how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
 - iv. **Approach.** Describes the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses in a well-reasoned and appropriate manner to accomplish the Specific Aims. The approach may contain preliminary data to support the premise or establish feasibility. The approach section should also identify potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success.
- d. **Protocol for the Proposal Defense.** The proposal defense meeting usually starts with a short closed-door review of the student's academic and research history. The student is then invited into the room and will present the proposal starting with background, significance, rationale, and a detailed description of the specific aims, most likely making use of PowerPoint slides. The examination will continue with questions on the proposal and global issues that test the student's general knowledge of microbiology. It is not unusual for the examination to end prior to the student completing the entire presentation of the aims. The meeting ends in a closed-door session for an examination committee discussion of the qualities of the proposal, the defense of the proposal, and an analysis of the breadth and depth of knowledge of microbiology. This discussion culminates in a committee vote.
- e. **Outcomes of the Comprehensive Examination. Outcomes of the Comprehensive Examination.** There are only three allowable outcomes of a comprehensive examination: Satisfactory, Reservation, or Unsatisfactory. Only one of these outcomes is to be used when describing the outcome of an examination. Hybrid outcomes such as 'Pass with Reservation' or 'Satisfactory with Reservation' are misleading and unacceptable.

Voting and Attendance Rules: In accordance with Graduate College rules, an examination is considered passed when at least 2/3rds (66%) of the entire appointed committee evaluates the student's performance as satisfactory. Because this 2/3rds passing majority is calculated based on the total size of the appointed committee (not just those present), any committee member who is absent (unable to attend) is mathematically equivalent to a negative vote. Depending on the chosen size of the student's committee, the official Graduate College voting thresholds are applied as follows:

- **For a 5-Member Committee:** To pass with a 'Satisfactory' outcome, the student must receive at least 4 positive (Satisfactory) votes. The student can still pass with exactly 1

negative (Unsatisfactory) vote OR 1 absent member. If 1 member is absent, all 4 remaining members must vote positive. A total of 2 or more negative votes results in an Unsatisfactory outcome. A total of 2 or more Reservation votes results in a Reservation outcome.

- **For a 4-Member Committee:** To pass with a 'Satisfactory' outcome, the student must receive at least 3 positive (Satisfactory) votes. The student can still pass with exactly 1 negative (Unsatisfactory) vote OR 1 absent member. If 1 member is absent, all 3 remaining members must vote positive. A total of 2 or more negative votes results in an Unsatisfactory outcome. A total of 2 or more Reservation votes results in a Reservation outcome

Satisfactory. The student has passed the exam and continues with research to satisfy the dissertation requirement of the Ph.D. degree.

Reservation. The Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulation outlines the criteria for allocating a Reservation status following a comprehensive exam. A vote of "Reservations" should only be used when a faculty member feels that the deficiencies displayed by the student were modest and can be readily rectified. In the event of a report with two or more votes of "Reservations," the Committee with specify in the examination report form what actions the student must take to correct any deficiencies and how much time the student has to do so. This report will be submitted to the student, the thesis advisor, the Department Head, and the Graduate College. The language describing the actions must be specific. For instance, if additional course work is required, a list of suitable courses must be presented. If the candidate needs to rewrite his or her research prospectus, the deficient areas must be identified, etc. If the candidate satisfies the required actions in the specified period of time, the appropriate departmental executive will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating the date for which the examining committee considers the actions to have been satisfied. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as "Satisfactory" as of that date. If the student does not complete the assigned task on time, or if the work is not of sufficient quality, the appropriate departmental executive will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating that fact. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as "Unsatisfactory" as of that date. The candidate will not be admitted to the final oral examination of the dissertation until a grade of "Satisfactory" has been recorded for the comprehensive exam.

When the outcome is a Reservation the following verbiage should be included in the letter to the student: "To be clear, a Reservation is neither a Satisfactory nor an Unsatisfactory performance. Rather, it is an opportunity for you to correct the deficiencies noted by the Examination Committee (outlined below) during the comprehensive examination. A decision will then be made by the committee as to whether the reservation is to be removed and whether the outcome of the comprehensive examination is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory"

Unsatisfactory. Depending on committee size, two or more negative/unsatisfactory votes (or a combination of negative votes and absent members that prevents the student from reaching the 2/3rds passing threshold) on the initial proposal or upon evaluation of a revision will render the overall Committee report unsatisfactory. Both constitute a failure. In the latter case, it would mean the "reservation" had not been satisfied. Both constitute a failure. The Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College specify that the student may be allowed re-examination, but this re-examination is entirely at the discretion

of the Comprehensive Examination Committee. If the Committee decides not to permit re-examination, the student will be terminated from the Ph.D. Program. If the Committee decides to re-examine the student, this examination may not be scheduled prior to 4 months, and no later than 6 months, after the initial examination. This is usually a re-examination of the same proposal although the Committee can recommend that an entirely new proposal be written and defended. In cases of re-examination, the student has one more chance to successfully pass the exam. If re-examination occurs, failure on this attempt under options c or d (above) will require the Committee to specify that the student switch to a master's degree program or be dismissed from the graduate program. Note: Failure on the first attempt does not allow faculty to propose pursuance of an M.S. degree. This choice is up to the student, not the faculty. If the second attempt also results in failure, the student must either leave the program or make an application to the DGS to enter the M.S. program (see page 20).

G. External Grant and Fellowship Submissions

The program strongly encourages all students to pursue and submit applications for external grants and fellowships to support their research and professional development.

General Guidelines & Resources

- Official Procedures: Students should familiarize themselves with the fellowship application guidelines provided by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS): <https://ogps.medicine.uiowa.edu/getting-fellowship>.
- Institutional Submission: All grant and fellowship proposals must be submitted through the home department of the student's faculty advisor.

Student Responsibilities

- Early Coordination: Students are responsible for initiating contact with their faculty advisor and the advisor's home department well in advance of the sponsor's deadline.
- Timeline Management: All proposal materials—including budgets, budget justifications, and required compliance documentation—must be completed and submitted in accordance with the home department's internal deadlines, which are often earlier than the sponsor's final deadline.
- Points of Contact: Any questions regarding submission procedures, budget requirements, or internal routing should be directed to your faculty advisor or the administrative staff within the advisor's home department.

III. PH.D. THESIS RESEARCH

- A. General:** The Graduate Training Timetable (page 28) indicates that following the first four semesters of graduate school, nearly all of the remaining time in the program is spent doing laboratory research. In other words, following the successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam, the Ph.D. Candidate is expected to devote >90% of his/her time to completion of his/her Ph.D. research. Ph.D. research is credited by enrollment in MICR:7261 and by using the section identification code of the Advisor. The minimum number of semester hour (s.h.) credits required for the Ph.D. is 72. The student's research is evaluated on a day-to-day basis by his/her Advisor (mentor) and on a regular basis by the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee. Many Committees meet twice yearly although the mandatory requirement is once per year. As indicated above, an APR/IDP is filed as a direct result of the required meeting.

The length of time that a student remains in the program depends on the rate of progress made

by the student. The current average tenure of a graduate student is approximately 5 years.

The written Ph.D. thesis must meet certain standards established by the Graduate College. The final thesis will contain numerous chapters, some of which may also have been published in peer-reviewed journals during the student's tenure as a graduate student.

- B. Regular Checkpoints on Student Progress:** The Ph.D. Committee will review the student's intellectual and research progress. The Committee will make certain that the highest level of ethical conduct is demonstrated at all times during the course of study. The student will submit APR/IDP to each member of the Ph.D. Committee and DGS, and to the departmental office. The one exception to this will be the year in which the student is taking the Comprehensive Exam. Reports in years 3, 4 and 5 may contain excerpts from manuscripts and posters. Reprints of manuscripts may be provided as evidence of progress. Following submission, a meeting of the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee is convened.

Only one APR/IDP is officially required per year, but students nearing the end of their study typically require 2-4 meetings/year with their Ph.D. Thesis Committee. Historically, students whose Committee seldom meets also have a protracted tenure. **The Student/Ph.D. Advisor is responsible for submitting an APR/IDP after each Ph.D. committee meeting.** APR/IDPs are placed in the student's file. This is very important in cases of grievances or any other situations in which a "paper trail" is valuable.

- C. Ph.D. Dissertation Preparation and Defense:** To be awarded the Ph.D. degree, a candidate must satisfactorily write a scientific documentation of the research conducted and defend the work before the respective Ph.D. Thesis Committee. The procedure to be followed by the student regarding the thesis/dissertation preparation and defense is outlined below:

1. The student's research progress should be presented orally to members of the Committee. This will often be accomplished in the yearly (or more frequent) meetings of the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee and the subsequent Progress Reports filed with the Director of Graduate Studies. Eventually the Committee will advise the student to begin writing the thesis/dissertation. Each semester the Graduate College establishes deadlines for the first deposit and final deposit of theses. These deadlines must be met to fulfill graduation requirements.
2. The student's Advisor will monitor the progress of the writing. The style of the document must conform to the thesis guidelines established by the Graduate College (www.grad.uiowa.edu/). It is recommended that a draft of the introduction (Chapter 1) be approved by the thesis committee prior to scheduling the thesis defense.
3. Collaborative research projects require extra attention when preparing your thesis. All Figure, Table, and Diagram Legends should include the names of individuals that contributed to generation of that information.
4. Instances in which 2 or more PhD students make equal contributions to a manuscript (e.g., dual first authors both wishing to include the manuscript as an internal chapter in the dissertation), require an acknowledgement section that clearly itemizes the contributions of others. While it is common practice to include published papers in the thesis with only moderate editing in the case of dual authorship these chapters should be written to focus on the work done by the student with the co-authors work provided as needed and with

attribution. **No two students should have identical chapters in their theses.**

5. The student distributes the completed thesis to the Committee at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the final defense.
6. The Ph.D. student will present a public seminar on the dissertation research. All graduate students and faculty in the Department will be encouraged to attend. The seminar will be followed by a defense of the dissertation before the student's Ph.D. Committee. The public seminar shall not precede the defense by more than one month and is generally held the same day.
7. The defense of the thesis will proceed in a manner similar to the proposal defense of the Comprehensive Examination. At this point in training, the student is expected to be an expert in the chosen field of research. Failure to demonstrate an outstanding level of expertise in the dissertation and in the experimentation conducted to answer the research problem(s) will be judged by the Committee to be a failed dissertation examination. The Graduate College states that two unsatisfactory votes will make a Committee report unsatisfactory. The forms prepared by the Departmental Administrator are taken to the thesis defense. The Chair of the Ph.D. Committee (Advisor) will gather the signatures from the Committee members at the conclusion of the defense. The forms will be returned to the Administrator who will send all appropriate materials to the Graduate College. If the candidate fails the defense, he/she must wait until the next semester for re-examination and will have this single re-examination opportunity to adequately demonstrate a mastery of the research topic and the experimental procedures.
8. A stipulation may be attached to an otherwise successful defense. The Committee may suggest further corrections to the document before final acceptance. This requires no re-defense, but the committee will not sign the Certificate of Approval page of the thesis until the corrections have been made. The final, corrected copies of the document must be submitted to the Graduate College per their deadline.
9. In addition to the copies required by the Graduate College, the student will present one final copy of the document to the Department for the permanent library file, at least one copy to the student's Advisor, and to members of the Committee per their request. Expenses associated with making copies of the document for the Committee and College are the responsibility of the student.

D. Publication Requirements for Ph.D. Students: Graduate students must have at least one peer-reviewed, first author research paper in press (or published) before defending their thesis. The Journal must be indexed on Pubmed in order to qualify. Completion of this requirement will be monitored by the Ph.D. Thesis Committee. In exceptional circumstances, a student's Ph.D. Thesis Committee may petition the Graduate Advisory Committee for exemption from this requirement.

E. Miscellaneous Reports. Students who present talks or posters at local or national meetings may have a letter documenting this placed in their file. Awards received by students for their presentation or copies of travel awards may be placed in a student's file. These provide additional sources of information for writing recommendation letters for research positions, teaching positions, and postdoctoral awards.

F. Unsatisfactory Research Progress, Research Probation, and Dismissal Procedures

1. Declaration of Unsatisfactory Progress and Research Probation

The mandatory meeting of the Ph.D. Committee that must occur at least annually serves as the formal mechanism for evaluating a student's dissertation progress. Additional committee meetings may also be convened by the research advisor or student when deemed necessary. If a student's research progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory (e.g., a lack of conceptual or technical progress, failure to generate required data, or failure to meet reasonable experimental benchmarks established in previous meetings), this finding must be documented in writing:

- **Committee Action:** The Ph.D. Committee must officially rate the student's research progress as "Below Average" or "Unsatisfactory" in Section 4 of the APR/IDP.
- **Formal Notice:** The Ph.D. advisor (in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)) will issue a formal Letter of Research Probation to the student within **7 calendar days** of the committee meeting. This letter will officially place the student on departmental Research Probation, detail the specific areas of research deficiency, and outline the consequences of failing to remediate these deficiencies. A copy of this letter and the signed APR/IDP will be placed in the student's departmental file.

2. Mandatory Remediation Plan

Upon being placed on Research Probation, a student must be given a fair and structured opportunity to return to satisfactory academic standing.

- **The Remediation Timeline:** The student is granted a probationary period of **one full academic semester (approximately 3 to 4 months)** to correct the identified research deficiencies. In exceptional cases, the Ph.D. Committee and DGS may agree to a modified timeline, but it must be explicitly defined in writing.
- **Development of the Plan:** Within **7 calendar days** of the student receiving the Letter of Research Probation, the Ph.D. Advisor, the Ph.D. Committee, and the student must meet to draft a formal written **Research Remediation Plan**.
- **Plan Requirements:** The plan must act as a binding contract and include:
 1. **Objective and measurable benchmarks** that the student must achieve (e.g., optimizing a specific protocol, completing a defined set of replicate experiments, or producing a complete draft of a specific thesis chapter).
 2. **A weekly meeting schedule** between the student and advisor to monitor progress.
 3. **Weekly Progress Documentation:** To ensure complete alignment and eliminate communication barriers, the Advisor will provide a brief written summary (via email) to the student within **24 hours** of each weekly meeting. This summary will outline the progress discussed and explicitly list the specific tasks and benchmarks expected for the upcoming week.

These weekly email summaries do not need to be routinely sent to the DGS, Ph.D. Committee, or Departmental Office. However, both the Advisor and student must preserve these emails. They will be compiled and submitted to the Ph.D. Committee and DGS as the official record of progress at the conclusion of the remediation period or submitted immediately to Departmental HR and CCOM OGPS as objective documentation in the event of an expedited non-compliance review.

4. **A specific end-date** upon which the Ph.D. Committee will re-convene to evaluate whether the benchmarks have been met.

3. Evaluation and Outcomes

At the conclusion of the designated remediation period, the Ph.D. Committee must re-convene for a formal review. The student will present their progress, and the committee will evaluate whether the benchmarks outlined in the Research Remediation Plan have been successfully completed.

There are three possible outcomes of this evaluation:

- **Outcome A: Satisfactory Completion.** If the committee determines that the student has met all benchmarks, the Research Probation is formally lifted. A written notice of satisfactory progress is added to the student's file.
- **Outcome B: Extension of Probation.** If the student has made substantial, documented progress but has been prevented from fully completing the benchmarks due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g., equipment failure, reagent delays, or illness), the committee may vote to extend the probation period for up to **one additional semester**.
- **Outcome C: Dismissal from the Ph.D. Program.** If the student has failed to meet the benchmarks of the remediation plan, the committee will initiate formal dismissal from the Ph.D. program.
 - **Voting Threshold:** In alignment with Graduate College rules, a recommendation for dismissal requires a **2/3rds (66%) majority vote** of the entire appointed Ph.D. Committee. An absent member is mathematically equivalent to a negative vote.
 - **Administrative Endorsement:** The committee's recommendation for dismissal is forwarded to the DGS and the Department Chair (DEO) for endorsement before being submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College for final action.

Stipend and Support During Research Probation. In accordance with program policy, a student placed on Research Probation will continue to receive their research stipend, tuition, and fees during the probationary remediation period, provided they are actively and in good faith participating in the remediation process.

Procedures for Student Non-Compliance or Refusal to Remediate. If a student fails or refuses to participate in the remediation process in good faith, the department is not obligated to maintain financial support for the duration of the probationary semester. Non-compliance is defined as:

- Refusing to meet with the Advisor and Committee to draft the mandatory Research Remediation Plan;
- Failing to attend scheduled weekly progress meetings without a documented and approved medical or personal excuse; or
- Failing to execute basic, agreed-upon laboratory or research tasks outlined in the Remediation Plan.

In the event of documented non-compliance, the following expedited procedure will be triggered:

1. **Written Documentation:** The Ph.D. Advisor must document the specific dates, times, and details of the student's non-compliance or failure to participate.

2. **DGS and HR Notification:** The Advisor will submit this documentation to HR and the DGS. Prior to convening the committee, the DGS and Departmental Administrator will immediately consult with CCOM Human Resources and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS) to ensure compliance with procedures.
3. **Expedited Ph.D. Committee Meeting:** The Ph.D. Committee Chair will convene an expedited meeting of the student's Ph.D. Committee. A representative from Departmental HR or CCOM OGPS may be invited to attend this meeting as an administrative observer to ensure procedural fairness.
4. **Immediate Termination of Candidacy:** The committee will review the Advisor's documentation and allow the student an opportunity to respond. If at least **2/3rds (66%) of the entire appointed** committee determines that the student has willfully failed to participate in the remediation process in good faith, the committee may immediately terminate the remediation period and issue a formal recommendation for dismissal from the Ph.D. program. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Department Chair and the Graduate College Dean for final action.

4. Post-Dismissal Pathways and Right of Appeal

- **M.S. Degree Transition:** A student who is dismissed from the Ph.D. program for lack of thesis progress may petition the Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) to transition to the terminal Master of Science (M.S.) program. This transition is a privilege, not a right, and is **strictly contingent** upon the student securing an agreement with the current advisor (PI) to finish current work or securing another faculty who is willing to accept them into their laboratory and financially support their stipend and research.
- **Right of Appeal:** In accordance with Carver College of Medicine Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS) guidelines, a student has the formal right to appeal any departmental academic probation or dismissal recommendation. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for OGPS in the CCOM within **30 calendar days** of receiving formal written notification of the department's decision. For full details on the collegiate appeal and grievance process, please consult **Section VI.G (Grievance Process)** of this handbook or the verbatim CCOM OGPS Procedures reprinted in the **Appendix**

IV. MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) DEGREE

- A. Introduction:** Although the Graduate Program in Microbiology does not recruit students aspiring only for the M.S. degree, those who enter as Ph.D. aspirants may change their final objectives. Alternatively, some students may wish to complete a M.S. degree during the course of obtaining a Ph.D. There is much to be said for this course of action, especially if students feel uncomfortable in moving directly to Ph.D. candidacy. Therefore, the Graduate Program in Microbiology does offer a M.S. degree. In any case, the student must petition the GAC through the DGS if he/she wishes to pursue the M.S. track.
- B. Requirements for the M.S. Degree:** There are differences in three categories between the Ph.D. and M.S. Degree:
 1. Semester hour and course requirement
 2. Thesis Committee and Comprehensive Examination

3. Research and thesis requirements

The Graduate College requires a minimum of 30 s.h. for a M.S. degree. Of these 30 s.h., not more than 9 s.h. from Graduate Research in Microbiology (MICR:7261) can be counted. This means that an aspirant for the M.S. degree must have at least 21 s.h. of course credits. Unlike the Ph.D. program requirement of 12 s.h. of strictly letter-graded graduate coursework, undergraduate courses taken as remedial courses, seminar courses (such as MICR:7263), and non-graded graduate coursework count toward the 21 s.h. minimum requirement for the M.S. degree.

Students aspiring for the M.S. degree need not pass a Comprehensive Examination. Furthermore, the M.S. Thesis Committee consists only of the Advisor and two other members (three total) versus four or five for the Ph.D. Committee. One of the Committee members *may be* a faculty member outside of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. The final examination will follow the format of the Ph.D. defense of dissertation including a seminar.

M.S. research should be accomplished in 1 1/2 to 2 years. Considering that such individuals have used one year for rotations, the normal time for a M.S. degree is 3 years. Typically, a M.S. Research Project is one-third as complex as a Ph.D. Research Project.

- C. Matriculation into the Ph.D. Program:** All graduate students who complete the requirements for the M.S. degree and wish to continue working towards a Ph.D. **MUST** reapply for admission to the Microbiology Graduate Program. Applications will be reviewed by the Chair of the Graduate Admissions Committee, the members of the student's M.S. Thesis Committee, and one additional faculty member.

V. PERFORMANCE IN TEACHING

The Department of Microbiology and Immunology requires that all students participate in the teaching activity of the Department. Teaching effectiveness may be reviewed by the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee. Each course director must fill out an evaluation form (Form C, page 45) following the participation of each student in the course under direction. These forms may be included in the student's file and can be used to evaluate the student's performance at the mandatory annual review of the student's performance by the Ph.D. (Thesis) Committee (page 29). Assessing Classroom Environment (ACE) evaluation forms will also be completed by students enrolled in courses that have graduate student assistants. A portfolio of teaching evaluations in a student's file can be extremely valuable in providing recommendations for those Ph.D. graduates applying for positions in which teaching skills are important.

The student evaluation will be directed toward improving teaching effectiveness and may include the recommendation for the student to take additional courses or to assist in specific courses in subsequent years. For example, The University of Iowa offers two tests for students for whom English is a second language: the English Proficiency Exam and the Teaching Assistant (TA) certification evaluation. [All such students are required to take these exams, *regardless* of their TOEFL score.] Depending on the results of these exams, certain English courses can be recommended by the examination administrators and the student's Ph.D. Committee. In the case of a language problem, the Department of Microbiology and Immunology requires that these course recommendations be followed at the rate of one course per semester, until the recommendations are fulfilled or the student passes the TA certification evaluation. The students are re-evaluated automatically at the end of each recommended class.

While English proficiency is important for teaching, teaching skills are not language-dependent and students for whom English is a second language are not singled out as it may appear from the discussion above. Most teaching skills are learned, i.e., the result of experience. Thus, weak performances as a graduate student assistant may lead to the recommendation that the student gain more experience. Courses that offer the possibility for students to deliver lectures or mini-lectures provide a valuable training opportunity. Students are encouraged to deliver such lectures so long as they are evaluated by faculty. In addition, the University offers several workshops to assist in the training of graduate student assistants. They are typically posted on departmental bulletin boards.

Student Teaching Evaluation. Form C (page 41) will be completed by the faculty member that supervises the graduate student assistant. This can be a very important document for students that have completed their training and are applying for positions that require they have teaching duties. ACE evaluation forms are also completed by students enrolled in courses that have graduate student assistants.

VI. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND LOGISTICAL MATTERS

- A. Teaching and Research Equipment:** The Department has a supply of various types of equipment used for teaching and research in Microbiology and Immunology. The equipment (microscopes, water baths, centrifuges, etc.) used for teaching major classes is not to be moved from the teaching areas without specific permission from the Department Chair or the Course Director. Research equipment is generally available in the core areas where the graduate student is conducting research. Certain pieces of movable equipment (projectors, microscopes, shakers, centrifuges, water baths, etc.) are available in the Department, but permission from the principal investigator in the lab housing the equipment or from the Department Chair is required before equipment is used or moved.

Graduate students and members of the Department are asked to assume responsibility for keeping equipment in first-class working condition. If anyone does not understand, or has any doubt about, the operation of a piece of equipment, please ask for instruction before use. Clean up after using equipment. For example, if tubes were broken in a centrifuge, or cotton plugs were blown from flasks in an autoclave, etc., please clean the equipment before leaving. This is especially critical when radioactivity or pathogenic organisms are involved. If any piece of equipment does not work properly, or if it has been broken, please report the matter to the principal investigator in the area, to the Department Chair, or the Departmental Office.

- B. Travel to Scientific Meetings:** If a graduate student presents research results at local or national scientific meetings, the Department may provide partial financial assistance for the necessary travel expenses. Usually, travel to meetings is paid by the mentor or by certain training grants. Students can also apply to the Graduate College and the Dr. Rachel J. Mason Fund for travel awards. The application and guidelines for the Mason Travel Award can be found on the S drive in the Dept Info/Graduate Student Information folder.

C. Departmental Administration

1. Office hours. The office of the Department (Room 3-403) is open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, except for holidays recognized by the University.
2. Mail. Business mail (journals, etc.) is delivered to the office two times a day, and office staff will sort the material for all personnel in the Department. **It is against University policy to use the office address for unofficial, non-University business such as personal mail,**

letters, newspapers, non-scientific magazines, credit card bills, etc.

3. Keys and Identification (ID) Card. Graduate students will be given desk and laboratory space in the various research core areas of the Department. All students will be issued a picture ID card through the University. ID cards can be used for food purchases at University cafeterias, bookstores, and recreation centers. ID cards are initialized to open doors equipped with the Marlock system, i.e., all core doors and the building entrances. Cores are locked after 5:00 PM and before 8:00 AM Monday through Friday. The Bowen Science Building is locked on weekends and from 6:00 PM to 6:30 AM on weekdays. Certain areas (faculty offices, isotope rooms, isolation rooms, storerooms, etc.) require specialized codes or keys, and permission to use these areas must be obtained from the faculty in charge of that particular space.

Keys assigned to graduate students must not be loaned or given to other persons without permission. If keys are lost, the student will be charged for new keys. It is against University regulations for unauthorized persons to have duplicate keys made. All keys are made by the University Key Shop and should be obtained through the Departmental office.

4. Requisitions for Supplies. Supplies for research generally are obtained through or from the faculty research mentor or the principal investigator directing the research.
5. Scheduling Rooms. Scheduling core conference rooms, lectures rooms, or laboratory space in the teaching labs is arranged through the Departmental office staff. It is the responsibility of the users of these rooms to return all books, journals, and computer and projection equipment to their original storage areas and ensure the room is clean for the next user.

D. Radiation and Health Safety

1. Radiation Safety. All users of radioactive materials must complete a yearly training course. There are strict rules regarding the handling of materials and their proper disposal. Students and laboratories not in compliance may lose their license for the use of radioactive materials.
2. Biohazard Safety. The University also has strict guidelines for the handling and disposal of hazardous chemicals such as carcinogens or environmentally unfriendly materials. Students working with human pathogens must complete yearly training. In addition, students who come into direct contact with animals used in experiments must complete the appropriate training programs offered through the Office of Animal Research.

E. Library Services

1. Departmental library. The Department has a small library that contains Ph.D. theses from past graduate students.
2. On-line journals. Numerous journals are available on-line through the University Library web site.
3. Outside libraries. The Hardin Medical Library has most books and journals needed for the study of medicine and microbiology. The Hardin Library Help Desk can acquaint you with the use of the facility.

- F. Computers:** Nearly all laboratories have multiple computers that can also be used by students. These are linked to various University servers for transfer of scientific data. For example, data

obtained from a flow cytometer can be transferred through a server connection to a computer in the student's lab. Most computers also allow Internet access for using on-line journals, databases, and important websites. The system also includes electronic mail and all graduate students are entitled to an address in the University e-mail system. This can be arranged with the Department Administrator. Since website usage is automatically monitored, computers are periodically checked for evidence that they have been used for personal activities or for contacting such things as pornographic websites.

G. Grievance Process

Academic complaints generally involve students experiencing difficulty in their academic program, or disputes concerning students' status or progress in their academic programs. Generally, graduate students should bring complaints to either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology or the DGS. Depending upon the specific situation, the Chair, Vice Chair or DGS may need to summarize his or her discussions with other department or college administrators. This will be done without prejudice. Should a grievance ever involve the Chair or Vice-Chair or the DGS, the grievance should be reported to the uninvolved others, and the involved member will be excluded from discussions or making decisions regarding the complaint.

Informal Departmental Resolution: Students are strongly encouraged to first seek an informal resolution at the departmental level. If the student elects the informal process, either the Chair, Vice-Chair, or DGS will serve as a mediator. They will work diligently with all parties to resolve the complaint in a mutually agreeable fashion. The student may transition the complaint to a formal process at any time if a resolution cannot be reached.

Escalation to the Carver College of Medicine OGPS: If a student feels uncomfortable pursuing a complaint through the department, or if informal departmental mediation fails to resolve the issue, the student should escalate the matter to the **Carver College of Medicine Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS):**

- **Informal Consultation:** The student may contact the CCOM Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (ADGPS) for guidance and informal mediation.
- **Formal Grievance Filing:** If the student elects to file a formal grievance, they must follow the CCOM OGPS procedures outlined in the appendix of this handbook (see page 44). This formal collegiate process is officially initiated by emailing a written complaint to biomedgrad-postdoc@uiowa.edu.

Escalation to the Graduate College: If consultation and formal procedures with the CCOM OGPS do not lead to an appropriate or satisfactory resolution, the CCOM Associate Dean will counsel the student on further options. At this stage, the student may escalate the grievance to the University-level by initiating either the Informal Academic Complaint Procedure or the Formal Academic Grievance Procedure (AGP) administered by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate College.

Note: Under Graduate College rules, no formal academic grievance may be filed later than two years from the event that gave rise to the complaint.

Confidential Campus Resources: At any stage of a dispute or grievance, students may seek confidential, neutral, and independent advice and conflict-management services from the University Office of the Ombudsperson (email: ombudsperson@uiowa.edu; website: <https://uiowa.edu/ombuds/>) or the University Counseling Service.

APPENDIX

Graduate Training Timetable (All Years)

Form A. Lab Rotation Report

Form B. Annual Progress Report/Individual Development Plan (APR/IDP)

Instructions for Microbiology Annual Progress Report and IDP

Form C. Student Teaching Evaluation

CCOM Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS) Procedures for Academic Grievances, Unethical Conduct, and Violations of the Graduate College and Iowa Code of Student Life

Graduate Training Timetable (All Years)

Year One

a. Pre-enrollment

- Obtain information about faculty research from departmental web site and communicate with faculty about research rotations prior to arriving in Iowa City.
- Attend the *Orientation Session* in late August with the DGS, the week before classes begin.
- Meet with the DGS to arrange a schedule of courses for first semester and a preliminary schedule for the second semester.
- Enroll for Fall semester courses. Registration forms and student numbers are provided in the Departmental Office. Registration may be done by computer using MyUI (<https://myui.uiowa.edu>).
- Arrange for starting the first rotation on or before September 1.

b. Fall Semester

- Complete necessary coursework.
- Complete first rotation and review Rotation Report (Form A, page 42) with the laboratory mentor.
- Plan and begin the second rotation.
- Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other relevant seminars.
- Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- Periodically meet with the DGS to keep him/her advised of progress and experiences during the first semester.
- Meet with DGS for discussion of coursework and Spring semester enrollment.

c. Spring Semester

- Complete second semester coursework.
- Complete second and third rotations and review Rotation Reports (Form A, page 40) with the laboratory mentors.
- Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
- Attend a meeting with the GAC to review first year coursework, rotations, and to discuss the procedures for Summer and Fall semester of the second year.
- Officially announce your selection of a Ph.D. Advisor **after** completion of all three rotations.
- Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.

d. Summer

- Enroll in necessary coursework as advised by the DGS and the Ph.D. Advisor.
- Begin Ph.D. research project.
- Determine teaching responsibilities for following year (Course Directors usually meet in July to make teaching assignments).

Year Two

- a. Fall Semester
 - The Ph.D. Advisor and the student will select a Ph.D. Committee.
 - Meet with Ph.D. Committee before December 15, and select a Chair for the Comprehensive Examination. Immediately provide the name of the Chair to the Departmental Office and to the DGS.
 - Enroll in any necessary coursework.
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Perform student teaching, if required.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Begin to formulate ideas for the Comprehensive Examination.
- b. Spring Semester
 - Enroll in necessary coursework.
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Perform student teaching, if required.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
 - Complete Comprehensive Examination.
- c. Summer Session
 - Continue Ph.D. research.

Year Three

- a. Fall Semester
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Perform student teaching, if required.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
 - Re-defend revised or new Comprehensive Examination proposal if initial defense during the Spring Semester was unsatisfactory.
- b. Spring Semester
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Perform student teaching, if required.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- c. Summer Session
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
- d. Annually
 - Submit APR/IDP to Ph.D. Committee and DGS.
 - Mandatory annual meeting with Ph.D. Committee.

Year Four

- a. Fall Semester
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Perform student teaching, if required.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- b. Spring Semester
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Prepare a written outline of your dissertation.
 - Perform student teaching, if required.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
 - Attend special training sessions on computer-formatted dissertations.
- c. Summer Session
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Begin writing thesis Introduction and Methods.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- d. Annually
 - Submit APR/IDP to Ph.D. Committee and DGS.
 - Mandatory annual meeting with Ph.D. Committee.

Year Five

- a. Fall Semester
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Perform student teaching; if year five is the last year of training, there will be no teaching responsibilities.
 - Review dissertation progress with mentor.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- b. Spring Semester
 - Continue Ph.D. research.
 - Attend departmental, interdisciplinary, and other seminars.
 - Complete first draft of dissertation.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- c. Summer Session
 - Complete and defend Ph.D. dissertation.
 - Participate in discipline-related journal clubs and lab research meetings.
- d. Annually
 - Submit APR/IDP to Ph.D. Committee and DGS.
 - Mandatory annual meeting with Ph.D. Committee.

Year Six - Special permission only

FORM A: LAB ROTATION REPORT
Graduate Program in Microbiology

Student Name

Date

Rotation Mentor

Research Topic

Description of Research Topic:

Average No. Hr/week =

Length of Rotation (weeks) =

<u>Student Performance</u>	Performance level:			
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>
Knowledge of material	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research expertise at the beginning of the rotation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research expertise at the end of the rotation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to function Independently	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of energy in attacking the problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of research potential	☐	☐	☐	☐

Logistic and financial issues aside, would you accept this student in your laboratory to pursue a Ph.D.?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Additional Notes:

☐ By checking this box, I (the faculty mentor) indicate that I have met with the above-named student and discussed the contents of this Lab Rotation Report. Email a final copy of this report to DGS and give the printed form with signatures to the Microbiology Office.

Signed

Mentor

Student

Form B
Annual Progress Report/Individual Development Plan (APR/IDP)

Red areas to be completed by student

Predoctoral Student:

Date of entry into program:

PhD Advisor:

Latest Revision Date:

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Coursework

- a. Graded courses completed (a minimum of 12 credits is required to graduate)**

Course Number, Name, Grade

Credits

 Total graded credits earned

- b. BMED:7270, Principles of Scholarly Integrity (required but no credits earned)**

Section 0001 (date completed):

Section 0002 (date completed):

- c. Credits of non-graded coursework (graduate student seminar, research, etc)**

Number of non-graded credits earned to date:

- d. Total credits earned (72 credits required to graduate)**

Add credits earned from sections a and b:

Comprehensive examination

Committee members:

First committee meeting – (Early January in 2nd year) – actual

date: Date of comprehensive examination:

Outcome of comprehensive examination:

Dissertation committee meetings

Committee members:

List dates of all committee meetings:

Student Self-Assessment of Skills (place a check mark in the column that applies):

Scholarship Skills	Needs Improvement	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Core science knowledge				
Laboratory skills				
Analytical skills				
Responsible conduct of research				
Manuscript writing and preparation				
Grant writing				
Overall productivity				

Professional Skills	Needs Improvement	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Teaching				
Communication				
Management				
Leadership				
Networking				
Teamwork				
Collaboration				
Interview skills				

Blue areas be completed by student and advisor comments in yellow boxes

1. Research / Scholarly Activity in the Past Year (Progress Review)
a. Brief overview of your research project & major accomplishments in the past year (250-300 words):
b. Publications:
c. Patents:
d. Honors/Awards (include fellowships with entire funding periods, grants written/applied for/received, professional society or meeting presentation awards or travel awards, etc.):
e. National or other professional meetings attended (include meeting title, oral or poster presentation):
f. Seminar Presentations (title, department):
g. New areas of research or technical expertise acquired in past year:
1. Advisor comments/suggestions – include guidance if adequate progress is being made; identify strengths and areas needing improvement.
2. Research and Other Training Plans (for the Upcoming Year)
a. Research project goals (brief paragraph):
b. Anticipated publications (indicate projected titles):
c. Anticipated meeting or workshop attendance:
d. Fellowship or other funding applications planned (indicate name of award):

e. Other professional training (course work, teaching activity):
2. Advisor comments – include input on realistic research goals to achieve in a reasonable time frame; include comments on feasibility and prioritizing.
3. Teaching Activity (Progress Review)
a. Oversight of graduate, undergraduate, or summer students (name, academic level, project title):
b. Course lectures (department, course name) or lab sections (section title, supervised/unsupervised):
3. Advisor comments – include guidance to help in identifying teaching opportunities; note if adequate progress is being made; identify strengths and areas needing improvement.
4. Other Professional Activities (Progress Review)
a. Committee or other service activity (indicate if you held an office):
b. Other activities (community, etc.) with professional relevance:
4. Advisor comments – include guidance on collegiality and contributing service while ensuring commitment to scholarly activity.
Part 5. Career Goals (for the Upcoming Year)
a. Current career goal(s):
1)
2)
b. What further research activity or other training is needed before graduation?
c. When do you plan to search for post-doctoral/job search?

5. Advisor comments – discuss career options and offer guidance on networking to assist in achieving his/her goals; identify other contacts who can help in this effort.

Sections below to be completed by Advisor/Dissertation Committee

Date of committee meeting:

Ph.D. Committee Evaluation of Student Progress

Scholarship Skills	Needs Improvement	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Core science knowledge				
Laboratory skills				
Analytical skills				
Responsible conduct of research				
Manuscript writing and preparation				
Grant writing				
Overall productivity				

PhD committee comments on student progress –

Committee Member	Exceptional	Satisfactory	Below Average	Unsatisfactory
1. (Chair).				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6. (Optional member)				

Instructions for Microbiology Annual Progress Report and IDP

... Students complete areas in red

Step 1. Conduct a Self-Assessment

- Assess your skills, strengths and areas which need development. Formal assessment tools can be helpful.
- Take a realistic look at your current abilities. This is a critical part of career planning. Ask your peers, mentors, family and friends what they see as your strengths and your development needs.
- Outline your long-term career objectives. Ask yourself: – What type of work would I like to be doing?
– Where would I like to be in an organization?
– What is important to me in a career?

Step 2. Survey Opportunities with Mentor

- Identify career opportunities and select from those that interest you.
- Identify developmental needs by comparing current skills and strengths with those needed for your career choice.
- Prioritize your developmental areas and discuss with your mentor how these should be addressed.

Step 3. Write an IDP

The IDP maps out the general path you want to take and helps match skills and strengths to your career choices. It is a changing document, since needs and goals will almost certainly evolve over time as a graduate student. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these.

The specific objectives of a typical IDP are to:

- Establish effective benchmarks and target dates for the duration of your graduate training.
- Identify specific skills and strengths that you need to develop (based on discussions with your mentor).
- Define the approaches to obtain the specific skills and strengths (e.g., courses, technical skills, teaching, supervision) together with anticipated time frames.
- Discuss your draft IDP with your mentor.
- Revise the IDP as appropriate (e.g., annually).

Step 4. Implement Your Plan

The plan is just the beginning of the career development process and serves as the road map. Now it's time to take action!

- Put your plan into action.
- Revise and modify the plan as necessary. The plan is not cast in concrete; it must be modified as circumstances and goals change. The challenge of implementation is to remain flexible and open to change.
- Review the plan with your mentor *regularly*. Revise the plan *regularly* on the basis of these

... Advisor and Student work together to complete areas in blue

Step 1. Become familiar with available opportunities

- By virtue of your experience you should already have knowledge of some career opportunities.
- But you may want to familiarize yourself with other career opportunities and trends in job opportunities.
- Refer to sources such as National Research Council reports and *Science* career reviews; see also *Resources: Career Opportunities* at the end of this document.

Step 2. Discuss opportunities with postdoctoral

- This needs to be a private, scheduled meeting distinct from regular research-specific meetings.
- There should be adequate time set aside for an open and honest discussion.

Step 3. Review IDP and help revise

- Provide honest feedback, both positive and negative, to help graduate students set realistic goals.
- Agree on a development plan that will allow graduate students be productive in their research *and* adequately prepare them for their chosen career.

Step 4. Establish regular review of progress

- The mentor should meet at regular intervals with the student to assess progress, expectations and changing goals.
- On at least an annual basis, the mentor should conduct a performance review designed to analyze what has been accomplished and what needs to be done.
- A written review should be included to objectively document accomplishments.

... Advisor and PhD committee complete areas in green

Establish regular review of progress

- On at least an annual basis, the committee should conduct a performance review designed to analyze what has been accomplished and what needs to be done.
- Provide a written review to objectively document accomplishments and plans for upcoming year

FORM C: STUDENT TEACHING EVALUATION

Department of Microbiology and Immunology

Student Name

Date

Course Coordinator Course

Approximate Number of Students:

Lecture: Lab:

Duties for the Teaching Assistant: For Lecture:

For Lab:

Performance level:

Student Performance	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Knowledge of material	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preparation of material	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lecture performance (NA if none given)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to facilitate student learning	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to function independently	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall aid to the course instructor(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Additional Evaluation Comments:

Suggestions to Improve Performance:

FORM D: PERMISSION TO SCHEDULE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Department of Microbiology and Immunology

Student Name

Date of last committee meeting

Date of first author research article acceptance

Proposed Defense date

Committee Chair

Committee Members

This appendix contains the official collegiate policy of the Carver College of Medicine OGPS, reprinted here verbatim. For a simplified, step-by-step routing guide on how Microbiology students should navigate informal and formal complaints within our department and college, please refer to Section VI.G (Grievance Process) on page 24 of this handbook.

CCOM Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS)

Procedures for Academic Grievances, Unethical Conduct, and Violations of the Graduate College and Iowa Code of Student Life

(Date of Preparation: July 25, 2024)

I. General Principles

The University of Iowa [Code of Student Life](#), published each year as an insert to *The Daily Iowan*, governs student non-academic conduct (including graduate and postdoctoral students).

The Graduate College [Manual of Rules and Regulations](#) governs graduate and postdoctoral student academic conduct.

Research misconduct, such as the fabrication or falsification of data and plagiarism, is defined by the US Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Research Integrity ([definition of misconduct](#)). Egregious acts of research misconduct may also result in additional action by the University of Iowa as stated in section 27.6, Ethics in Research, of the [University's Operations Manual](#).

Graduate students in CCOM-affiliated departments and programs (including the Biomedical Science Program and its 7 subprograms; the Biochemistry and Microbiology Departmental Programs, and the 4 biomedical interdisciplinary programs (Genetics, Human Toxicology, Immunology, and Neuroscience) are expected to adhere to all sets of policy guidelines. Postdoctoral students in CCOM laboratories are expected to adhere to all sets of policy guidelines. Graduate students may be sanctioned or dismissed from their program in the event of policy violations. Postdoctoral students may be sanctioned or dismissed from their position in the event of policy violations.

Please contact the CCOM Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, your Graduate Program Director or Coordinator, or your Departmental HR Administrator, for further information about these policies.

II. Academic Grievances

The grievance procedure to employ for a complaint will depend on the area involved (student life, academic difficulties, employment, faculty). Generally, students first explore how to pursue a grievance with their mentor, PI, or with program leadership (Director of Graduate Studies, Program Director, Program Coordinator/Administrator).

An attempt should be made to resolve grievances at the lowest level, before escalating to higher levels. Nearly all grievances can be resolved at the level of the faculty member and student, or at the level of the Department. However, if students are uncomfortable or dissatisfied using this route, the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (ADGPS) can be contacted.

(see figures at the end of this document for quick visual reference of grievance workflows)

If consultation with the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies does not lead to an appropriate or satisfactory resolution, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate College will counsel students on further options. The Graduate College has established two complaint procedures:

1. [Informal Academic Complaint Procedure of the Graduate College](#)
2. [Formal Academic Grievance Procedure \(AGP\) of the Graduate College](#)

In addition, the [Counseling Service](#), the [Office of the Ombudsperson](#), and the [Office of Civil Rights Compliance \(OCRC\)](#) will counsel graduate students on a confidential basis and will assist students in selecting an appropriate grievance procedure. The UI Postdoctoral Association is a resource for postdoctoral students.

III. Student Grievances about Faculty Members

If a student has a grievance about a faculty member, they should first try to resolve the grievance directly with the faculty member, per the policies in II above. If that process is not available or successful, the grievance should be filed by emailing biomedgrad-postdoc@uiowa.edu in order to trigger a department-level review of the faculty member. If students are uncomfortable or dissatisfied using this route, the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (ADGPS) can be contacted.

If consultation with the ADGPS does not lead to an appropriate or satisfactory resolution, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate College will counsel students on further options, per II above. Beyond that, the grievance can be escalated to the Office of the Provost or the Board of Regents. In CCOM, grievances towards faculty members will also be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, and further follow-up from that Office may occur. HR sensitive faculty issues will remain confidential.

IV. Academic Integrity

Integrity is a [core value of the University of Iowa](#) and the CCOM. At the University of Iowa, we hold ourselves to the highest standard of professional and scholarly ethics, are accountable for our decisions and actions, exercise responsible stewardship of the resources with which we are entrusted, and treat one another with honesty and fairness. **Academic integrity** embodies the principles of honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect, forming the foundation of ethical scholarship and intellectual growth. Upholding academic integrity is not only essential for maintaining the credibility and integrity of the academic community but also for nurturing individuals who contribute positively to society through their knowledge, skills, and ethical conduct. **Academic and research misconduct** undermine the efforts and achievements of other students, erodes the trust and credibility that society places in educational institutions and science, and can have lifelong consequences for the individuals involved.

Academic integrity is a teaching and learning issue, and our policies and procedures are written in that spirit. Academic misconduct can involve many gray areas. The ways that students are allowed to work with other classmates or utilize additional resources can differ between courses which can lead to confusion. **Instructors** are responsible for making expectations regarding academic integrity and academic misconduct clear and explicit to students in the course syllabus, assignment instructions, and exam instructions. **Principal Investigators (PIs)** are responsible for making expectations related to research misconduct clear to their trainees.

Students are responsible for actively seeking clarification from their course instructors and principal investigators if they are uncertain about whether a situation might involve academic/research misconduct.

V. Academic/Research Misconduct Reporting Procedures, Sanctions, and Appeals

A. Reporting Academic/Research Misconduct

University of Iowa Colleges track offenses on a shared database, with academic/research misconduct reports thus shared across UI colleges and with more severe consequences for repeat violations.

Incidents of academic/research misconduct will be investigated and reported in a manner that ensures due process and fairness.

- **Instructors/PIs:** Instructors/PIs are required to report incidents of academic/research misconduct by filing a violation report (email: biomedgrad-postdoc@uiowa.edu) and notifying the accused student in writing and contacting the student's program director. Instructors/PIs are encouraged to maintain documentation of all communication with students accused of academic misconduct.
- **Students:** a student who witnesses an incident of academic/research misconduct is expected to report the violation to the course instructor/PI. During any investigation, the reporting student may be asked for additional information. The confidentiality of the reporting student will be protected to the greatest extent possible; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in all cases.

Reports of academic misconduct are shared with the Graduate College, the Associate Dean in OGPS, the Director of Graduate Studies or Program Director, and Departmental Executive Officer (DEO, Department Head) in the student's home department. If the case involves founded allegations of research misconduct, the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) is notified. Misconduct investigation records are not transferred to the student record in MAUI. However, depending on the result of a case (e.g., dismissal/expulsion), a dean's level note acknowledging misconduct as the reason for dismissal/expulsion may be added to the student's MAUI advising notes. Access to dean's level MAUI advising notes is highly restricted and campus advisors (e.g., DGS, DEO, Graduate Program Coordinator, faculty advisors) do not have access to these notes. Notes associated with misconduct are not recorded on the student's transcript. Records of misconduct violation(s) will be kept for seven years or until the student graduates, whichever comes first.

B. Misconduct Procedures and Sanctions

In the event that academic/research misconduct is suspected, the following procedures will be followed:

Course-Level/Lab-Level Procedures

- An instructor/PI who suspects a student of an incident of misconduct will investigate whether the suspected misconduct has, in fact, occurred.
- Instructors/PIs who intend to report a student for misconduct should inform the student about their concerns. The instructor/PI will make reasonable attempts to arrange a meeting with the student as soon as is feasible to clarify the situation and to discuss specifics of the incident. The student should be provided the opportunity to respond to the allegation. If the student does not respond or chooses not to meet with the instructor, the instructor/PI should proceed with sanctioning the student (see below) and reporting the incident.

- If the meeting between the instructor/PI and the student ultimately results in no sanction (e.g., grade reduction) because the allegation of academic misconduct is not supported, then the process will be considered completed. No additional reporting will be required, nor will there be any information related to the situation entered into the student's record.
- If after meeting with the student the instructor/PI determines that the allegation of academic misconduct is founded, then the instructor/PI will make a decision regarding whether or not a sanction (e.g., grade reduction) will be applied and report the allegation by filing a violation report.
 - If the instructor/PI decides not to apply a grade sanction (e.g., issues a warning or provides the student with learning opportunities to address any misunderstandings of misconduct), the incident must still be reported at the level of the program (program director and/or DGS).
 - **Examples of Course-level Sanctions.** In the case of academic misconduct that is related to a course, the instructor will determine the appropriate sanction. Sanctions may include but are not limited to:
 - Failing the assignment or assigning a lower grade than otherwise would have been given for the assignment.
 - Requesting a revision of the work in question and accepting the revision for grade assignment.
 - Failing a student for the course (must only be considered in consultation with the departmental/programmatic administrative home for the course)
- The student may:
 - Accept responsibility and the instructor's/PI's sanction.
 - Accept responsibility but appeal the instructor's/PI's sanction. Reasons could include inequitable enforcement of the sanction, the sanction is too severe, or the sanction is out of alignment with stated policy in the syllabus.
 - Deny responsibility for the violation and appeal the instructor's/PI's sanction.
- Sanctions are the responsibility of the instructor or department/program, and sanctions must be implemented, monitored, and enforced at the instructor or departmental/program level. If a case is appealed to a higher office (e.g., OGPS, Graduate College, Office of the Provost, Iowa Board of Regents), the decision reached by that office must be executed by the department/program (for department-level sanctions) or by the instructor/PI (for course-level/lab-level sanctions).

Student Appeals of Course-Level Sanctions

- If the student has any questions about the appeals process, then they should contact their Graduate Program Coordinator or Program Director to learn their departmental/program appeals process. The student may also choose to discuss their situation confidentially with a representative of the [Office of the Ombudsperson](#).
- Appeals must be in writing to the DEO (Department Chair) of the department in which the course is offered within 30 calendar days of written notification of the instructor's finding. An email to the DEO is sufficient.
- The DEO will review the case and submit a decision letter to the student and to the Program Director of the student's program.
- If the student is not satisfied with the DEO's decision, the student may then request a review by the Associate Dean in OGPS in CCOM. The request must be written within 30 calendar days of receiving the DEO's finding. An email to the Associate Dean is sufficient.

- The Associate Dean will review the case and submit a decision letter to the student and to the Program Director of the student's program.
- If the student is not satisfied with prior decisions, then the student has the right to appeal to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate College, followed by the Office of the Provost, and finally up to the Iowa Board of Regents.
- The instructor should send copies of the final determination document to the student, the department/program. The instructor should send a copy of the final determination document to biomedgrad-postdoc@uiowa.edu and they should notify any additional offices that have been involved in the appeals process that a decision has been reached.
- When a conflict of interest in the chain of appeals is identified (e.g., the DEO or Associate Dean is also the student's instructor, advisor, or supervisor), then an appropriate substitute to hear the appeal will be made.

NOTE: The course-level policies and procedures described above can be extended to non-course or lab-based situations, such as but not limited to the qualifying exam, comprehensive exam, prospectus defense, dissertation defense, seminars, and poster presentations. In these instances, the supervising faculty member, the committee, or others may report the alleged misconduct according to the procedures noted above. If the misconduct is founded, then the supervising faculty member and/or the student's committee will determine the appropriate sanction. Sanctions may include but are not limited to:

- Requesting a revision of the work in question and accepting the revision in order to receive a passing grade on the assessment.
- Failing a student on the assessment.

Supervising faculty members and/or committees are responsible for making expectations regarding academic integrity and academic misconduct clear and explicit to students.

Departmental Procedures

In the event that academic misconduct is founded, the student's home department/program will make a determination as to whether or not additional sanctions will be applied by the department/program according to the following procedures:

- Following a report of academic misconduct, a review committee of 2-3 primary faculty members will be appointed by the DEO, with one member designated as the chair. A meeting will be convened to allow the student an opportunity to discuss the alleged misconduct. The committee will meet to review the available evidence. After the committee has reviewed the report, the committee may assign the student additional sanctions (see below for examples) based on the severity of the offense and the number of previous offenses by the student reported to the department.
- ***Examples of Departmental Sanctions.*** Academic misconduct can involve many gray areas and borderline situations. In these cases, the department might combine or change the sanctions listed below so that they better fit the situation. At the department's discretion, egregious acts of misconduct may lead to more severe sanctions than suggested below even for a student's first or second report of misconduct.
 - **For first report** – The student receives a warning letter in which they are notified of the consequences of any additional offenses related to academic misconduct. The student is required to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Chair (DEO) to discuss the alleged violation(s) and departmental expectations regarding academic integrity. A summary of the violation report will be provided to the student. During the meeting, the DGS and/or DEO will review the sanction imposed by the instructor, review

departmental sanctions, and review the appeal process and the deadline to appeal.

- **For second report** – The department may require the student to enroll in a non-credit [academic integrity seminar](#). The seminar is completed online, and most students complete the assigned readings and assignments in about 5-15 hours. The student will be charged a course fee of between \$100 and \$200.
- **For additional reports** – In addition to any penalties listed above, the department may dismiss the student from the graduate program or recommend expulsion from the University. Decisions to dismiss a student from the graduate program or expel the student from the University are made in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate College. Dismissal from the program/department may not automatically dismiss a student from the Graduate College.

Students who fail to complete any of the assigned sanctions may be restricted from course registration in future semesters. Degree conferral may be held for students in their final semester of enrollment until they complete their assigned sanctions.

Student Appeals of Departmental Sanctions

- If the student has questions about the appeals process, they should contact the Graduate Program Coordinator or Program Director. The student may also choose to discuss their situation confidentially with a representative of the [Office of the Ombudsperson](#).
- Appeals must be in writing to the Associate Dean for OGPS in the CCOM within 30 calendar days of written notification of the department's finding. An email to the AD is sufficient.
- The AD will review the case and submit a decision letter to the student and to the Program Director
- If the student is not satisfied with the AD's decision, then the student has the right to appeal to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate College, followed by the Office of the Provost, and finally up to the Iowa Board of Regents.
- The AD will send copies of the final determination document to the student, the department, and any offices that have been involved in the appeals process. In addition, the AD will file the final determination document.
- When a conflict of interest in the chain of appeals is identified (e.g., the AD is also the student's advisor or supervisor), then an appropriate substitute to hear the appeal will be made.

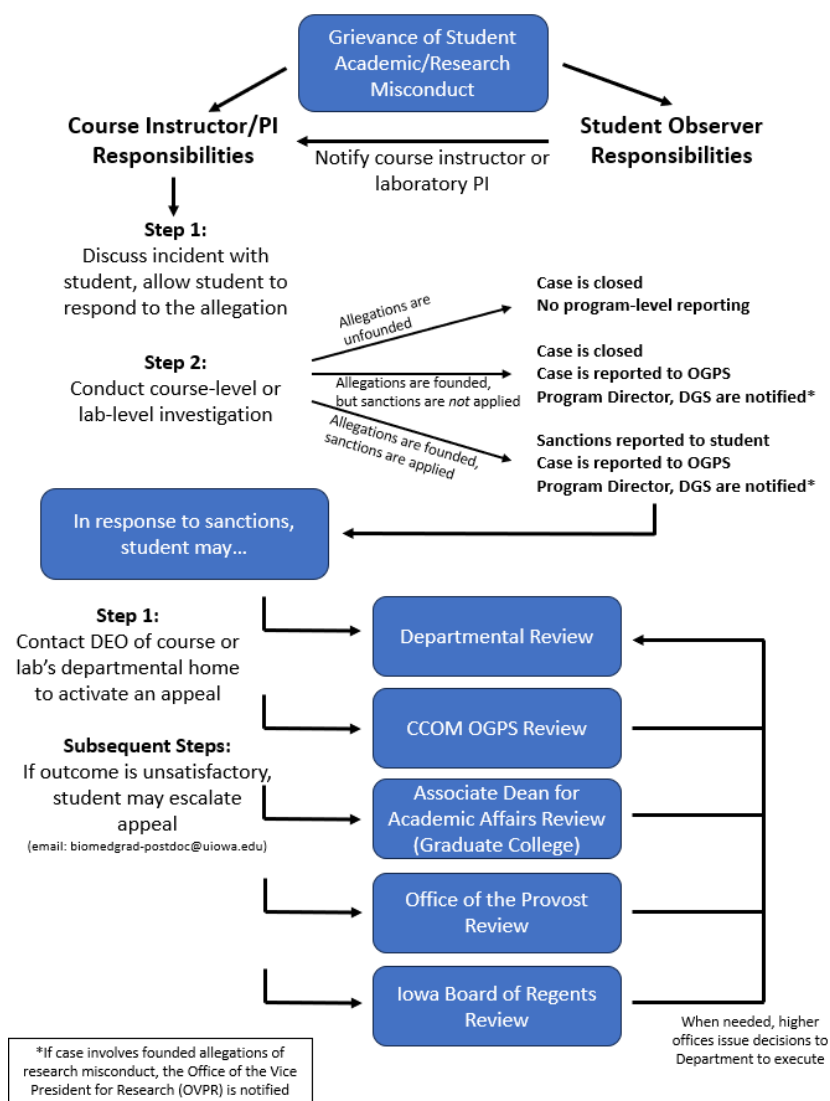


Figure 1: Workflow for grievances related to student misconduct.

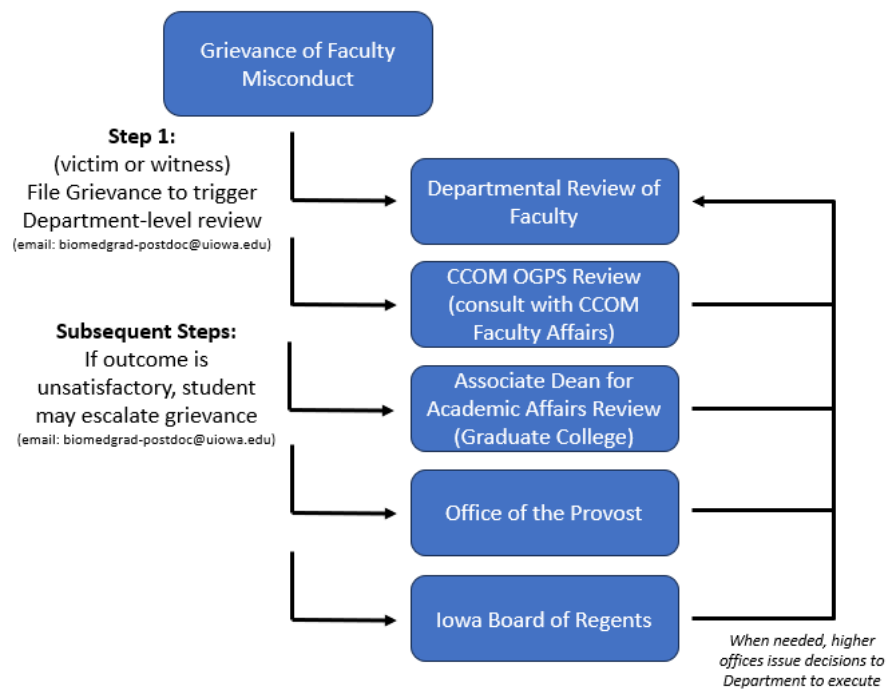


Figure 2: Workflow for grievances related to faculty misconduct.