

Expectations of Students in Biomedical Graduate Studies 2015-2016

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Please sign and date the *Expectations of Students in Biomedical Graduate Studies* and the *Patent and Tangible Research Property Policies and Procedures* Participation Agreement* (last page of this packet) and return to the staff at orientation.

Thank you.

* Provided as a separate document in orientation folder

Expectations of Students in Biomedical Graduate Studies

Introduction BGS students are subject to the policies and procedures of their graduate group, BGS, and the University. The University academic policies for graduate students are described in the *University-Wide Academic Rules for Graduate Degrees*. Some of the BGS academic policies are described below. These and other University and BGS policies relating to graduate education are also 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. Policies are grouped as follows:

- I. Student Conduct
- II. Conditions of Fellowship Awards
- III. Leaves of Absence
- IV. Academic Requirements
- V. Grievance Policy
- VI. Other Policies

I. Student Conduct

BGS students must comply with the University's Code of Academic Integrity, Code of Student Conduct, and other University policies related to student conduct that are listed on the website of the [Office of Student Conduct](#). 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. Alleged violations of the Code of Academic Integrity (reproduced below) are adjudicated in accordance with the *University's Judicial Charter*. 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. All of these documents are available on the BGS website.

Code of Academic Integrity

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the following Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic Dishonesty Definitions

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following definitions:

- A. *Cheating*: using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work or preventing, or attempting to prevent, another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. Example: using a cheat sheet in a quiz or exam, altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, etc.
- B. *Plagiarism*: using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person's paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else's ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.
- C. *Fabrication*: submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Example: making up data for an experiment, fudging data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.

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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 a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to the University of Pennsylvania. Example: forging a change of grade slip, tampering with computer records, falsifying academic information on one's resume, etc.

F. *Facilitating academic dishonesty*: knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of the Code. Example: working together on a take-home exam, etc.

G. *Unfair advantage*: attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Example: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials, obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise, lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper, continuing to write even when time is up during an exam, destroying or keeping library materials for one's own use., etc.

*If a student is unsure whether his action(s) constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, then it is that student's responsibility to consult with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities.

[\(Source: Almanac, September 10, 1996\)](#)

II. Conditions of Fellowship Awards

BGS fellowships provide tuition, fees, health insurance, and a stipend for all eligible full time students in residence as long as the student remains in good academic standing.

Graduate students who accept a fully-funded fellowship from BGS are expected to devote themselves full time to their program of graduate study. Students may not simultaneously accept another appointment or be employed either within or outside the University. Exceptions may be made only with the written approval of the Dissertation Advisor (if applicable), the Graduate Group Chair, and the Director of BGS.

Funds for BGS fellowships derive from a variety of University and extramural sources. Students are generally supported by a training grant and/or a University fellowship during the first two years of study and by a training grant and/or faculty research grant resources during the dissertation phase. Some students apply for and receive individual extramural fellowships from organizations such as the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health. Students are expected to abide by the conditions of their funding source. For example, students appointed to a training grant must complete the required documentation and participate in site visits relating to the grant, and students who receive multi-year individual extramural fellowships must prepare and submit annual renewal materials.

All BGS students must observe their graduate group's policies, BGS policies, and the University policies relating to graduate students. Each graduate group's policies can be found on its website, and the BGS and relevant University policies can be found via the BGS website. All students must complete the annual BGS training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR).

Stipends: BGS endeavors to provide a uniform stipend to all students. Stipends for BGS fellowships are paid in equal amounts at the end of each month. The 2015-2016 stipend is \$31,000 effective 9/1/15. Any supplementation of this amount must be approved by the Graduate Group Chair and the Director of BGS. See section VI below (2nd paragraph).

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Cost of Education Allowances: On occasion, students may receive in addition to the stipend extra funds from a training grant or an extramural fellowship for education-related expenses, such as travel or the purchase of laboratory or computer equipment.

Taxes: All University and extramural fellowship awards in excess of tuition, general fee, and required course-related expenses (e.g., required books) are subject to Federal income tax. Even though they are taxable, the University is not required to withhold Federal taxes or issue an IRS W-2 form for non-service (i.e., institutional or training grant based) fellowships. Some fellowships (i.e., those funded by research grants or teaching assistantships) are also subject to Philadelphia city wage taxes, which are withheld from the paycheck. The University is not qualified to provide specific tax information. Students are urged to seek counseling directly from the IRS.

BGS Academic Calendar/Student Personal Time: BGS has a 12-month annual training program. While BGS generally adheres to the University's schedule for Fall and Spring course terms, many BGS courses do not observe fall and spring breaks. BGS students are expected to work full-time towards the degree but are entitled to take University staff holidays and two weeks per year for personal time. Students at the course-work stage should consult their graduate group chair with requests for any additional time off. Students at the dissertation stage may schedule time off only with the prior approval of their advisor.

III. 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.

Family Leave University policy allows PhD students to take an unpaid Family Leave of Absence for the birth or adoption of a child, child care, or care of an immediate family member (spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent) with a serious health condition. Details are provided here:

http://www.upenn.edu/provost/academic_rules

Childbirth or Adoption PhD students are eligible for up to 8 weeks of paid time off in association with the birth or adoption of a child. Details are provided here: http://www.upenn.edu/provost/academic_rules

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IV. Academic Requirements

During the first two years, BGS students take a combination of didactic courses, seminars, laboratory rotations, and independent studies. Each graduate group sets its own specific curriculum requirements.

In general, students 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 candidacy 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. Students are expected to abide by BGS' registration policies: http://www.med.upenn.edu/bgs/user_docs/BGSRegistrationGuidelines.pdf

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. These policies are available on the BGS website.

Timely Degree Progression Each student's progress is monitored to facilitate timely completion of the degree. 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.
http://www.med.upenn.edu/bgs/user_docs/BGSrecertificationpolicies.pdf

V. Grievance Policy

A BGS student who wishes to register a grievance regarding the evaluation of his/her academic work or a matter related to the program or a course should discuss the matter with the instructor or the appropriate Graduate Group Chair. If the grievance is not addressed, the student may bring the issue to the Director of BGS.

Appeal of a Grade Evaluation of a student's performance is the responsibility of the Instructor. Should a final grade in a course be disputed, the student must submit a written appeal to the Instructor within the first two weeks of the academic semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was received. The Instructor must respond in writing to the student within two weeks of receiving the written appeal from the student. If, after receiving the written response to the appeal from the Instructor, the student still believes that the grade has been unfairly assigned, the student must submit a written appeal to the student's Graduate Group Chair. If the Chair believes the appeal demonstrates evidence of negligence or discriminatory behavior, an advisory committee will be formed to review the student's appeal and make a recommendation to the Chair. The decision of the Chair is final.

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Course Attendance Attendance at all scheduled class meetings is expected and Instructors may base final grades on attendance. Absences from class for medical reasons or family emergencies are acceptable excuses. If requested by the Instructor, written documentation must be submitted for an absence to be excused. BGS reserves the right to withdraw students from courses for failure to attend the first class meeting.

VI. Other BGS Policies

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Training in research conduct 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 undertake additional online training and 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 RCR training is emailed to students annually.

Student Teaching and Other Supplemental Activity 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. In addition, students may serve as TAs or conduct other approved tasks for a maximum of two semesters only. Students who wish to participate in a 3rd semester of teaching for the CTL fellowship program or a 3rd semester of supplemental activity for the CTT program may do so with the permission of mentor and graduate group chair but may not receive supplemental pay for the third semester. (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. More resource information is provided here:

http://www.med.upenn.edu/bgs/current_students_resources.shtml

Expectations of Students in Biomedical Graduate Studies

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

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Student Graduate Group

Date
