

Expectations of Students in Biomedical Graduate Studies

BGS students are subject to the policies and procedures of their graduate group, BGS, and the University. These policies are summarized below. BGS and University policies relating to graduate education are available through the BGS website. Students are encouraged to become familiar with these policies and to consult their graduate group or BGS with any questions or concerns.

Student Conduct BGS students must comply with the University's code of general conduct and other University policies related to student conduct that appear in *The PennBook, Policies and Procedures Handbook*. These include, but are not limited to, policies on sexual harassment, acquaintance rape and sexual violence, appropriate use of electronic resources, open expression, and drug and alcohol usage. However, the judicial charter contained within that document is not applicable to BGS students. Alleged violations of the BGS Code of Academic Integrity (reproduced below) are adjudicated in accordance with the *Charter of Biomedical Graduate Studies Student Judicial System*. Alleged research ethics violations are handled in accordance with the University's *Procedures Regarding Misconduct in Research for Non Faculty Members of the Research Community*. Students are also expected to abide by the *BGS Authorship Policy* when publishing their research.

BGS Code of Academic Integrity The most fundamental value of any academic community is intellectual honesty; accordingly, all academic communities rely upon the integrity of each and every member. Students are responsible not only for adhering to the highest standards of truth and honesty but also for upholding the principles and spirit of the following Code.

Violations of this Code include but are not limited to the following acts:

- A. *Cheating*: using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material or study aids in examinations or any other academic work, or preventing, or attempting to prevent another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids.
- B. *Plagiarism*: using the ideas, data or language of another without specific and proper acknowledgment.
- C. *Fabrication*: submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise.
- D. *Multiple Submission*: submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement.
- E. *Misrepresentation of Academic Records*: misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of one's own or any other person's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to the University of Pennsylvania.
- F. *Facilitating Academic Dishonesty*: knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate provisions of this Code.
- G. *Unfair Advantage*: attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise.

BGS Conditions of Fellowship Awards Virtually all BGS students are provided with a full fellowship. Students are subject to the *BGS Conditions of Fellowship Awards*, which defines general expectations of BGS students, including information about time off. It is given to incoming students and available on the BGS website.

Academic Requirements During the first two years, BGS students take a combination of didactic courses, seminars, laboratory rotations, and independent studies. In general they take the equivalent of four course units in the fall and spring semesters and two course units in the summer sessions. After completing their coursework, students are required to undergo the preliminary examination, which is administered by the graduate group. They then arrange to complete their dissertation research in the laboratory of a faculty advisor with the approval of the graduate group. The dissertation progress is monitored by a dissertation committee, which consists of faculty engaged in relevant research. Students are required to meet regularly with their dissertation committee, on a schedule determined by their graduate group. Students who wish to conduct dissertation away from the Penn campus must receive prior approval from the graduate group and BGS. Each graduate group sets its own specific curriculum requirements.

Academic Standards According to University policy, a graduate student must maintain a B average or better to be considered in good academic standing. The Biomedical Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee reviews the record of any student who receives an unsatisfactory grade (less than a “B”) in a course or who does not meet the University policy of a B average to decide whether the student should be placed on academic probation.

Dissertation Policies Students are expected to abide by the policies of their graduate groups at the dissertation stage. Moreover, the Biomedical Advisory Committee has established several policies for all BGS students at the dissertation stage relating to changing mentors, leaving the lab prior to defending, and writing and defending the dissertation.

Timely Degree Progression Each student’s progress is monitored to facilitate timely completion of the degree. University standards mandate that PhD students complete all course requirements and examinations within a period of seven consecutive years. BGS students are reviewed at the start of the seventh year if they have not completed their program. The student and the dissertation advisor are asked to provide details of the goals of the research, a progress report specifying the work remaining, and an estimate of the amount of time until completion of the research and a successful defense. The report is reviewed by the Director of BGS, who must approve the plan for the student to remain in good standing. Failure to submit a report will result in a second request, and if not heeded, may lead to termination of the student’s enrollment in BGS. This mechanism serves as an early warning to students and their advisors. In addition, students who remain at dissertation for more than five years must be “re-certified” by their graduate groups.

Bioethics Training Training in research bioethics is a requirement of all BGS students and mandated by NIH training grants. The BGS Office coordinates this training. Students in year one complete training on-line; students in years two, three, and four are required to attend small-group workshops arranged by the BGS office. Students in their fifth year and beyond are given several options, such as attending seminars sponsored by the Center for Bioethics or co-facilitating a workshop. Information about bioethics training is emailed to students annually.

Student Teaching In general, BGS students are not required to teach and are not supported by teaching assistantships. The exception is Neuroscience students, who are required to teach for a semester in their third year of training. Students in any graduate group who wish to obtain teaching experience may apply for TA positions offered by departments sponsoring undergraduate courses and for a few BGS-related TA positions. Teaching opportunities are announced by email. However, students may not accept TAs without prior approval of their thesis advisor (if applicable), Graduate Group Chair, and the Director of BGS. (Note that BGS students are not permitted to serve as Resident Assistants, given the substantial demands associated with these positions.)

Student Problems Students who have any sorts of concerns about the program should first consult with individuals within their graduate group: chair or coordinator, academic review committee members, dissertation advisor, or dissertation committee members. If the student's concerns persist, he or she may consult with the BGS office staff or director. Students in serious distress should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 133 S. 36th Street, 2nd floor, at 215-898-7021 during normal business hours or 215-349-5490 after hours.

As a student in BGS, I certify that I have received and read the documents entitled **BGS Expectations of Students** and **BGS Conditions of Fellowship Awards**, and I agree to abide by all applicable policies and procedures.

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Student Graduate Group

Date