

# THE HANDBOOK

## NAVIGATING THE GRADUATE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

A HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES

Updated July 2025

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# part A

## **The Research Mission of The Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**

The Department's research mission is to generate new knowledge and original concepts related to solving basic and applied problems in the fields of biochemistry and molecular biology, broadly defined. Faculty members are pursuing a wide range of research questions related to the structure and function of biomolecules. Internationally recognized and well-funded research programs are established in the areas of extremophile biology, RNA biology, structural biology, enzymology, glycobiology, molecular medicine, plant biology, parasitology, proteomics, and bioinformatics, among others. The Department is enriched by the involvement of its faculty in many highly interactive and interdepartmental research centers that are housed at the University of Georgia. Among these are the following:

The Bioenergy Science Center  
The Cancer Center  
The Center for Metalloenzyme Studies  
The Center for Molecular Medicine  
Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases  
The Complex Carbohydrate Research Center  
The Georgia X-Ray Crystallography Center  
The Institute of Bioinformatics  
The Southeast Collaboratory for High-Field Biomolecular NMR

In addition, several large, federally funded research resource centers and program project grants provide opportunities for research in stem cell biology, biomedical glycomics, metabolomics, and structural biology. Research faculty have active, funded programs that utilize a diversity of experimental systems, such as prokaryotes (including thermophiles), parasites, plants, *Drosophila* and other insects, zebrafish, mice, rats, and cultured cells from many sources.

## **The Academic Mission of The Department**

The Department's academic mission is to foster in our students the development of independent learning strategies, creative thinking habits, and effective communication skills. The academic programs are designed to encourage the student's innate enthusiasm to achieve. Original research is fully integrated into the graduate (and undergraduate) curriculum of the Department, which prepares students for positions in academia, agrobiology, biotechnology, government, professional post-graduate programs, and other job sectors. The Department provides training toward research-intensive PhD degrees that are highly sought-after by academic, industrial, and governmental agencies looking to hire the best and brightest. Federally funded research programs (NIH, NSF, and/or DOE) provide resources that amply enrich the opportunities for graduate training in diverse research areas. Our current graduate student body consists of more than 60 students from the United States and abroad. The department has historically provided competitive stipends and tuition waivers.

## part B

administrative procedures

## 1. WHO DO I ASK ABOUT...?

Graduate course requirements	Angie Stockton or Graduate Coordinator
Course registration, graduate student files and forms	Angie Stockton
Personnel, payroll, keys, notary public	Angie Stockton
Departmental van, fax	Angie Stockton
Reimbursements	Angie Stockton
Computers, A/V equipment, department listserves	Angie Stockton
Graduate student affairs	Angie Stockton or Graduate Coordinator
Undergraduate course enrollment	Angie Stockton

## HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

### UGA Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (BMB) Department Website

[www.bmb.uga.edu](http://www.bmb.uga.edu)

### UGA email and myID account

Register for email account and university myID

[www.uga.edu/myid](http://www.uga.edu/myid)

### ATHENA

Online course registration, student account and transcript information

[athena.uga.edu](http://athena.uga.edu)

### eLC (electronic Learning Commons) at UGA

Used by many instructors to post course syllabi and assignments

[uga.view.usg.edu](http://uga.view.usg.edu)

### UGA Parking Services

Register and pay tickets online

If you're going to be parking on campus, get your permit on your first day

[www.parking.uga.edu](http://www.parking.uga.edu)

### UGA Health Center

Clinic services, hours and contact numbers

[www.uhs.uga.edu](http://www.uhs.uga.edu)

### UGA Counseling and Psychiatric Services

Services, hours, and contact numbers

[www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/index.html](http://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/index.html)

### UGA library

Hours, holdings, online journals and literature services: [www.libs.uga.edu](http://www.libs.uga.edu)

UGA library list of online journals: [www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals](http://www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals)

Science Citation Index: [isi1.isiknowledge.com](http://isi1.isiknowledge.com)

Many other reference sources: [www.galileo.peachnet.edu](http://www.galileo.peachnet.edu)

### Graduate School

Forms, contact info, and policies (remember that ALL forms get turned into Angie—she will turn them into the graduate school for you and make a copy for your BMB records)

[www.uga.edu/gradschool](http://www.uga.edu/gradschool)

### UGA Student Newspaper

Red & Black (an independent student newspaper): [www.redandblack.com](http://www.redandblack.com)

### Athens life

Flagpole (local events weekly): [www.flagpole.com](http://www.flagpole.com)

Athens Banner-Herald (local daily paper): [www.onlineathens.com](http://www.onlineathens.com)

## **2. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Electronic Mail**

All faculty, staff, and graduate students need a university and/or departmental email account (to get a UGA “MyID”, go to [www.uga.edu/myid](http://www.uga.edu/myid)).

All students will receive a uga email acct (@uga.edu). This is the only email address by which the department will officially interact with you. It is your responsibility to keep this mailbox from reaching its capacity.

### **Telephones**

To make a call to an on-campus number, dial the last 5 digits of the number. To make a local, off-campus call, dial 9 + the 10-digit telephone number (area code + number). To make a long-distance call, dial 9 + 1 + the 10-digit telephone number.

### **Mail (Davison Life Sciences Building, CCRC)**

Campus and US mail is delivered and picked up daily. Please remember to affix proper postage to personal mail.

## **3. OFFICE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

See Angie Stockton in Life Science Bldg or Karen Howard in the CCRC.

## **4. DEPARTMENTAL SEMINARS**

BMB has instituted a new seminar program run by graduate students with minimal faculty input. Graduate students now host biannual mini-symposia on topics chosen by students. Mini-symposia are designed to maximize student interactions with speakers during breakout sessions. The department will continue to host seminars. Specific faculty or the BGSA invites these speakers, however, these seminars do not occur weekly. Students should consider attendance at departmental symposia and seminars to be mandatory. These events are held at great expense to the Department and feature cutting-edge work in biochemistry and molecular biology. As a community, we should extend this courtesy to our guest speakers that includes attention during the talk and participation in lively question/answer sessions at the end of the seminars. No question is unworthy of being asked. In fact, seminar speakers enjoy questions from students far more than questions from faculty. Do not hesitate to participate in the discussion. The schedule for BMB Seminars is listed on the home page of the BMB website (<http://www.bmb.uga.edu>).

Seminars for third and fourth year students are part of BMB8060, which is held weekly in B118 Life Sciences. All students are expected to actively participate according to the course outline. Departmental faculty, postdocs and research staff are encouraged to attend.

Ph.D. defenses are scheduled throughout the semester in the Davison Life Sciences Building or the Complex Carbohydrate Research Center (CCRC). These seminars are special occasions for the Department and are expected to draw broad attendance from faculty, students, postdocs, and research staff. The thesis defense is a momentous event, an opportunity to celebrate the scientific achievements of the Department’s members and attendance is expected by graduate students.

Other departments, centers, and programs at UGA host excellent seminars that you should consider attending. Among them are seminars at the CCRC including the Glycoscience Training Program seminars, the Department of Cell Biology, the Dept. of Genetics, the Program in Developmental Biology, the Center for Molecular Medicine, Institute of Bioinformatics, and the Center for Tropical

and Emerging Global Disease. These seminars are highlighted and advertised to you through specific mailing lists or postings around Davison Life Sciences, the CCRC, or the Coverdell Building. Attendance at these seminars is highly encouraged, to the extent that they are of interest to you or relevant to your research.

## **5. BOOKS AND JOURNALS**

UGA library list of online journals: [www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals/](http://www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals/)

Science Citation Index: [isi1.isiknowledge.com/](http://isi1.isiknowledge.com/)

Current Prot. in Mol. Biol.: [www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/mrwhome/104554809/HOME](http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/mrwhome/104554809/HOME)

Many other reference sources: [www.galileo.peachnet.edu/](http://www.galileo.peachnet.edu/)

Guided tours are available for The Science Library in the Boyd Graduate Research Center.

## **6. DEPARTMENTAL VEHICLES**

A limited number of state vehicles are available for specific purposes related to Departmental or research needs. See Angie (Life Science) or Karen Howard (CCRC) for details and procedures.

## **7. STIPEND, FEES, AND HEALTH INSURANCE**

All graduate students in good standing the BMB department will receive a competitive stipend and a tuition waiver will be automatically requested upon their behalf. Fees and insurance are the responsibility of the student.



# graduate student information

## PART C

## 1. PROGRAM DETAILS GENERAL INFORMATION

### Annual Progress Reports-zac

All students, regardless of their source of financial support (Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, other Fellowship), are encouraged to submit an annual progress report by December 15th of each year (Angie will send these around and collect them). ***Students who are planning on graduating during that Fall semester must still file an annual progress report.*** Forms will be e-mailed to all students by November 1<sup>st</sup> and should be returned promptly. One essential requirement for meeting progress expectations is that you will have had a thesis committee meeting during the previous year. The Annual Progress Reports serve two purposes: 1) They ensure that each student is moving forward toward completion of their thesis; and 2) They provide an overview of the state of the Program, facilitating the oversight function of the Graduate Affairs Committee.

### Academic Appeals

Students have the right to appeal decisions regarding academic matters. An appeal must be made within thirty days after receiving the written (or e-mail) ruling, and students should ask the Department Head what procedures are appropriate. Grades are appealed within the department or college in which they are earned, which may not be the student's major department or college. In general, appeals should begin at the level at which the decision was made. Therefore, in the case of grades, a student would begin with the instructor. After the instructor, the graduate students' next line of appeal is to the Dean's office for the Graduate School. For appeals regarding departmental programmatic decisions, the first level is to the Graduate Coordinator, then to the Graduate Affairs Committee.

### M.S. Thesis and Ph.D. Dissertations

All theses and dissertations must be filed electronically. See details on the web page at: [grad.uga.edu](http://grad.uga.edu).

Per the Graduate Bulletin, the Master's thesis demonstrates independent judgment in developing a problem from primary sources, and a Ph.D. dissertation represents originality in research, independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. It is the responsibility of the advisory committee to review and evaluate the thesis or dissertation as a representation of a student's individual effort. **As such, the use of generative AI in theses and dissertations is considered unauthorized assistance per the Academic Code of Honesty and is prohibited unless specifically authorized by members of the advisory committee for use within the approved scope. If approved by the advisory committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be disclosed in a statement within the thesis or dissertation.**

### Outside Fellowships

First-year students may be eligible for NSF, NIH, Howard Hughes, or similar national pre-doctoral fellowships. Students are encouraged to apply for outside funding; it is to your advantage and to the advantage of the Department and the University. Some forms are available from the Graduate School. Many deadlines for external fellowships are in early November. Accordingly, most fellowship applications do not require that the student have generated any relevant preliminary data. Fellowship-granting organizations are more interested in assessing the ability of the applicant to present a logical argument in a clear and concise narrative. A member of the Graduate Affairs Committee is available to assist any student interested in applying for external fellowships. The Graduate Coordinator can also steer you toward appropriate resources. See [grad.uga.edu](http://grad.uga.edu) for more information. For NSF graduate research fellowships, see [www.nsf.gov/grfp](http://www.nsf.gov/grfp).

## **Outside Employment**

Successful graduate study is, at minimum, a full-time endeavor. The faculty of the Department works very hard to maintain the stipend at its maximum, allowable level (within the limits set by the State Government acting through the University Board of Regents). The stipend provides sufficient income for the expected cost of living of a graduate student in Athens, leaving little justification for undertaking other outside employment. Thus, outside employment without prior unanimous consent of the mentor, the thesis committee, the Graduate Affairs committee, and the department Head will result in dismissal from the program.

## **Travel**

If money is available, the Department may provide travel funds for graduate students to attend scientific meetings. Departmental travel funds are allocated by the Department Head. Students applying for domestic travel money from the Biochemistry Department must also apply for travel funds from the Graduate School, and for international travel from the Office of the Vice President for Research (see below). The principal investigator (major professor) must approve funding from individual research grants.

- i. Students must apply for funds from the Graduate School and meeting organizers (if available).
- ii. Students must be presenting research at the meeting (required by Graduate School).
- iii. Major professors should justify the student's attendance at the meeting.
- iv. Priority will be given to students who do not have access to other travel funds.

***If you are traveling on University-related business, regardless of how your expenses are covered, you must complete a travel authority (see appropriate personal in Life Sciences or in the CCRC, or the CMM) at least three weeks prior to departure.*** Airfare can be charged directly to specific grants by an authorized travel agent, but you must complete the travel authority prior to contacting the travel agent. You can also be reimbursed for airline tickets prior to travel. Meals, lodging and other travel expenses will be reimbursed at an appropriate per diem rate after completion of the trip. Upon your return, you must complete a Travel Expense Statement in order to be reimbursed for these expenses. Receipts for lodging, meeting registration, airfare (if not previously submitted), shuttle service, parking, and gas must be submitted with the expense statement. Daily meals will fall under the per diem reimbursement rate.

The Graduate School has limited funds to assist graduate students with travel to present papers at professional conferences within the United States. The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) has limited funds for international travel to meetings. ***Travel requests to either the Graduate School or OVPR must be submitted through the BMB, CCRC or CMM office and are only accepted for consideration four times per year – announcements will be sent to the students.***

## **2. Ph.D. DEGREE**

### **ILS Laboratory Rotations and Entry into BMB**

The ILS Program administers laboratory rotations during the first semester in residence. In the spring, students who join a BMB laboratory for dissertation research will enter the BMB graduate program. At this point, they will register for BCMB 9000. ***All students should also sign up for 1 hour of BCMB 8070 (Laboratory Meeting, all semesters) and 1 hour of BCMB 8080 (Journal Club, every Fall and Spring) while in residence.*** The Laboratory Meeting Course serves an important function for most

BMB laboratories, providing a forum for organizing the laboratory, discussing data, and exploring new concepts with the laboratory members and the major professor. Upon joining a laboratory, an executed “thesis mentor/mentee form” should be turned into Angie Stockton. See [bmb.uga.edu](http://bmb.uga.edu) for forms.

## Forms

Forms required by the Graduate School or the department are available at the Graduate School web site ([grads.uga.edu](http://grads.uga.edu)), the BMB Department web site ([bmb.uga.edu](http://bmb.uga.edu)), or from Angie Stockton.

Remember that all forms are to be turned in to Angie Stockton who will make a copy for your BMB file and for programmatic review by the Graduate Affairs Committee. Angie will forward completed forms to the appropriate office.

## Teaching Skills

The Department values high-quality undergraduate/graduate instruction and provides several mechanisms by which graduate students can practice and improve their teaching skills. To be a TA graduate students must take GRSC 7770, a course designed to establish clear, minimum standards for effective teaching (GRSC 7770 may be taken concurrently with your teaching assignment). Additional teaching opportunities are available through other departmental programs and all graduate students are encouraged to expand their teaching experiences as allowed by their research progress. Students should discuss their required or planned teaching commitments with their major professor prior to requesting a formal assignment to a specific course.

## Graders

All graduate students are required to serve as Course Assistants (“graders”) for departmental courses during the Fall and Spring of their second year in residence. The only exception to this would graduate students who are also being paid on a teaching assistantship. Those student will serve as graders once they transfer back to an GRA position.

Course assistants (“graders”) are NOT teaching assistants and are being paid directly by individual investigators to conduct research. Thus, graders are expected to spend no more than 2-3 hours per week (*~30-45 hours per semester*) in their duties. For example, if a student is grading for a class of 50 students with 4 essay and short answer-based exams, they spend ~4 hours in class proctoring and perhaps an average of 8 hours grading each of the exams for a total of 36 hours during the semester--this does not leave them time to have office hours, mandatory attendance at lectures, run review sessions, etc.. Alternatively, a course assistant could be used to give a weekly hourly review session (with a 2 hour prep time for each contact hour this would total *~45 hours per semester*). However, doing both grading and teaching with office hours and attending lectures would be the role of a full-time TA and *far exceeds* the expected requirements of our BMB course assistants.

## Seminars

The BCMB8060 course (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Seminar) consists of three parts: the BMB mini-symposia, BMB scheduled seminars, and the Graduate Student Seminar series. The Graduate Student Seminar Series, organized by the graduate students, provides a valuable opportunity for students to present their research progress to their peers. The Graduate Student Seminar Series meets every Fall and Spring semester for 1 hour. ***All students are expected to give a Graduate Student Seminar in their 3<sup>rd</sup> (Fall) and 4<sup>th</sup> (Spring) years of residence.*** This venue provides students with experience in organizing and presenting data to a diverse audience. Students should find this

invaluable for their future careers as they prepare seminars for meetings and job interviews. ***All students should register for 2 hours of BCMB 8060 every Fall and Spring semester for which they are enrolled and must attend all of the Seminars.*** In the case of an unavoidable conflict with teaching, or other professional or personal obligations, please contact the course coordinators beforehand.

### **Journal Clubs**

Many journal clubs are offered by various groups within the Department. These journal clubs meet at various times and are generally open to interested students. It is the responsibility of the Major Professor to make sure that all graduate students under their direction are participating in a journal club. ***All students should register for 1 hour of BCMB 8080 (Journal Club) every Fall/Spring semester for which they are enrolled and should actively participate by giving presentations.*** Journal Club participation provides important experience and a mechanism for students to stay current with the primary literature.

### **Grant Writing Course**

All second year BMB students beginning Spring 2019 will register for ***BCMB 8990***. This course will teach students how to construct an NIH F series grant application based on their dissertation project. Goals include learning how to break down questions into well controlled testable hypotheses as well as construct and critically assess the Introduction, Specific Aims, Significance and Scientific Premise, Innovation, and Approach of a grant proposal. ***This proposal may serve as the written component of the student's qualifying exam, which is described below.***

### **Major Professor**

Major professors are selected by mutual agreement between a faculty member and the student with the consent of the Department Head. The rotation system, now administered by ILS, is designed to help new students identify major professors appropriate for their research and educational goals. A major professor should be chosen by the beginning of spring semester of the first year and must be a member of the Graduate Faculty of UGA. Students may change major professors later if appropriate arrangements can be made, although this may result in an extension of the student's tenure in graduate school.

### **Graduate Advisory Committee**

Selection and Composition: Every doctoral student, with the advice of his or her major professor, will select an Advisory Committee (also more generally referred to as the Thesis Committee) by the beginning of the fall semester of the second year. Once the committee is formed, the “Advisory Committee for Doctoral Candidates” form must be submitted to the Graduate School through Angie Stockton in the BMB front office.

The Advisory Committee will have a minimum of 4 faculty members, including the student's major professor (students with co-advisors need a total of five committee members). The committee must include at least two tenure-track members of the BMB Department (regular faculty). ***A minimum of three members of the Advisory Committee must be members of the graduate faculty of UGA.***

Persons employed by The University of Georgia and who hold the following ranks may serve on doctoral committees: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, public service assistant, public service associate, senior public service associate, assistant research scientist, associate research scientist, and senior research scientist. Persons having the following ranks may not serve on doctoral committees in an official capacity: instructors, lecturers, and academic professionals. In addition to the regular committee members, a person having no official relationship with the University of Georgia may be appointed to serve as a voting member on the advisory committee of a

graduate student on nomination by the graduate coordinator and approval of the dean of the Graduate School. When nominating a non-affiliated person, the graduate coordinator must submit the nominee's current resume with the appropriate forms and a letter addressed to the dean of the Graduate School explaining why the services of the non-affiliated person are requested. A person nominated must have distinguished credentials in the field of study. A non-affiliated person appointed to a graduate student's committee must attend meetings associated with the appointment. The composition of the Advisory Committee can change over the course of the student's graduate career as needed to ensure that the most appropriate advice is available to guide the evolving thesis project. Changes in Advisory Committee membership must follow the general guidelines for the committee composition (see above). The Graduate Affairs Committee should be notified in writing of Advisory Committee changes as soon as possible, but before the first Advisory Committee meeting is held with the new members. A new "Advisory Committee for Doctoral Candidates" form will need to be filed with the Graduate School through Angie Stockton. ***The first meeting of the advisory committee will be held by the end of the fall semester of the second year to help the student design a plan of study and plan the qualifying exam.*** Permission to delay the first committee meeting must be obtained from the Graduate Affairs Committee. By the end of fall semester of the student's second year, a "Preliminary Doctoral Program of Study" form must be submitted to the Biochemistry Department through Angie Stockton. ***Students are not allowed to bring refreshments for faculty to committee meetings or exams.***

#### **Responsibilities of the Graduate Advisory Committee:**

- i. **Annual Committee Meetings:** A student's Advisory Committee must meet once a year. The student is responsible for scheduling the meetings. All committee members are expected to attend, but in the case of an unavoidable absence, three members will constitute a quorum. At the beginning of each meeting, the graduate student will step out of the room to allow the committee to discuss progress and concerns with the Major Advisor. Next, the Major Advisor will step out of the room to allow the committee to discuss any concerns that the student may have. The goal is to provide a space for the student to interact with their committee in the absence of their major advisor; thus it is important that this step in the process happens, even if the student has no concerns. After the meeting, committee members will sign an "Annual Advisory Committee" form. **The Last Meeting:** If the student is also seeking permission to schedule their Ph.D defense, then the committee members are required to list any stipulations to the defense in the space provided on the Annual Advisory Committee form, so that there are no misunderstandings and the student can plan appropriately for the next step in their career.
- ii. It is the expectation of the BMB Graduate Program that students should be able to complete their course of study within five years. The deliberations of the Advisory Committee should balance this goal against real progress in the student's thesis work to achieve the best possible outcome.
- iii. The Advisory Committee will prepare, administer, and grade qualifying examinations.
- iv. Members of the Advisory Committee should be available to the student for advice and guidance beyond the confines of the annual meeting. Students should expect that Advisory Committee members are a resource for both scientific considerations and also for discussing topics related to professional development.

## **Admission to Candidacy and Timing of the Qualifying Exam**

Students must pass a comprehensive qualifying examination before becoming a candidate for the PhD degree. Qualifying exams should be taken no later than the Summer semester in the graduate student's second year in residence. Failure to take the oral exam by the end of the Summer semester may be considered inadequate progress and may affect the student's financial support, ability to register, and academic standing. The Major Professor and the student's Advisory Committee may request a waiver from GAC to delay the qualifying exam. The request should briefly explain the circumstances and give reasonable timeframe for scheduling the exam. Common reasons for delay include scheduling conflicts, more time to adequately assess the student, or a personal reason leading to a prolonged absence of the student or Major Professor.

## **Qualifying Examination**

***Overarching Purpose: To verify that the graduate student has immersed herself or himself in their chosen field of study, and has a sufficient grasp of key concepts, hypothesis building, and experimental design to warrant progression towards candidacy.***

All members of the student's Advisory Committee must be present for the oral exam, either in person, or by teleconference, if necessary. The qualifying exam is comprised of two parts: a written research proposal based on the student's planned dissertation research, and an oral exam based on the presentation and defense of this proposal. The written proposal must be submitted to the committee two weeks before the scheduled exam (although the committee may choose to accept a shorter deadline). The oral defense expects mastery of a broad knowledge base related to the student's proposed research. Therefore, the student should expect that oral exam questions from Advisory Committee members will range beyond the narrow boundaries of the written proposal, probing for evidence that the student has acquired comprehensive knowledge related to the biochemical and molecular principles underlying their thesis proposal. One purpose of this exam is to evaluate the student's ability to identify a hypothesis or question and develop a practical and coherent experimental approach to address it and its ramifications. Another purpose is to encourage the student to focus as soon as possible on developing a viable dissertation subject.

According to UGA Graduate School rules, the oral exam is open to the public. The Graduate School will publish notice of the exam, and send the required paperwork to the student's PI for Advisory Committee signatures. The student's name, department, title of presentation, time, and place is required. **BMB requires** that all the information be e-mailed directly to Angie Stockton ([angie1@uga.edu](mailto:angie1@uga.edu)), at least three weeks before the planned examination date, and she will send all relevant information on to the Graduate School. Additionally, the qualifying exam rubric form that is to be filled out by committee members must be turned into Angie Stockton following completion of the qualifying exam along with the forms from the graduate school.

***The Role of the Major Professor in Preparing the Student for the Written Proposal.*** The purpose of the written proposal is to evaluate the student's ability to develop and present a coherent, logical, and well-thought-out research project in the area of their thesis research. Therefore, while the student may consult with his/her Major Professor regarding the written proposal prior to distributing it to the committee, the proposal must represent the student's independent work and thinking. The student and Major Professor are encouraged to discuss specific aims and the research plan in *broad* terms, but the ideas must originate from the student, with an appropriate level of guidance from the Major Professor. Specifically:

- (i) Specific Aims. The Major Professor may not suggest detailed Aims to the student. However, they may discuss the student's choice of Aims, and they are allowed to identify obvious weaknesses in order to inspire the student to think more deeply about the project.
- (ii) Research Strategy. The Major Professor should not suggest specific experimental approaches, but they may question the student as to how an approach relates to an Aim or fits into the proposal. They may also direct the student to relevant literature or identify major weaknesses in the approach, but the student should come up with strategies to address the weaknesses. The Major Professor should encourage the student to think about orthogonal and alternative approaches.
- (iii) Examples of Grant Writing and Grantsmanship. The Major Professor may provide the student with example grants (their own, or those of their colleagues), providing there is no significant overlap with the student's specific proposal. The Major Professor may not edit any part of the document, but they may point out areas that are unclear or need work.

**Research proposal guidelines.** The written research proposal will take the form of NIH F series grant application based on their dissertation project and will be written as part of the **BCMB 8990 Grant Writing Course**.

- Title page: 1 page (title of proposal and your name)
- Project Summary/Abstract: no more than 30 lines of text
- Project Narrative: no more than 3 sentences
- Specific aims: no more than 1 page
- Research Strategy: Significance (1-2 pages) and Research Approach- suggest 4-5 pages. Cannot exceed 6 pages total.
- Bibliography/Literature Cited: no page limit. Number by order of appearance in body of grant. List all authors, year, complete title and inconclusive page numbers at end of grant using output style called NIH (Grant Format). Can be downloaded from Endnote website if you do not have it in your styles folder. Likely will have 25-50 references
- Biosketch (limit to 5 pages)

**Typographical format:**

- Use an Arial typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.)
- Use standard size (8.5" x 11") paper with at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. Must be single-sided and single-spaced and consecutively number pages throughout. JUSTIFY TEXT (looks much more professional). SET SPACING to Exactly 12 point (instead of single) and it will not do weird things with symbols, etc and it will give you a couple extra lines per page INSTEAD of indenting paragraphs, set to like a 3pt space between paragraphs...looks cleaner
- *Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes* For Figure Legends, you may use a smaller type size (no smaller than Arial 8 points).

After the Qualifying Exam, it is expected that future research progress may mandate changes in the aims and experimental approaches of the project. These evolving targets should be actively discussed in the annual Graduate Advisory Committee Meetings and it should be clear that the proposal is not a contract of work to be executed. It is important to note that a student can request an Advisory Committee Meeting at anytime. Committee meetings need not be limited to one per year. Students, in consultation with their major professor, are primarily responsible for obtaining the advisement needed to ensure timely progress toward completion of thesis research.

**Oral exam guidelines.** All members of the student's Advisory Committee must be present for the oral exam, either in person or by teleconference if necessary. The senior-most member of the Advisory Committee (not counting the Major Professor) will serve as the presiding chair of the oral examination. The goal of the oral exam is to assess the student's capacity for independent thinking. Thus, the Major Professor should NOT participate in the discussions or questions. However, if the presiding chair deems it appropriate, the major professor may clarify some questions or may question the student in limited areas. In accordance with Graduate School Policy, the qualifying exam is also open to any faculty member who might wish to attend. The oral exam will usually begin with the committee members asking a general knowledge question related to the written proposal. The oral exam will then continue with the student delivering an oral presentation with slides of the written research proposal. The committee members (or any other faculty members of the BMB Department who may be present) may interrupt the presentation and question the student on any subject that they deem to be relevant. There is no specified time limit for the oral exam, but it generally lasts ~2 hours.

**Qualifying Exam Outcomes:** The exam assessment is based on the combined quality of the written proposal and the oral defense. The qualifying exam will be graded pass or fail, with a "pass" requiring no more than one dissenting vote. Abstentions are not allowed.

In the event of a failed exam, the Graduate School and the Program will allow the student the opportunity to retake the Qualifying Examination. The second attempt must take place before the Spring semester of the graduate students third year in residence (any additional delay must be approved by GAC). Prior to the second attempt, the Advisory Committee may determine that the student has a specific area (or areas) of weakness requiring remediation. In this case, the student may be required to perform additional coursework, directed reading, and/or additional written work before taking the exam for the second and final time. The committee members may also require that the student rewrite the research proposal in part or in its entirety. If a grade of "fail" is assigned by the Advisory Committee on the second attempt or if the student fails to retake the exam during the assigned time, then the student will not be admitted to PhD candidacy and may be dismissed from the program. In some instances, it may be appropriate for the student to complete the requirements for a Master's degree. The student should consult with their Major Professor, their Advisory Committee, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Departmental Head to determine if a Masters is warranted, and to assess the likelihood of the student making timely progress toward the completion of a defensible Master's thesis.

**Formal Admission to candidacy.** The student must petition for admission to candidacy following successful completion of the written and oral components of the qualifying examination. This petition requires filling out the appropriate Graduate School form, which is provided to the major professor prior to the oral examination. As part of their application for admission to candidacy, students must provide the Graduate School with their "Final Doctoral Program of Study". In addition, the qual exam rubric executed by each committee member must be collected. All forms should be turned into Angie Stockton, who will make sure that everything is in order and then submit them to the Graduate School. Following admission to candidacy, there is a two-semester minimum residency requirement before the student can graduate.

**Time Limit on Candidacy (For students who matriculate in Fall 2024 or later; For students who matriculated prior to Fall 2024, see next section):** Doctoral students must complete all requirements for the doctoral degree and the degree must be awarded within eight (8) calendar years after initial enrollment/registration in the program. For example, if the date of first registration for a doctoral student is the fall semester of 2024, the eight-year time limit expires in summer semester of 2032. The student's time-to-degree clock starts with the first course approved for inclusion in their doctoral Program of Study, or the date of matriculation into the program, whichever occurred earlier. For ILS students, that occurs in the Spring Semester. A student who exceeds the time limit may petition for an extension (see below)

**Time Limit on Candidacy (For students who matriculated before Fall 2024):** The dissertation must be completed within five years following the admission to candidacy in order to qualify for graduation. If a doctoral student's candidacy expires the first week of classes in the final semester of the fifth year, the student is granted the remainder of the semester to complete degree requirements without special permission of the dean of the Graduate School. A student who exceeds the time limit may petition for an extension (see below).

***Degree Time Limit Extensions.*** Doctoral students in good academic standing who experience extenuating circumstances that prevent them from completing their degrees within the requisite 8 years (or five years of candidacy for students who matriculated prior to Fall 2024) may petition for an extension of the degree time limit to the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School. Such circumstances include military obligations, family and medical challenges, and other life events. A petition for an extension of the degree time limit requires support from the major professor, graduate coordinator, and academic unit head.

To petition for an extension of time, the student should contact the Graduate Coordinator for assistance. The petition consists of three parts: (i) a letter from the student explaining why the degree could not be finished within the five-year window, and a binding schedule for completion of the degree; (ii) the student's major professor must review the extension of time request and write a letter to the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School stating approval or disapproval of the petition; and (iii) the Graduate Coordinator and department head/chair must review the major professor's recommendation and indicate their concurrence by writing an additional letter. If they do not concur with the recommendation, further justification should be provided in the letter. The Graduate Coordinator will submit the appeal to the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School.

The maximum extension of the degree time limit that may be granted is 24 months and the total time to degree shall not exceed 10 years.

If a petition for an extension of time is approved by the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School, the student will be notified in writing of the expectations for progress, and of the expected timeline for degree completion.

If the petition is denied, the student will be notified in writing that they will be dismissed from the Graduate School. Students dismissed under such circumstances may appeal their dismissal to the Appeals Committee of Graduate Council.

### **Program of Study and Recommended Course Sequences**

A "Preliminary Doctoral Program of Study" form should have been completed by the student and filed within the Department by the end of the Fall semester of the second year. The "Final Doctoral Program of Study" will be developed in consultation with the major professor and the Advisory Committee. The Final Program should be forwarded to Angie Stockton, who will file it with the Graduate School upon successful completion of the qualifying exam. Course recommendations are further described below. All students are required to take at least 30 hours of 8000 level courses, including 3 hours of

BCMB 9300 (Doctoral Dissertation) in the final semester. The Graduate Affairs Committee can waive course requirements, providing a majority of the student's Advisory Committee supports the waiver.

International students whose native language is not English (*i.e.*, those required to take the TOEFL) are required to take the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or its institutional equivalent, the SPEAK Test, before being considered for a teaching assignment. Questions about these requirements should be directed to the Graduate Affairs Committee

***Required of all PhD students (a grade higher than C+ must be obtained to count towards fulfilling requirements): Mandatory Credit Hours: Fall/Spring Semesters= 18 credit hours, Summer= 15 credit hours.***

- 1) BCMB 8060 (2 credit hours): BMB Seminar. Must sign up every Fall/Spring Semester (NO summer Class).
- 2) BCMB 8070 (1 credit hour): Research Discussion (in lab). Must sign up Fall/Spring/Summer Semesters.
- 3) BCMB 8080 (1 credit hour): Journal Club. Must sign up Fall/Spring Semesters (NO summer Class).
- 4) BCMB 8113/8114 (2 credit hours each): Spring Core courses in Advanced Genetics, Cell Bio, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. BCMB 8113 is the first half of the semester, and BCMB 8114 is the second half.
- 5) BCMB 8213/8214 (2 credit hours each): Fall Core courses in Advanced Genetics, Cell Bio, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. BCMB 8213 is the first half of the semester, and BCMB 8214 is the second half
- 6) BCMB 8990 (2 credit hours): Grant writing. Must be taken the Spring Semester of your second year.
- 7) BCMB 9000 (1-14 credit hours): Research. Hours must be adjusted to reach 18 total hours in Fall/Spring semesters, and 15 total hours in the Summer
- 8) BCMB 9300 (3 credit hours): Dissertation. Must be taken in the semester the student expects to defend.
- 9) 8000 Level Electives (6 credit hours): These courses may come from any department. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to substitute a 6000 level course, but this substitution requires the approval of your PI and Advisory Committee.
- 10) ***The publication of scholarly work is the capstone achievement of a Ph.D. dissertation. As a measure of the significance of your research, BMB Ph.D. students are expected to publish a minimum of one peer-reviewed research manuscript or patent application as first- or co-first author (see below).***

#### *Typical Class Schedules*

<i>1<sup>st</sup> Year Spring</i>		<i>1<sup>st</sup> Year Summer</i>		<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Year Fall</i>	
<i>Courses</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<i>BCMB 8060</i>	<i>2</i>			<i>BCMB 8060*</i>	<i>2</i>

BCMB 8070	I	BCMB 8070*	I	BCMB 8070*	I
BCMB 8080	I			BCMB 8080*	I
BCMB 8113/8114	4			BCMB 8213/8214	4
Elective (optional)	-			Elective (optional)	-
BCMB 9000	10*	BCMB 9000	14	BCMB 9000	10*
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>18</b>

\*If a student decides to take an elective in any semester, reduce the BCMB 9000 credit hours to produce a total of 18 hours in the semester.

2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Spring		2 <sup>nd</sup> Year and up Summer		3 <sup>rd</sup> Year and up Fall/Spring	
Courses	Hours	Courses	Hours	Courses	Hours
BCMB 8060	2			BCMB 8060*	2
BCMB 8070	I	BCMB 8070*	I	BCMB 8070*	I
BCMB 8080	I			BCMB 8080*	I
BCMB 8990	2				
Elective (optional)	-			Elective (optional)	-
BCMB 9000	12*	BCMB 9000	14	BCMB 9000	14*
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>18</b>

\*If a student decides to take an elective in any semester, reduce the BCMB 9000 credit hours to produce a total of 18 hours in the semester.

*Final Semester (the semester in which a student plans to defend)*

Fall or Spring Defense		Summer Defense	
Courses	Hours	Courses	Hours
BCMB 8060	2		
BCMB 8070	I	BCMB 8070*	I
BCMB 8080	I		
BCMB 9300	3	BCMB 9300	3
BCMB 9000	11	BCMB 9000	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>15</b>

## **BMB Publication Requirements**

The publication of scholarly work represents the culmination of a research project and is the capstone achievement of a successful Ph.D. dissertation. All BMB Ph.D. students are expected to have had accepted for publication a minimum of one peer-reviewed research manuscript or patent application as first- or co-first author prior to scheduling their defense. However, extenuating circumstances may justify waiving this policy. If the student has submitted a manuscript or is nearing the submission of a manuscript (within 60 days of defending), the student's advisory committee may waive the publication requirement by a majority vote of the full committee. If a submission or publication is not expected within this time frame, but the Major Professor and the majority of the full advisory committee support the student defending, the student or the Major Professor may appeal to the BMB Graduate Affairs Committee for a waiver. The appeal should briefly explain why the student's work cannot be published before the defense. If the majority of the full Graduate Affairs Committee denies the appeal, then the student or the Major Professor may appeal to the BMB Department Head, who will make the final decision.

***Co-First Authored Work in the Dissertation:*** The student must be either the sole author or the first co-author of each article submitted as a manuscript chapter. The student must be able to defend the entirety of the research in their thesis or dissertation. If the academic program allows chapters that are a collaborative effort with co-researchers or co-authors, each co-authored chapter must include an Author Contributions section, regardless of whether that work is unpublished, submitted for publication, or already published. This section should include the specific contributions of each author, including the author of the thesis or dissertation, with credit given according to the norms of the discipline. In addition, the Author Contributions section must include a declarative statement that every co-author agreed that the work may be included in this thesis or dissertation. If the student was unable to secure the response of every co-author, a statement should be included to indicate that due diligence was used to allow all co-authors an opportunity to respond.

For more information, including an Authorship Contributions template, [see the theses and dissertations style manual.](#)

## ***Annual Milestones for BMB Graduate Students by Year (revised Dec 2020):***

***The publication of scholarly work is the capstone achievement of a Ph.D. dissertation. As a measure of the significance of your research, BMB Ph.D. students are expected to publish a minimum of one peer-reviewed research manuscript or patent application as first- or co-first author.***

### **YEAR 1**

Learn the background and significance of your project. Identify the knowledge gap you will address. Draft a research plan. Begin forming Advisory Committee if possible.

Fall: ILS Directed. Choose BMB Major Professor at the end the semester.

Spring: Begin your independent research.

Summer: Form Advisory Committee.

## **YEAR 2**

Serve as a Grader for BMB. Hold first committee meeting to discuss the knowledge gap you are addressing and your research plan. Convert your research plan into a proposal for your qualifying exams. Begin thinking about your project in terms of eventual publications. Complete Qualifying Exam by end of Year 2 (you must schedule your exam with Angie Stockton at least three weeks in advance).

Fall: Have your first committee meeting .

Spring: Complete Grant writing course.

Summer: Earliest that you are expected to complete Qualifying Exam Requirements and enter candidacy (consult with Angie Stockton  $\geq 3$  weeks in advance).

## **YEAR 3**

Complete your first annual advisory committee meeting and assessment. Your committee can help you identify and resolve any remaining roadblocks to publishing your work. Go to scientific meetings to present your pre- or post-publication findings.

Fall: Must advance to Candidacy this semester at the latest.

Spring: Hold Advisory Committee meeting if not done in Fall.

Summer: Hold Advisory Committee meeting if not done in Fall or Spring.

## **YEAR 4**

Complete your annual advisory committee meeting and assessment. With your committee's help, re-evaluate your publishing plan and make adjustments as necessary. Go to scientific meetings.

Fall: Hold Advisory Committee meeting (Fall or Spring).

Spring: Present research progress in 8060 and hold annual Advisory committee meeting if not done in Fall.

Summer: Hold annual Advisory Committee meeting if not done in Fall or Spring

## **YEAR 5 AND BEYOND**

Complete your annual advisory committee meeting and assessment. Continue making progress towards publications. Go to scientific meetings.

Fall/Spring: Hold yearly Advisory Committee meeting. Sign up for BCMB9300 (3) in semester of anticipated graduation.

Summer: Hold annual Advisory Committee meeting if not done in Fall or Spring. Sign up for BCMB9300 (3) in semester of anticipated graduation.

### **Scheduling the PhD Defense**

Before scheduling their defense, a student must meet with their Advisory Committee. If the committee supports the student writing and defending their dissertation by a majority vote (including the Major Professor), then the student may schedule the defense. At this stage, the Advisory Committee may place stipulations on the defense, such as completing an ongoing project or manuscript, but these

stipulations should be reasonable and presented in writing on the final committee meeting form. **The student must notify the Department (Angie Stockton) at least three weeks in advance of the defense of a dissertation, and the graduate coordinator must notify the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance.** The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The notification must include the date, time, place, list of committee members, and the title of a doctoral dissertation.

Be aware that after the defense, students may be required by their Advisory Committee to make revisions to the dissertation prior to submitting the final copy to the Graduate School. ***Thus, the scheduling of defense seminars should take into consideration the possible need for completing revisions before the University's submission deadline.***

## **Dissertation**

The format of the dissertation falls under the discretion of the Advisory Committee but also must meet the requirements outlined by the graduate school. It may be written as a series of papers already published or ready for publication, bracketed by an introductory/background survey chapter and a concluding chapter that places the entire body of work in context and indicates future directions. Chapters that present data unlikely to be published or provide unique insight into any aspect of the project are welcome additions to a PhD thesis, as long as the Advisory Committee and the major professor concur regarding the value of the content. ***Once approved by the major professor, the dissertation must be submitted to the student's Advisory Committee members at least ten working days before the defense seminar is held.***

## **The PhD Defense**

The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. All students, staff, and faculty of the department are highly encouraged to attend the public dissertation seminar. ***All members of the advisory committee must be present for the entire defense.*** If, for a good reason, a member cannot be present, the student must choose one of the following options:

- 1) The absentee member may participate via a teleconference or video conference in which the comments of all participants can be clearly and consistently heard. The chair of the committee must sign the approval form for the absentee member, register his/her vote and indicate that the member's participation was by teleconference or video conference (the major professor signs the absentee member's name followed by the major professor's initials). The student and committee chair must appear in person for the defense. If the major professor is not able to attend the defense in person, they can designate a chair for the defense who is a current member of the committee;
- 2) A substitution may be made with another faculty member who can replace the former member in expertise of the subject field and who has knowledge of the student's research. A revised advisory committee form must be submitted to the Graduate School prior to examination. A minimum of three Graduate Program Faculty members must be maintained.
- 3) The defense may be cancelled or rescheduled at a later time. In either case, the Graduate School must be notified.

**The advisory committee must approve the student's dissertation or thesis and defense with no more than one dissenting vote. The major professor's/co-major professors' vote of approval is required for the student to pass the examination.** An abstention is not an appropriate vote for the defense of the dissertation or thesis. The committee, after having read the dissertation, should verify whether human

subjects were used in the student's research and indicate this by verifying that the appropriate box is checked on the approval form. If human subjects were used, the student must provide the IRB protocol number and date of approval on the defense form. The defense approval form must be submitted to the Graduate School before the corrected copy of the electronic thesis or dissertation will be accepted as the final official copy. The deadline for this is posted on the Graduate School website in advance for three semesters.

## **BMB DEPARTMENT PHD DISSERTATION (OR MASTER'S THESIS) CHECKLIST**

### **Date Completed**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Application for Graduation submitted to Graduate School no later than Friday of the first full week of classes the semester of the anticipated graduation date through Angie Stockton.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dissertation/Thesis approved by major professor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dissertation/Thesis submitted to Advisory Committee at least two weeks before scheduled defense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrangements made (through Angie Stockton) for final defense three weeks before the defense. Arrangements are also made for a conference room after the defense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar notice turned in to Angie Stockton.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate School notified of date of Final Defense through Angie Stockton. Send time, place, title and names of Advisory Committee members. Must be received by Graduate School two weeks prior to exam date, so provide to Angie three weeks before exam date.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Approval Form for Doctoral Dissertation (or Masters Thesis) and Final Oral Examination completed and turned in to Graduate School through Angie Stockton.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections (requested by Advisory Committee) on dissertation/thesis completed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dissertation signed by major professor and Advisory Committee in BLACK INK.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Signed dissertation/thesis format checked in thesis office (prior to making official copies). Should be done approximately two weeks before graduation. See electronic form at [www.uga.edu/gradschool/academics/thesis\\_format\\_check.html](http://www.uga.edu/gradschool/academics/thesis_format_check.html).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Official copies of dissertation/thesis made. For paper copies, be sure to contact the Tate Center Print and Copy Services.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Applicable fees paid at Treasurer's Office. Keep receipt to show at Graduate School when submitting dissertation/thesis for approval.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete electronic submission.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Official copies of dissertation/thesis delivered (in a large envelope or box) to the periodicals desk in the basement of the new annex of the Main Library for binding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange with major professor for handling of personal copies of dissertation/thesis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Laboratory space cleaned, departmental keys returned, and Departmental Exit Survey completed and given to Angie Stockton (including your forwarding address).

### **3. M.S. DEGREE**

#### **Overview**

The Department does not actively recruit applications for admission from students wishing to achieve a terminal Master's degree. However, the Department recognizes that, under certain circumstances, it may be advantageous to have guidelines in place for the granting of a terminal M.S. degree. In general, the course requirements for the M.S. degree are identical to the PhD degree. A final Master's thesis is required to achieve the degree. The nature and content of the thesis are determined in consultation between the student, the major professor, and the Advisory Committee. All programmatic requirements (seminar attendance, timely formation of Advisory Committee, presentation of thesis seminar, professional expectations) described for the PhD degree also apply to the MS degree.

#### **Forms**

Forms that must be submitted to the Graduate School or the department are available at the Graduate School web site ([grads.uga.edu](http://grads.uga.edu)), the BMB Department web site ([bmb.uga.edu](http://bmb.uga.edu)), or from Angie Stockton. Please remember that ALL forms are to be turned into Angie and she will make copies and then send them to the appropriate office.

#### **Course Requirements**

All Graduate School requirements for a master's degree must be completed within the six-year time limit beginning with the first registration for graduate courses listed on the program of study. Course requirements are the same as for the Ph.D. degree (see below) and consist of at least 30 semester hours of graduate-level courses. These 30 hours must include at least 21 hours of graduate course work exclusive of 7000 (research) and 7300 (thesis writing). Twelve of these 21 hours must be courses that are restricted to graduate students. The program of study must include a minimum of 3 hours of 7300 (thesis writing). The remaining six hours may be 7000 (research), 7300 (thesis writing), or any other appropriate graduate coursework. Courses not counting towards the program of study include GRSC 7770, GRSC 9270, and ELAN 7768/7769. All M.S. students are required to give a 3<sup>rd</sup> year seminar in the Fall and a 4<sup>th</sup> year seminar in the Spring if they are still in attendance.

#### **Major Professor**

The major professor for master's students must be a member of the Graduate Faculty of UGA. For further description of major professors, see discussion under Ph.D. degree. A major professor must be chosen by the end of the first semester of enrollment. Delay beyond this point in choosing a major professor must be approved by the Graduate Affairs Committee.

#### **Master's Advisory Committee**

Every master's student shall have a committee of four faculty members (a minimum of two MUST be BMB primary faculty, not adjunct) selected by the end of his or her third semester in graduate school. The committee will be formed in consultation between the student and the major professor. Once committee members are selected the "Advisory Committee for Master of Arts and Maser of Science Candidates" form must be submitted to the Graduate School through Angie Stockton in the BMB office. The functions of the advisory committee include evaluating the student's progress and approving the student's plan of study, advising the student on required research skills, guiding the thesis research, administering the thesis defense and final examination, and evaluating and approving the student's master's thesis.

The advisory committee must include two BMB faculty members. The major professor and at least two other members of the Advisory Committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty of UGA.

The fourth member may be a member of the graduate faculty or a person with a terminal degree holding one of the following ranks at the University of Georgia: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, public service assistant, public service associate, senior public service associate, assistant research scientist, associate research scientist, or senior research scientist. A UGA employee who holds one of these ranks or who holds a terminal degree in his/her field may be appointed as a fourth member upon approval by the departmental graduate faculty and the dean of the Graduate School. The fourth member can also be a faculty member of another institution with a terminal degree in his/her field of study.

The first advisory committee meeting should take place no later than the fall semester of the second year. Permission to delay the first committee meeting must be obtained from the Graduate Affairs Committee. After the first advisory committee meeting, the student should file the “Program of Study for Master of Arts and Maser of Science Candidates” form to the Graduate School.

### **Thesis Defense**

Master's students must submit their theses to their advisory committees at least two weeks before their scheduled defense seminar. The major professor should approve the thesis before it is submitted to the committee. Following the oral presentation, the student should be prepared to defend the contents of the thesis before their advisory committee in a formal meeting and before any faculty member of the BMB Department.

### **Assisting in Courses**

The requirement is the same as for Ph.D. students.

## **4. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

All graduate students have the right to have their grievances heard and to seek appropriate changes in their academic or research programs. Grievances regarding grades are handled through an appeal process that runs through the instructor to the Dean's office of the relevant College. Grievances regarding the Graduate Program are initially handled through the Department. Should a grievance arise, the student's first course of action is to discuss it with their major professor and/or Advisory Committee. In addition to resolving interpersonal issues (mentor-student conflicts) and professional disputes (authorship, laboratory citizenship, etc.), the student's Advisory Committee may also be involved in resolving grievances related to the direction or endpoints of the student's thesis work. The student and faculty member (or members) involved must make every effort to resolve problems at this level. Only if the problem cannot be solved at this level should the student seek to present his or her grievance to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will determine whether the grievance should be referred to the Graduate Affairs Committee or the Department Head for further evaluation. In any case, all students are entitled to have their grievance heard and to carry it forward, in succession, to the Graduate Affairs Committee, the Department Head, and the Graduate School. Grievances brought to the Graduate Affairs Committee should be presented in writing. The Graduate Affairs Committee will proceed forward as dictated by the nature of the grievance.

## **5. WHICH FORMS TO USE — AND WHEN**

Form titles are in bold letters below and are available electronically, at the BMB Department ([bmb.uga.edu](http://bmb.uga.edu)) and Graduate School websites ([grads.uga.edu](http://grads.uga.edu)). Most forms are also available from Angie Stockton. Students meeting Graduate School deadlines must allow ample time to get the necessary departmental approval and signatures (e.g., the major professor and Graduate Coordinator) in advance. REMEMBER, all forms are to be turned in to Angie Stockton in the BMB front office of Life Sciences. Although the Graduate Coordinator and Angie Stockton will advise students of

deadlines whenever possible, **students hold the primary responsibility for being aware of Graduate School and Departmental requirements and filing appropriate forms on time.**

Note: Completing degree requirements and graduation are not synonymous. The student must be registered during the semester in which degree requirements are completed, but need not actually graduate until the following semester. If a student wishes to graduate in the same semester in which degree requirements are completed, he or she must submit the thesis to the Graduate School for approval at least two weeks before the graduation date and must submit the thesis approval form to the Graduate School at least one week before the graduation date. If the student does not meet these deadlines, however, he or she is considered registered until the registration period for the next semester and may use that additional time to submit the thesis or dissertation and the approval form. Registration for the subsequent semester will not be required and a letter will be received from the Graduate School stating that all degree requirements have been met and that graduation will occur the subsequent semester. Students receive periodic updates on their status from the Graduate School.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS IN THE BMB GRADUATE PROGRAM**

### **Responsibilities of Graduate Students**

- i. Know the University's policy and procedures on academic honesty and adhere to the University Student Honor Code: "*I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.*" The policies and procedures on academic honesty are described in **A Culture of Honesty** (available at [www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm)) and all students hold the responsibility to understand and follow these guidelines.
- ii. Meet all deadlines imposed by the Department and the Graduate School. The Graduate School provides the Graduate Coordinator with a list of deadlines every semester. This list is forwarded to students by e-mail. University and Graduate School degree requirements are officially described in the Graduate School Bulletin and students are strongly advised to consult this resource as needed.
- iii. Complete and file all necessary forms with the Graduate School in a timely manner. In many cases (described in this document) these forms can and should be filed through the Department (Angie Stockton). In all cases, any form submitted to the Graduate School should also be copied and provided to the Department.
- iv. Actively contribute and participate in the overall graduate program of the Department. Such participation includes attending Departmental Seminars and other functions, contributing to graduate student and faculty recruitment, and engaging fully in the intellectual and academic life of the Department.
- v. Assume a proactive nature in pursuing your goals for graduate education. The faculty and staff of the Department are strongly invested in the success of the program and are willing to help you fulfill your goals. But, keep in mind that this is YOUR graduate degree. The faculty and staff are here to help YOU help YOURSELF.

### **Responsibilities of the Graduate Affairs Committee**

- i. Monitor progress in the program as a whole to ensure that students are moving toward completion of their degrees. Students are expected to complete their doctoral degrees in five

years. The GAC committee will evaluate student progress each year and may elect to meet with senior students, their major professor, and other members of their advisory committee as needed to ensure progress.

- ii. Hear student appeals regarding programmatic grievances. Depending on the nature of the grievance, the Committee may involve the Department head, members of the Advisory Committee, and/or the major professor. The Grievance procedures should respect the integrity and concerns of all parties.
- iii. Organize Departmental Orientation activities for incoming graduate students during the first weeks of the Fall and Spring semesters.
- iv. Provide leadership for introducing innovation and initiating self-evaluation of the Graduate Program at all levels. The input of graduate students will be solicited whenever possible as changes in the program are considered. Likewise, graduate student initiatives for specific program modifications are welcome and are due full consideration by the Committee.
- v. Work together with faculty and graduate students to enhance recruitment of new students.
- vi. Identify opportunities for students to apply for external fellowships.

### **Responsibilities of BMB Faculty Members**

- i. Provide the best possible environment for graduate training in laboratories and courses.
- ii. Welcome graduate students for rotations as laboratory resources allow, keeping in mind that rotations need not be a commitment to accept a student as a permanent lab member. Rotations should provide a broad range of opportunities for students to explore many aspects of biochemistry and molecular biology, independent of any long-term considerations.
- iii. Serve on Graduate Advisory Committees as often as is reasonable. Service need not be restricted to the committees of students whose research is within a faculty member's area of expertise. An outside point-of-view can be valuable and all students should be able to effectively present their work to non-experts.
- iv. Encourage students to attend all Departmental Seminars and other Departmental academic functions. Become a role model for seminar attendance.
- v. Provide both scientific and professional mentoring as students move through their qualifying exams and develop into valuable laboratory colleagues. Encourage attendance at conferences and seek other opportunities for students to explore the best options for their future life beyond the Departmental Graduate Program.

