

**Biochemistry
Graduate Program**

**Student Handbook
2013 - 2014**

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Welcome!

This handbook has been designed to assist you as you progress through your academic career with the Biochemistry Graduate Program. We have made every effort to include all pertinent information, but for further information please utilize the resources listed below.

Your Responsibilities as a Graduate Student

You are responsible for understanding the rules and policies that govern your academic degree. Use all resources available to you and plan well in advance to meet necessary deadlines. The Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator are available to answer questions.

The Graduate School web site (<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/>) is an excellent resource for extensive information on the requirements of graduate degrees at the University. The policies and requirements governing your graduate career continue to evolve and you should refer to the Graduate School web site frequently.

Two University catalogs are essential references: The General Information Catalog and The Graduate Catalog. These catalogs are available online at <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/publications/>

The Graduate School

As a graduate student, you are admitted to both the Biochemistry Graduate Program and the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin. All graduate degrees are the responsibility of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School (<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/>) includes the Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School and staff, plus about 100 Graduate Studies Committees. The Graduate School can be reached at (512) 471-4511.

Each department or field of study offering a graduate degree has a Graduate Studies Committee composed of active assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors (tenured and tenure-track faculty). Each Graduate Studies Committee sets policy and supervises its own graduate program.

Approximately 30 faculty members from various Graduate Studies Committees, plus six graduate students, serve as representatives in the Graduate Assembly, the legislative body of the Graduate School.

There is also a student organization concerned with issues related to graduate study, called the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) <http://www.utgraduatestudentassembly.org/index.php>. Any graduate student is welcome as a member.

The College of Natural Sciences

Linda Hicke is the Dean of Natural Sciences (<http://cns.utexas.edu/>). The Dean's office is located in W.C. Hogg 3.134 and can be reached at (512) 471-3285.

The College of Natural Sciences consists of 34 Organized Research Units, including the departments of **Astronomy, Chemistry, Computer Sciences, Human Ecology, Integrative Biology, Marine Science, Mathematics, Molecular Biosciences, Neuroscience, Physics and Statistics and Scientific Computation**. There are also several research institutes including the Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (ICMB).

The Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (ICMB)

The Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (<http://www.icmb.utexas.edu/>) is a multi-departmental research unit that serves as an umbrella for the Biochemistry Graduate Program as well as the Microbiology and Cell and Molecular Biology graduate programs. The Institute Director is Alan M. Lambowitz.

The Biochemistry Graduate Program

Biochemistry Graduate Program Administration

The Biochemistry Graduate Program is administered through an executive committee that represents the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). These members are drawn from diverse departments, with faculty primarily from Molecular Biosciences, Chemistry, Pharmacy and Biomedical Engineering.

David Hoffman Adviser	dhoffman@cm.utexas.edu	WEL 4.244 512-471-7859
Rick Russell, GSC Chair	rick_russell@cm.utexas.edu	MBB 2.212 512-471-1514
Jen Gilmore Coordinator	jpgilmore@austin.utexas.edu	NHB 2.632 512-471-4181

Graduate Adviser

The Graduate Adviser is a member of the Biochemistry GSC who is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to advise Biochemistry graduate students, maintain student records, and represent the Graduate School in matters relating to graduate students. Questions about degree requirements and academic policies should be directed to the appropriate Graduate Adviser.

Graduate Studies Committee Chair

The GSC Chair oversees the Biochemistry Graduate Studies Committee, which is a committee of all faculty members. The executive committee of the GSC sets policy concerning academics and requirements for the graduate program.

Graduate Coordinator

The Graduate Coordinator keeps student records and ensures forms are processed in a correct and timely manner. Questions concerning routine procedures should be addressed to the Graduate Coordinator.

Laboratory Rotations

During the first nine months in the Biochemistry program, you will rotate through three different laboratories. The rotations broaden your laboratory experience and help you find the area and permanent laboratory that are best suited for you. Students are required to spend ~20 hours per week working in their rotation lab. At the end of each rotation, the faculty member completes a rotation evaluation of your laboratory research performance. These research hours are CR/NC and do not count toward your GPA.

2013/2014 Laboratory Rotation Schedule

Early Rotation: June 3, 2013 - August 23, 2013
Rotation #1: September 16, 2013 - November 29, 2013
Rotation #2: December 2, 2013 - February 14, 2014
Rotation #3: February 17, 2014 - May 2, 2014

Before the first rotation period, you will submit three choices of laboratories for that particular rotation. You MUST submit three; if you submit less than three choices for any reason, you will not be assigned a laboratory for that rotation period.

For the first rotation, assignments for the Biochemistry, CMB and Microbiology programs are made only by the CMB First Year Graduate Adviser. Any prearranged agreements concerning rotations are not final or binding unless approved by the CMB First Year Graduate Adviser. Changes in an assigned rotation may be made only with permission of the CMB First Year Graduate Adviser. Assignments for the second and third rotations are made by agreement between each student and PI and require submission of a completed rotation form to the Graduate Coordinator.

Permanent Laboratories

The standard policy is that at the end of your third rotation, you will choose which laboratory to work in on a permanent basis. This is done after careful consideration and consultation with the supervising professor (also known as PI or Primary Investigator) of the lab. Once you join a laboratory, all financial support you've been receiving from Biochemistry ends, so it is important that you discuss with the supervising professor how the laboratory will support you, especially the first summer. For 2013-2014, if mutually agreeable to the student and PI, it will be possible to join a lab after two rotations.

If you have not made arrangements for a permanent supervisor by the end of your first 9 months in the program, you will be notified that the next 3 months are your last in the program. If you find a permanent supervisor before the end of the 3-month period, that supervisor must petition the Graduate Adviser asking that you be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program. You may not be eligible for financial support during this 3-month period.

Once in a permanent laboratory, you may change your laboratory if necessary; however, any change must be discussed with and approved by the Graduate Adviser. Your new supervising professor must be a member in good standing of the Biochemistry GSC. If you select a supervising professor that is not a member of the Biochemistry GSC but is a member of the GSC for the CMB program, you may transfer to the CMB Graduate Program.

If, for any reason, you end your association with your permanent laboratory before arranging for a new laboratory, you will be allowed two months to find another laboratory. While you are without a laboratory, you may not continue to work toward the Ph.D. and may not have financial support unless you have a TA position. Your new supervising professor must be a member in good standing of the Biochemistry GSC and must petition the Graduate Adviser asking that you be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program.

Core Courses

The core courses are: BCH 395G Structure and Function of Proteins and Membranes, BCH 395J Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression, BCH 387D Biophysical Methods and BCH 394 Structure and Dynamics of Protein and Nucleic Acids. These courses are taken during the student's first year. BCH 395G and BCH 395J are taken in the first fall semester, and BCH 387D and BCH 394 taken the following spring semester.

If you earn less than a B- in any of the four core courses, you may be allowed to retake the course with the permission of the Graduate Adviser. If it is necessary to repeat a core course, it must be taken at the very next opportunity. The core courses may not be taken more than twice.

Core Course Descriptions

Structure and Function of Proteins and Membranes (BCH395G)

Detailed consideration of the structure and function of proteins, with discussion of enzyme mechanisms and kinetics, the biochemistry of energy production, and the metabolism of lipids and nucleotides.

A one-year undergraduate sequence in biochemistry is required.

Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression (BCH395J)

Detailed consideration of prokaryotic and eukaryotic mechanisms of DNA replication and transcription; post-transcriptional processing of transcription products; mechanism and regulation of the translation of messenger RNAs.

Biophysical Methods (BCH387D)

Discussion of procedures and equipment used in modern biochemical investigation, with laboratory work to provide experience in techniques of general importance.

Structure and Dynamics of Protein and Nucleic Acids (BCH394)

The structure and function of proteins and nucleic acids will be presented. Students will learn the tools they need to understand and evaluate structure and measure function through kinetic and equilibrium methods. Students are expected to have a basic knowledge of protein and nucleic acid structure at the introductory biochemistry level.

Seminar in Biochemistry (BCH192G)

Students will present recent papers from invited seminar speakers. In addition, there will be speakers in various aspects of professional development.

Required Grade Point Average

The Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain a cumulative, graduate GPA of at least 3.0. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School will place you on academic probation. You will have one semester to raise your cumulative GPA above 3.0 or be dismissed from the program. Note that a B- is a 2.67, so it is possible to pass all of your classes and still have a GPA less than 3.0.

Annual Meetings

Each year you will meet with an appropriate faculty member(s) to discuss the current status of your studies. In the first year this will be the Graduate Adviser. During subsequent years it will be with your supervising professor and your dissertation committee. This meeting assures both yourself and the program that you are on track with your studies and allows you an opportunity for individualized attention and feedback.

Degrees Offered

The Biochemistry Graduate Program is designed for students seeking a Ph.D.; however, under certain rare circumstances with the consent of the supervisor and graduate adviser, a Master of Arts with Thesis may be allowed.

Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. program prepares you for a career in research by emphasizing scholarship and original research. By the submission of a dissertation, you demonstrate that you have a mature knowledge of the field and that you can design and execute original research.

Academic Requirements for Ph.D.

The Biochemistry Graduate Program expects incoming students to have successfully completed at least one year each of calculus, biology (genetics and cell biology recommended), organic chemistry, biochemistry and general physics. Students with any deficiencies in these areas should remedy as soon as possible. You are urged to speak with the Graduate Adviser if you have any concerns about what remedial courses you may need.

The requirements for a Ph.D. from the Biochemistry Graduate Program are:

- a GPA of 3.0 or higher at all times (required by the Graduate School)
- completion of the Biochemistry core courses with a grade of at least a B- (note that a B- is 2.67; B- in all core courses would result in a GPA below the required 3.0)
- **six semesters of Student Seminar (BCH 192G)**
- two additional elective courses (3 credit hours each and related to Biochemistry)
- after completion of rotations, continuous membership in a permanent lab
- one semester as a teaching assistant
- International Students - successful completion of ITA English exam and workshop
- successful completion of qualifying exams (second spring)
- admission to candidacy (third fall)
- annual meetings with supervising professor and/or dissertation committee
- successful completion of dissertation and final defense

Dissertation Proposal and Qualifying Exam

In order to proceed with the Qualifying Exams you must:

- have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0
- have completed all core courses with a grade of B- or above
- be assigned to a permanent laboratory
- be ITA certified as eligible for employment "with student contact" if you are an international student

Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation proposal takes place in the fall of the second year. You will select your Dissertation proposal committee in consultation with your supervising professor. The committee ordinarily consists of two faculty members in addition to your supervising professor who chairs the committee.

The Written Portion of Dissertation proposal

This document is a proposal of the work you plan to do for your dissertation. The written proposal should include a short review of the literature, a description of the goals, hypotheses to be tested, procedures to be used and a projected analysis of results. This document should be no longer than ten single-spaced pages. Consultation with your supervising professor on this document is desirable for the appropriate content.

At least one week before meeting with the committee, you will distribute copies of the proposed dissertation to the committee. A copy for your student file must be supplied to the Graduate Coordinator.

The Oral Portion of Dissertation proposal

At the Dissertation proposal meeting, you will present a short (30 minute) oral presentation on your proposed dissertation research. The presentation is followed by questions and suggestions from the committee.

Possible Outcomes of Dissertation proposal

- Pass, unconditional and permission to proceed to qualifying exam
- Pass, conditional. Examples of conditions include, but are not limited to, rewriting the proposal or taking additional course work.
- No pass, retake the exam at a future date; delay of Qualifying Exam.
- Termination of work toward the Ph.D. Masters may be an option.

Qualifying Exam

The qualifying exam, also known as the “prelim”, is a major milestone in the Ph.D. program. Its purpose is twofold:

- establishes that you have sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge in Biochemistry to be a research scholar.
- determines that you can formulate reasonable research questions and propose effective strategies to address the questions.

The Qualifying Exam is taken in the spring semester of your second year. If you have not passed all the core courses with a grade of ‘B-’ or above, or, if you are an international student and are not yet “certified for employment with student contact”, your Qualifying Exam will be delayed until this requirement is met.

The Written Portion of the Qualifying Exam

In the fall of the second year you will participate BCH398T and the “Dissertation Proposal” that will provide an experience in writing a proposal for your own research. This experience will help to prepare you for the Qualifying Exam in the spring. A major portion of the Qualifying Exam consists of a written research proposal based on a hypothesis driven research problem **not** related to your actual laboratory research.

In mid-January you will prepare two abstracts (250 words) that will be reviewed by the Graduate Adviser and referred to the chair of your Qualifying Exam committee and will give approval to proceed with one of the abstracts. You will have four weeks to prepare a NIH style research proposal. The written proposal should not be more than 10 single spaced pages and may not use a font size smaller than 12. Figures are not included in the page limitations. One week before the oral exam, you will submit four copies of the proposal to the Graduate Coordinator. This written proposal is **very important** and every effort should be made to make it exceptional.

The Oral Portion of the Qualifying Exam

At the Oral Exam you will orally present and defend your written proposal and will be examined in terms of your ability to plan and carry out independent research, as well as your general scientific knowledge. Your supervising professor may not ask questions during the exam, but participates afterward in discussion with the committee members concerning your performance.

Rules for the Qualifying Exam

- Students may discuss a topic or methodology with faculty members other than their own supervising professor.
- Students are encouraged to have another student or post-doc (not a faculty member) read their proposal for clarity, spelling, grammar, etc.
- Students may practice their oral presentations with other students, journal clubs or research groups but not with any faculty member.
- The committee will consist of 3 faculty members. The supervising professor is an ad hoc member and may only observe.
- The student will not know the composition of the committee until the exam.
- The Qualifying Exam topic must be a new project to the student. The student must not have worked on the same topic in a previous position or at another program. The methods in the proposal may overlap with those used by the student, but they should not be identical. The student should not be able to cite their own previous work for the primary methods used in the proposal.
- The student may not provide food or drink.
- A student may only take the Qualifying Exam twice.

Possible Outcomes of the Qualifying Exam

In evaluating your performance during the Qualifying Exam, the committee considers not only your responses to questions during the exam but also your successful completion of coursework, prior research experience, as well as other evidence of academic success. The following are the options available to the Qualifying committee when determining results of a Qualifying exam.

- *Pass*: Proceed to candidacy.
- *Conditional Pass*: Once the conditions listed by the Qualifying Committee have been satisfactorily met within the specified amount of time, the student will be passed and allowed to proceed to candidacy. Failure to fulfill any conditions within the specified time will result in termination from the program. Examples of conditions include but are not limited to, rewriting the proposal or taking additional course work.
- *Re-examination at a later date*: The student may be allowed to retake Qualifying Exam once. The original Qualifying committee will set the timeline for the retake; the committee will also decide whether to administer the re-examination or to have a new Qualifying Exam committee formed for the re-exam.
- *Termination with permission to take a terminal Master degree*: The student may register only for courses counted toward the Masters degree.
- *Termination of work toward Ph.D.*: The student may not continue in the Biochemistry Graduate Program.

Admission to Candidacy

Once you successfully complete your Qualifying Exam, you will apply for, and be admitted to candidacy. From this point on, you no longer register for “research problems” but instead must be registered for “dissertation hours” every long semester.

Admission to Ph.D. candidacy has six requirements:

- grade of B- or above in each of the Biochemistry core courses
- cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- successful completion of two elective courses
- completion of one semester TA requirement
- successful completion of the Dissertation Proposal and Qualifying Exam
- submission and final approval of a Candidacy Application (<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/candidacy.html>).

The composition of the committee is the supervising professor, three Biochemistry GSC faculty and one member from outside the Biochemistry GSC. The committee should be chosen for expertise that may assist in the proposed research. Once you are admitted to candidacy, you must meet with your dissertation committee yearly until your final defense.

If you elect to have a scholar from off-campus serve on the dissertation committee, they must be appropriately credentialed to serve on a dissertation committee. The Graduate Adviser and Graduate Dean approve such a committee member only under exceptional circumstances, and only if the expertise he/she offers cannot be provided by a faculty member on campus.

It is sometimes necessary to change the membership of the dissertation committee prior to completion of the dissertation. The Graduate Adviser and the Graduate Dean must approve the “Petition for A Change to the Doctoral Committee” form. Changes for the sole purpose of constituting a more compliant committee will not be approved. Changes in the committee must be completed well in advance of the dissertation.

Annual Meetings with Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee has three primary responsibilities:

- general supervision of your research,
- monitoring your progress toward your degree,
- certifying to the Graduate Dean that an acceptable dissertation has been submitted.

Once you have been admitted to candidacy, the dissertation committee will convene annually to review your progress. Following this meeting, you will prepare a written summary of recommendations that emerged from the meeting, the chair of the committee will indicate approval by endorsing the summary, and the final document will be submitted to the graduate adviser and becomes a part of your student file. Your supervising professor must also turn in a signed form to the graduate coordinator.

If you have not completed the dissertation within three years of admission to candidacy, the results of the annual review will be presented with recommendations to the GSC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will decide what actions are required.

Although the supervising professor provides day-to-day guidance, all members of the committee are available for consultation and you should feel free to ask for advice from them or any faculty member.

The Final Oral Exam/Dissertation Defense

When the dissertation is in final form, it is circulated to the dissertation committee four weeks prior to setting the final oral exam. When each member of the committee has had an opportunity to read the draft and agrees that it is ready to defend, as indicated by signing the petition to schedule the defense, you may schedule the final oral exam. The request is submitted to the Graduate School **at least two weeks** prior to the exam, following the Graduate School graduation procedures.

(<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/>)

The defense consists of two parts. The first is a public seminar that is open to all faculty and students. Immediately following the seminar, you meet privately with the dissertation committee to respond to questions from the committee members.

If all members of the committee approve, the committee signs the Degree Certification Form. The Chair of the GSC committee must also sign the Degree Certification form. This is the **only** document that notifies the Graduate Dean of successful completion of the exam and is necessary for graduation.

Timeline of the Ph.D. Degree

First Year

Fall semester

Core Courses (Structure and Function of Proteins and Membranes, Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression)

Student Seminar (BCH192G)

ICMB Conference and Retreat

Laboratory rotation 1 (September – mid-November)

Laboratory rotation 2 (mid-November – mid-February)

Spring Semester

Core Courses (Biophysical Methods, Structure and Dynamics of Protein and Nucleic Acids)

Student Seminar (BCH192G)

Laboratory rotations 2 (mid-November – mid-February) and 3 (mid-February – early May)

Choose a permanent laboratory by May 15

End of May: financial support from ICMB ends

First of June: your newly assigned permanent laboratory assumes financial responsibility

Second Year

Fall semester

Student Seminar (BCH192G and BCH398T)—Writing a Research Proposal

Dissertation Proposal

Spring semester

Student Seminar (BCH192G)

Qualifying Exam

Admission to candidacy

Third Year

Fall semester and Spring semester

Student Seminar (BCH192G)

Annual meeting with committee (Fall or Spring)

Completion of elective courses

Fourth Year to Graduation

Annual meeting with committee (Fall or Spring)

Final semester

File to graduate, deadline early in semester

Schedule final defense with committee

Complete all forms, graduation procedures

Meet all deadlines required by Graduate School.

Master of Arts with Thesis

The Master of Arts with Thesis involves original research carried out under the supervision of a member of the Biochemistry GSC. This option is allowed only under certain circumstances and requires the permission of the research supervisor and the graduate adviser.

Academic requirements of the Master of Arts with Thesis

- Completion of the Core Courses with a grade of at least a B- and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. The core courses are the same as for the Ph.D.
- Six semesters of Student Seminar (BCH192G).
- A total of at least 30 semester hours of course work with the following requirements:
 1. 21 hours must be graduate-level course work,
 2. 18 hours must be in the major area,
 3. 6 must be in supporting work,
 4. supporting work: non-core biology/chemistry graduate or upper division course.
- All work counted for a MA must have been initiated no earlier than six years before date of degree.
- No more than six hours of credit/no credit courses.
Approval of the Graduate Adviser is required prior to registration for a credit/no credit course.
- No course counted toward any other degree may be counted towards a Master degree.

Master of Arts Committee

Your major professor and one other Biochemistry GSC member will serve as readers of your thesis. It is your responsibility to arrange for the second reader. Any faculty member asked to be a reader should have an interest in the topic.

The readers must be allowed at least two weeks to read the thesis and return it to the student. Since revisions are often necessary, the earlier in the semester you get the thesis to the readers the better your chances of getting the thesis into the Graduate School on time.

Financial Support

Entering graduate students are supported the first 9 months (Sept-May) by ICMB or other fellowships. Continued financial support after June 1 of your first year is the responsibility of the permanent laboratory. When selecting laboratories, students should inquire as to the availability of summer support as GRAs since TA positions are very limited during the summer. The primary means of support of continuing Biochemistry students is through appointment as a teaching assistant (TA), graduate research assistant (GRA), receipt of a University Fellowship or awarding of an external fellowship (NIH, NSF, etc.).

Policy for graduate student stipends

There are no university guidelines for graduate student stipends, and stipends within the College of Natural Sciences vary widely. The Biochemistry Program's GSC makes the following recommendation for stipends for Biochemistry students:

It is the program's preference for students to maintain a stipend in line with the entering year fellowship (2013/2014, /mo plus benefits and in state tuition) throughout their graduate career with appropriate stipend increases when possible; however, the minimum stipend should be no less than the TA stipend for that fiscal year and must include tuition and fees as stipulated by the Graduate School and Vice-President for Research. It is preferred by the program that Biochemistry students who are TAs receive a financial supplement from their supervising professor to bring the TA stipend

in line with the Biochemistry fellowship stipend. It is the supervising professor's responsibility before accepting a student into a laboratory to explain what level the stipend will be, particularly if it is anticipated to be lower than the fellowship stipend.

Graduate Research Assistants

Most faculty have research grants that allow them to appoint students as graduate research assistants. Check with your supervising professor concerning the availability of continued grant support.

Teaching Assistants

The Biochemistry program does not directly control any TA positions. Biochemistry students are assigned TA positions by the Department of Molecular Biosciences. Requests for TA positions must be made online by the **supervisor** (not the student) directly to the Biochemistry Graduate Coordinator.

University Fellowships

Each year the Graduate School accepts nominations from the GSC of three students for consideration for University Fellowships. The Fellowship and Evaluation Committee makes these nominations. The Graduate Coordinator notifies all students of the fellowship competition via e-mail. Nominees are selected based on the applications submitted and on the graduate record of each applicant.

Competitive National Fellowships

Each year there are various competitive national fellowship programs (e.g., National Science Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowships). You are strongly urged to apply for external fellowships during the second year of graduate school. These fellowships are prestigious and will support you for several years of graduate education. You are also encouraged to explore and apply to fellowship programs on your own for which you may be uniquely qualified.

(<http://www.nsf.gov/funding/>, <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/index.cfm>)

Student Loans

The Office of Student Financial Services (512 475-6282, <http://finaid.utexas.edu/>) administers several long-term loan programs as well as a short-term loan program for registration and other emergency needs.

General Information

Academic Integrity

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic work, research, or records. The Biochemistry graduate program has a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Any student caught participating in academic dishonesty including, but not limited to plagiarism, falsifying academic work, research or records, will face immediate dismissal from the program. For additional information, see the General Information Bulletin, Appendix C, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities (<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/>) or the Student Judicial Services Office website (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

Attendance at an Ethics for Research Workshop (usually offered once or twice a year by the VP-Research) or online training program is required during the first year. The CITI online training module is used and should be completed as soon as possible: www.citiprogram.org

Contact Information

Change of Address and Phone Number

It is important that all directory information be kept up to date. Information can be updated via UT Direct. There must be a phone number where voice mail messages may be left for you.

Email Information

The Biochemistry Graduate Program and the University of Texas use e-mail as the primary method of communication with you. Whether we are communicating with you individually or with your entire class, it will be done via e-mail. If your e-mail is not accepting mail (full mailbox) or if you are not checking your e-mail often, you may miss important correspondence.

The Biochemistry Graduate Program will correspond with you using a UT email account only. Biochemistry students must have a UT email account at all times. (<http://www.utexas.edu/its/email/>). Notify the graduate coordinator of any changes in your email address immediately.

English Certification for International Students

UT Austin conducts English Certification for TAs whose first language is not English. The Biochemistry Graduate Program requires this certification of all international students, regardless of whether they serve as teaching assistants.

All international students admitted to the Biochemistry graduate program are anticipated to unconditionally pass the Oral English Proficiency Assessment and be “certified with student contact.” Students must be certified to be employed “with student contact” before being admitted to candidacy.

Holiday Schedules

Graduate students do not have the same break schedules as undergraduates. All Biochemistry graduate students are paid continuously through the December, spring and May breaks, and thus, have the same work schedule and holiday schedule (<http://www.utexas.edu/hr/holiday/>) as university staff. The relative tranquility of campus during breaks is very conducive to research progress in the laboratory.

Out-of-State Tuition Waivers

Students who UT Austin does not consider to be Texas residents, and who are employed as teaching assistants or graduate research assistants, are eligible for out-of-state tuition waivers. These are very important as they remove the out-of-state portion of the tuition bill. The out-of-state tuition waiver is accessed through UTDIRECT and **must be completed each semester before you register**. It may also be found at the Student Accounts Receivable website, (<http://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/sar/>)

Recipients of a Continuing or Pre-Emptive University Fellowship should **not** complete this form, as the Graduate Coordinator will request waivers for these students.

Outside Employment

Biochemistry students are **not** allowed to have outside employment such as part-time positions in restaurants, retail, etc. or any type of job that interferes with class work or research. Students may have 5-10 hours of employment that is related to their role as graduate students such as grading but only after the completion of the first year and international students are not eligible for these additional hours.

Progress Towards Degree

All students are expected to make reasonable progress toward the degree. Among other situations, any of the following could be cause for being dropped from the Biochemistry Program due to failure to progress:

Core courses not successfully completed by May of second year

Qualifying Exam not completed by fall semester of 3rd year

Dissertation not completed within four years of admission to candidacy

Registration

Continuous Registration

Biochemistry graduate students in Ph.D. candidacy must be continuously registered for dissertation hours for all long semesters (spring and fall) until the completion of their degree. (A student applies for candidacy after the successful completion of the Qualifying Exam.)

Students with a break in attendance of one long semester or more (such as a leave of absence) must apply for readmission. The Application for Readmission form should be submitted as soon as a leave of absence is granted.

Registration for Dissertation Hours

Once admitted to candidacy, you must register for dissertation hours every long semester until graduation. You no longer register for Research Problems but instead register for Dissertation Hours: 399R, 699R, 999R, 399W, 699W, or 999W.

The dissertation courses ending with an 'R' should only be taken once, the first semester after your admission to candidacy. From that point on, register for a dissertation course ending with a 'W'. Registration for an "R" course and a "W" course in the same semester is not permitted; the courses must be taken over at least two semesters. Registration for Mol 999R or 999W fulfills the 9-hour credit requirement for teaching assistants, graduate research assistants, or fellowship holders.

Late Registration

If you miss the regular registration periods, you may be able to register late, but you will be responsible for paying the late fee, which ranges between \$25 and \$200. All late registrations require the approval of the graduate adviser.

Late registration takes place during the first four class days of each long semester and during the first two class days of each summer session. Check the Course Schedule for late registration procedures.

Registration for the Masters Student

The last two semesters before graduation, thesis students must be registered in thesis courses, BCH 698A and BCH 698B. BCH 698A may only be taken once and must be taken before BCH 698B. Students must be registered for 698B the semester in which the thesis is submitted.

Safety Requirements

The University of Texas requires safety training for laboratory employees, which includes all Biochemistry graduate students. Biochemistry students are required to be in compliance with these safety classes prior to being assigned a rotation. The required safety courses are:

- OH 101 Hazard Communication Training
 - OH 201 Laboratory Safety Training
 - OH 202 Hazardous Waste Management Training
- See <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/ehs/train/> for course listings and information

Fire Extinguisher Use, animal use training, and Radiological Health are actual classes and are offered during the orientation period.

The Environmental Health and Safety Office: (<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/ehs/>) 471-3511.

Second Degrees

Biochemistry students will not be allowed to work toward or obtain a second degree outside of the Biochemistry program (e.g., a Master's degree in a separate graduate program) without the written consent of their supervising professor and the graduate advisor.

Student Records

The Graduate Coordinator maintains the official records of graduate students. It is your responsibility to insure that your records are current. Members of the Biochemistry GSC, any person appointed to your dissertation committee, and the Graduate Coordinators have access to your file. No other person has access without your written permission unless the Graduate Adviser authorizes him or her. Those authorized by the Graduate Adviser are staff members whose assistance is necessary to carry out administrative responsibilities.

Your student file may contain:

- Permanent Laboratory Form
- Qualifying Exam Form
- Safety Certificates and CITI RCR Training
Hazard Communication, Radiological Health, Laboratory Safety and Fire Extinguisher
- Curriculum Vitae
- Admission Documents
- TA Evaluations
Each time that you assist in a course, the supervising faculty member fills out an evaluation of your performance. One copy of the evaluation goes into your student file. You may request that copies of your student evaluations be placed in your file. If you choose, you may prepare a statement that will be appended to the evaluation and become part of the file.
- Annual Meeting of Dissertation Committee Forms
It is imperative each Annual Meeting is documented with an Annual Meeting Form, which will be kept in your student file.
- Other items that provide a record of the student's activities and progress.
Students are urged to place reprints of any published articles in their files. Information on awards, prizes, grants, etc., should also be given to the Graduate Coordinator.

Teaching Requirements

The Biochemistry Graduate Program has a one semester teaching requirement. You must complete this requirement during the fall or spring semester by the end of your fourth year, and before you advance to candidacy. If this is not possible because of a fellowship you may hold, this requirement must be met as soon as possible.