OTHER PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Standards

The University standard for satisfactory academic progress is a 3.0 grade point average (B). The minimum standard for final course grades in the BMB Graduate Group is a "B". BMB student who do not achieve the minimum grade for courses will be referred to the Biomedical Graduate Studies Academic Standards Committee. The Academic Standards Committee will, in concert with the BMB Academic Review Committee's recommendations, impose sanctions such as academic probation. In addition, the Academic Review Committee may ask a student to retake a course, continue course work towards the terminal Master's Degree, or withdraw from the program. The Academic Review Committee will review each case on an individual basis.

Transfer of Credit

Students who enter the program having taken similar courses at the graduate level at other institutions may petition the Graduate Group for transfer of credits. The decision to approve transfer of credits will be made in writing by the Graduate Group Chair. Up to eight courses may be transferred. Students who have taken graduate courses at Penn through the College of General Studies (CGS) may apply to transfer up to four course units toward the Ph.D. degree. Combined degree students may transfer as many as 14 course units from another Penn professional or graduate program, but are required to take 8 course units of Ph.D. lecture courses and seminars. It is recommended that incoming students review any courses that may be transferable at their meetings with the Advising Committee in September.

Transfer from Other Programs

University of Pennsylvania students who are currently enrolled in another graduate group within BGS may be considered for transferring into the BMB Graduate Group. Students should express their interest in joining the BMB Graduate Group by writing a letter of intent to the Graduate Group Chair. The student will then meet with the Chair to review his or her academic record and establish a plan for meeting the BMB requirements. Students who wish to transfer from graduate groups outside of BGS need to follow the same procedures as regular applicants to the program.

Terminal Master's Degree

The BMB Graduate Group does not offer study towards a Master's degree. However, the Graduate Group may award a terminal Master's degree to students who choose not to continue in the Ph.D. program. In certain instances, the Graduate Group Chair may recommend that students who have not performed satisfactorily in course work, the Candidacy Examination, or dissertation research leave the program with a terminal Master's degree. The University requires a minimum of 8 course units for the terminal Master's degree. A final paper or master’s thesis may also be required, as determined by the Graduate Group Chair and Academic Review Committee.
Leaves of Absence

BGS Leaves of Absence

The University allows graduate students to take leaves of absence with the permission of the graduate group chair and the graduate dean. Students must write to the graduate group requesting the leave; if the chair approves, the request will be forwarded to the graduate dean (i.e., the BGS Director) for approval. The main types of leave are medical, family, and paid time off for the birth or adoption of a child. Under medical and unpaid family leaves, stipends are suspended during the leave period and are guaranteed upon return from leave under the conditions of the original award guarantee, i.e., as long as the student remains in good academic standing. Note that students who have passed the candidacy exam may need to arrange fellowship support from a mentor in order to return; there is no guarantee that the original mentor will be able to provide financial support when the student returns from leave. Students receiving NIH NRSA support in the form of a training grant appointment or individual fellowship must also obtain permission for a leave from NIH.

Medical Leaves of Absence

Students who wish to take a medical leave are expected to arrange for a letter from the treating professional(s) justifying the leave. The letter should be sent to the BGS Director. Students on medical leave are expected to seek and follow the advice of the graduate group chair or his/her designate to remediate any work and to devise a course of study for re-enrollment. Such students are also expected to make appropriate financial arrangements to continue any necessary treatment during the leave (e.g., payment for the Student Health Insurance plan), to continue treatment, and to arrange for an appropriate support system. In order to return from medical leave, students must arrange for treating professional(s) to provide documentation of treatment and progress. Students who take a leave for psychological reasons are expected to arrange evaluation with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) four weeks prior to the sought return date.

Other Leaves of Absence

BGS abides by the University’s policies for Family Leave and Time Off for Childbirth or Adoption. The University policies can be found at: http://www.upenn.edu/provost/academic_rules.