

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## Neuroscience PhD Program

College of Medicine  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL  
2025-2026

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## WELCOME FROM THE FACULTY AND STAFF

We are pleased that you have elected to enroll in the Neuroscience PhD Program at the UF College of Medicine. Neuroscience is one of the fastest-advancing disciplines in science. Doctoral graduate students in our program are mentored by faculty who are passionate about advancing our understanding of the nervous system using state-of-the-art technologies that can influence human diseases. Our program provides a fertile ground for trainees to develop original research that will contribute to the field and that is directly relevant to preserving brain health and combatting neural diseases. As a PhD graduate neuroscience student at UF, you will receive broad interdisciplinary training that fosters independent critical thinking and develop problem-solving skills. Your training will be achieved with rigorous coursework, specialized seminar series, explicit training in grant writing, and development of other professional skills. Enhanced by our enthusiastic mentors, and the ample resources and facilities within one of the top public universities in the nation, you will be able to leverage unique opportunities to excel nationally and be on the leading edge as you become the next generation of neuroscientists.

## PURPOSE OF THIS STUDENT HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is intended to serve as a reference for our new Neuroscience PhD Program. It provides a summary of the Program, the operating procedures, and your responsibilities but it is not comprehensive or complete. **You are still responsible for becoming familiar with and abiding by the requirements, procedures, and deadlines set forth by the University of Florida Graduate School.**

Parts of the handbook concerning general university regulations have been copied verbatim. If questions or problems arise that are not covered in the handbook, please contact the Program Directors. University regulations are also detailed in the University of Florida Graduate Catalog ([gradcatalog.ufl.edu](http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu)).

## **FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

**Dean of the College of Medicine (Interim):** Jennifer Hunt, M.D., M.Ed.

**Sr. Associate Dean for Educational Affairs:** Joseph Fantone, M.D.

**Associate Dean for Graduate Education:** David Bloom, Ph.D.

**Chair of the Department of Neuroscience:** Jennifer Bizon, Ph.D.

**Program Directors:** Benoit Giasson, Ph.D. and Eduardo Candelario-Jalil, Ph.D.

**Program Academic Coordinator:** Ikiah Young, M.Ed.

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

### I. Getting started and maintaining your status

#### A. Payroll Signup, Letters of Appointment

Upon receipt in writing of the student's acceptance of our program and graduate assistantship offer, the Neuroscience Program will send payroll forms, including a letter of appointment as a graduate assistant (GA), which must be filled out, signed, and returned well before the entrance term begins. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the receipt of the student's first paycheck. If you have not already filled out payroll forms, do so as soon as possible and return them to Trecia Jasper ([treciaj@ufl.edu](mailto:treciaj@ufl.edu)). Payroll can be viewed at [my.ufl.edu](http://my.ufl.edu); My Self Service; Payroll and Compensation; View Paycheck - this can be viewed the Monday of pay week. International student payroll processing may be delayed until immigration paperwork has been verified by the university.

All students must be assigned as Graduate Assistants. This involves a Letter of Appointment (LOA), the binding contract between the student and the University (see below). The LOA should be filed before the beginning of the semester for which it covers.

As detailed below, students must be familiar with the rights and responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant contract.

**Neuroscience PhD graduate students may not hold any other type of payroll appointment at UF or outside of UF.** Exceptions must be obtained from the Associate Dean for Graduate Education with the approval of the student's mentor.

#### B. Health Insurance

Through their appointment as Graduate Assistants, all Neuroscience PhD Graduate Students are eligible to participate in GatorGradCare at a nominal cost. Enrollment is not automatic; registration is done online at <http://hr.ufl.edu/benefits/health-insurance/gatorgradcare/>. Enrollment must be completed each year in the fall. Students should retain the INSURANCE REQUEST CONFIRMATION that is received after successfully completing the online GatorGradCare enrollment process in order to track their GatorGradCare enrollment submissions.

#### C. Financial Aid

For federal loans, please contact Susana Morales in Student Financial Affairs

Email: [susanamorales@ufl.edu](mailto:susanamorales@ufl.edu) Phone (352) 273-7939

Harrell Medical Education Bldg.

Student Affairs Office

Room 214 (2nd floor)

For loan deferments of federal loans, please see The Graduate Education staff in Room M-134 of the Graduate Education Office.

## **D. Emergency Loan Fund**

The University of Florida Medical Guild has established a revolving interest-free emergency loan fund available to all students in the graduate programs within the College of Medicine. These loans are intended to help with extra expenses incurred moving to Gainesville or financial emergencies which arise during enrollment in the graduate program. The student must be enrolled in the program before loan monies will be given. Up to \$750 can be requested from this fund and must be paid back within 90 days. Loans are administered by UF Student Financial Services direct deposit. To apply for a loan, see the Office of Graduate Education staff. Completed forms are turned in to Susana Morales in the College of Medicine Office of Financial Aid (HMEB, room 214). If you default on the terms of the loan, a financial hold will be placed on your student record, and you will not be allowed to register for the next semester until the account is up-to-date.

## **E. Registration for courses**

All students will be registered for their courses by the staff of the Neuroscience PhD Program. **Ikih Young** ([ilyoung@ufl.edu](mailto:ilyoung@ufl.edu)) is currently responsible for registering all the students. Students should ensure that they do not have any holds on their record for immunizations, insurance, emergency contact information, registration checklist, or financial services. If you have a hold that is not cleared up during advanced registration, and we are unable to process your registration, you will be assessed a \$100 late registration fee that will not be waived.

## **F. Security, Keys and Identification Badge (Gator 1 card)**

Mobile GatorOne - All students will receive the Mobile ID unless their phone is not compatible or they need access to door readers that have not yet been upgraded. For more information please visit: <https://businessservices.ufl.edu/services/gator-1-card/gator-1-card-homepage/>

The Health Science Center requires that identification badges be worn at all times while personnel are on the premises. Gator 1 cards are obtained at the Satellite ID card center in Room NG-10. New students should check with the Office of Graduate Education for specifics. You must bring a picture ID. The Office of Graduate Education will handle the paperwork for new students. Current students who need Gator 1 replacement should see their department's personnel administrator. There is a fee for Gator 1 replacement.

The Health Center (HSC) buildings are locked outside of regular weekday business hours. The only HSC entrances that are open 24 hours are the UF Health Hospital east (near Pediatric Emergency Room) and west (near Dental clinics) entrance doors nearest to the parking garages in addition to one of the doors of the Communicore Bldg. facing the Health Professions, Nursing, and Pharmacy (HPNP) Bld. (the east door).

After-hours access to the McKnight Brain Institute, Cancer Genetics Research Complex (CGRC), and Biomedical Sciences, and Academic Research Buildings is available to authorized personnel with your Gator 1 ID card after it has been processed by a department. With authorization from your mentor, lab and/or office keys may be checked out through the mentor's department.

The Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP) is a free, nightly campus safety and transportation service sponsored by UF Student Government, Student Traffic Court, and the University of Florida Transportation

& Parking Services (TAPS). SNAP provides a point-to-point vehicular escort service. You can request a SNAP escort by calling 352-392-SNAP (7627) and discussing your request with a SNAP dispatcher.

The University of Florida Police Department provides service 24 hours a day, and is an integral part of the university's dedication to developing and maintaining a safe and secure campus through the cooperative efforts of many university departments and community organizations.

Non-emergency dispatch: 352.392.1111

Emergency: 911

### **G. E-mail Accounts, Internet access**

Email is a vital means of communication for the University of Florida and College of Medicine. A GatorLink account is an individual's computer network identity at the University of Florida. Every student is expected to have a GatorLink username and password. All email correspondence from UF or the College of Medicine will be sent to the student's Gatorlink address listed in the UF directory.

To set up an email account, you need to log into GatorLink at: [www.gatorlink.ufl.edu](http://www.gatorlink.ufl.edu)

### **H. Change of Address**

Be sure that the Office of the Registrar at Criser Hall has your current address. A change of address is changed by you at ONE.UF (<https://one.ufl.edu>) using your student ID and PIN number. Whenever you change your address, please change it with the Office of the University Registrar and with the Office of Graduate Education.

### **I. Qualifying for Florida Residency**

It is expected that all eligible Neuroscience PhD Graduate Students (i.e., U.S. citizens, permanent resident aliens, or legal aliens granted indefinite stay by the Immigration and Naturalizations Service) will apply for Florida residency upon entry into the program. Some steps **in this process need to be taken prior to the end of drop/add in the first semester of study.**

For more information, go to: <https://registrar.ufl.edu/assets/pdfs/residencyreclass.pdf>

### **J. International Student Contacts**

The UF International Center (IC) is a good resource for international student information. Each student will be assigned with an IC advisor. For a list of advisors, visit: <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/f-1-student/contact-advisor>.

### **K. Required online trainings**

All new students are required to complete a series of trainings before the beginning of the fall semester. These include:

- HIPAA & Privacy – UF\_PRV800V\_OLT



- Blood Borne Pathogens Training - UF\_EHS850G\_OLT
- Biomedical Waste Training - UF\_EHS851\_OLT
- General Biosafety Training - UF\_EHS853\_OLT
- Hazardous Waste Management - UF\_EHS809\_OLT

Students conducting animal work during their lab rotations are required to complete additional trainings and should discuss this with their rotation mentor several weeks prior to the start of the rotation.

## II. University and Neuroscience PhD Program Administrative Requirements and Policies

### A. Teaching Requirements

There are currently no formal teaching requirements for students in the Neuroscience PhD Program. However, several courses taught either within the Department of Neuroscience or by departments require teaching assistants. Volunteers for these assignments will be solicited periodically.

### B. Graduate Assistantship Policy

The graduate assistantship (GA) appointment is a formal, binding contract between the student and the University/Neuroscience PhD Program. Students should be familiar with the terms of the Graduate Assistant United (GAU) contract, their rights and responsibilities, and the consequences for violating the contract. The current contract can be accessed at <https://www.ufgau.org/cba.html>. The contract stipulates that students receive a stipend, with minimum levels set in the contract; paid tuition for the full-time number of credit hours (9 hours in the fall and spring, 6 hours for the summer); and paid health insurance. The amount of paid time off is also stipulated, as are other important matters.

All Neuroscience PhD students are promised full funding via a graduate assistantship for as long as they make satisfactory progress toward their PhD degree. Faculty members may not place a limit on the length of funding provided. In the event a faculty member cannot provide full support for the student, it is the responsibility of the mentor's primary department to find continuous support for students in good standing. This policy is formalized by a mentor contract signed by the student (mentee), mentor, and chair of the mentor's primary (budgeted) department.

All Neuroscience PhD graduate students receive the same basic 12-month stipend, which is increased in accordance with the state appropriation and Graduate Assistants United (GAU) negotiations. Mentors are not allowed to change the stipend of their students, and they are not allowed to provide additional employment as a means to increase payment to the students

Payment is biweekly throughout the calendar year. All assistantships are 0.5 FTE to comply with federal regulations. Additional employment, either within UF or outside of the university, is not allowed while you hold a GA appointment. One exception is Reserve or National Guard military duty.

Graduate assistantship appointments may be made on a semester-by-semester or annual basis. Typical dates for appointments are:

Fall	~August 16 – December 31
Spring	~January 1 – May 15
Summer C	~May 16 – August 15
Summer A	~May 16 – June 30
Summer B	~July 1 – August 15

Note that the summer semester appointment may be split if needed to accommodate a leave of absence for vacation purposes (see sections C and D).

### C. Vacation Policy

The current GAU contract stipulates that students on assistantships may take up to 5 days per semester of paid personal leave. The scheduling of any vacation time must be approved in advance by the mentor. As employees of the University of Florida, graduate assistants are also entitled to days off for designated official paid holidays, declared emergencies, and travel to scientific meetings. University academic breaks (i.e., Spring Break) are not considered as paid time off. According to the GAU contract, vacation days are not cumulative, i.e., days not taken in one semester do not carry over to the next semester.

Students planning an extended leave of absence for personal reasons (e.g., vacation or marriage) should plan to take a leave of absence from the program. This must be approved by the mentor and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education. You will not be paid a stipend, will not be registered for classes or research credits, and will not be liable for payment of student fees. During the graduate assistant's leave of absence, their GatorGradCare coverage will continue. However, the graduate assistant is responsible for the employee's share of the monthly premium.

#### **D. Leave of Absence**

Graduate assistants are entitled to a leave of absence under the following circumstances:

- The graduate assistant is disabled or otherwise unable to perform assigned duties because of their injury, illness (physical or mental), jury duty, required U.S. military service, or when unable to perform because the employee's presence is required elsewhere because of injury, illness, or death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as mother, father, spouse, sister, brother, child, domestic partner, or a person in a legal dependent relationship with the employee.
- The University is closed for a state holiday or a declared emergency unless the special conditions of the appointment require the graduate assistant to perform duties at these times.
- Taking examinations for professional licensing related to the degree or qualifying examinations required by the University.
- Traveling to conferences or other events for professional development that are not assigned by the department.

Please go to [GA Leave of Absence Process](#) for additional information.

There are three types of leave available to graduate assistants

#### **Personal Time with Pay**

Graduate assistants are eligible for personal time with pay for up to five (5) days per semester appointment. Each graduate assistant is credited with five (5) days at the beginning of each semester and must use personal time in one (1) day increments. For example, an employee scheduled to work six (6) hours on Monday and three (3) hours on Tuesday, who is unable to perform assigned duties on these days for any of the reasons described above, would be charged with two (2) days of personal time regardless of FTE appointment or number of work hours scheduled. The scheduling of personal time off must be approved in advance by the mentor. Students will not receive a stipend for personal leave that exceeds five (5) days per semester.

Personal time is not cumulative from semester to semester. Personal time with pay is managed at the department level; graduate assistants are encouraged to contact their supervisor or HR Liaison for more information.

### **Paid Family Leave of Absence**

Graduate assistants are entitled to eight (8) weeks of paid family leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and in order to care for that child within one year of birth;
- The placement of a child with the graduate assistant for adoption or foster care within one year of birth;
- The birth of a child through surrogacy and in order to care for that child within one year of birth;
- The serious health condition of an immediate family member; or
- A serious health condition of the graduate assistant which makes the graduate assistant unable to perform their duties.

### **Eligibility for Paid Family Leave**

A graduate assistant must be in, at least, the second semester of employment as a graduate assistant to be eligible for Paid Family Leave of Absence. Graduate Assistants on a leave of absence as of January 1, 2023 who meet the eligibility requirements for Paid Family Leave will receive Paid Family Leave for future qualifying absences, but not retroactively for past absences. If the graduate assistant has multiple graduate assistant appointments, Paid Family Leave applies to all appointments.

The graduate Assistant must provide the University with written notice no less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the requested leave, if practicable. In the case of an emergency, verbal notice within twenty-four (24) hours of taking leave must be provided.

In the case of a serious health condition, the University may request medical verification from a health care provider. The University may also require the graduate Assistant to see a health care provider of the University's choice and at the University's expense.

In the event that both parents are graduate assistants, both are entitled to the eight (8) weeks of Paid Family Leave following the birth, foster care placement, or adoption of a child. If both parents work in the same department, their leave may not overlap.

Paid Family Leave is taken as a complete leave of absence.

Also, the graduate assistant may request an unpaid extension of the leave of absence, which the University may provide at its sole discretion.

### **Benefits during Paid Family Leave of Absence**

During the graduate assistant's paid family leave of absence, their GatorGradCare coverage will continue. The graduate assistant is responsible for the employee's share of the monthly premium, which can be collected in advance if possible or upon return from their leave. If applicable, the University's tuition waiver is also to be maintained.

## **Paid Family Leave of Absence and Student Status**

Paid Family Leave provided to graduate assistants is exclusively related to leave from the graduate assistant's appointment and assignment. **Any academic/student leave requests must be made and approved through the appropriate University process.** If the graduate assistant is taking a leave of absence due to a medical condition, please visit the Dean of Students [Medical Petition Portal](#) and complete any necessary paperwork.

Before beginning the paid family leave of absence, it is the graduate assistant's responsibility to contact their academic advisor to determine how the leave of absence may impact the graduate assistant's academic progress. Additional information on how to request a paid family leave of absence can be found at [Request a Paid Family Leave of Absence](#).

## **Research Leave of Absence**

A graduate assistant may request an unpaid leave of absence for a semester or a year to pursue research related to their academic program, subject to university approval. The graduate assistant shall be considered an employee during such leave.

Research leaves of absence are managed at the department level; graduate assistants are encouraged to contact their supervisor or HR Liaison for more information.

Also, a research leave of absence must be approved using the Graduate Assistant Research Leave of Absence Template Letter and submitted to the Graduate School for review.

## ***Leave of absence of 3 or more consecutive terms***

A graduate student who wishes to take a leave of absence for 3 or more consecutive terms, including summer term, must follow the steps outlined previously for requesting a leave of absence. The approved leave of absence letter should be submitted via email to the COM Office of Graduate Education, Employment Operations & Records in UF Human Relations, and Judy Traveis in the Graduate School. Students taking a leave of absence for 3 or more consecutive terms, including summer term, must reapply for admission to the same program of their previous enrollment. All readmission applicants must meet the current admission requirements of the Neuroscience Ph.D. Program. Readmission is not guaranteed and is subject to availability in the program. Readmission is for a specific term. If a student is unable to enroll for the term for which they have been admitted, they must apply for readmission again to a different term. Applicants must present a satisfactory record of conduct. Regardless of other qualifications, applicants who have experienced major or continuing difficulties with school or other authorities since their last enrollment at the University of Florida may find their application for readmission denied.

For international students on an F1 visa, as long as the leave is less than 5 months it does not affect the visa status. If the leave is longer than 5 months, the UF International Center must be notified, and the

leave must be processed and approved through them as well as the mentor and the Neuroscience Ph.D. Program. Potentially, the I-20 will also need to be extended.

### **E. Minimum Credit Registration Requirements**

The Graduate School requires that students register for a minimum number of credits depending on the type of appointment. The following table lists these minimums:

Category	Fall/Spring	Summer Terms		
		A	B	C
Graduate Assistants	9	3	3	6
Full-time students not on assistantship, (i.e., other fellowships or traineeships)	12	4	4	8

Please note that in the absence of any transfer credits, the earliest time for most Neuroscience Ph.D. Program students to earn 90 credits graduation is the spring semester of the fourth year of graduate study.

Tuition payments are granted for up to 9 hours for graduate research assistants and 12 hours for students supported by training grants and/or fellowships. Students registered for more hours must pay for the additional credits in full.

### **F. Compensation during the Final Semester**

In most circumstances, the graduate student's stipend comes from the mentor's research grant. Thus, the date that the stipend terminates following the Dissertation Defense and Final Examination is negotiated between those two parties, providing that the student remains physically in the COM. Students receiving stipends who remain in their lab subsequent to the Defense and Final Exam will continue to be paid at the same rate until the semester ends. If the student remains beyond this time, the laboratory in which the student works will provide financial support at a rate to be negotiated between the Principal Investigator and the student.

If a student graduates and leaves the university before the end of the semester in which they hold a graduate assistantship, it is recommended that their contract be maintained through the remainder of the semester and that the student be placed in "no-pay" status. Otherwise, their tuition payment will be canceled, and the student will be required to reimburse the University the full amount of the tuition payment.

Note: Registration of less than 9 hours in fall/spring terms, or 6 hours in the summer disqualifies the student from receiving a graduate assistantship and a tuition waiver.

### **G. Work-related Injuries (Worker's Compensation)**

For non-serious injuries, you should first contact AmeriSys by calling 1-800-455-2079. Treatment for any non-life threatening work-related injury or illness must be authorized by AmeriSys prior to obtaining medical treatment (<https://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/employee-relations/workers-compensation/>). AmeriSys will select an appropriate medical provider and arrange the initial appointment and any necessary follow-up treatment from within the AmeriSys Workers' Compensation Services Provider

Directory. For serious injuries, you should go directly to the UF Health Emergency Room for treatment. Upon arrival, you should inform the admitting clerk of your graduate status and that the injury is work-related. The student's supervisor must complete the Accident Investigation Report and submit it to Environmental Health and Safety and the UF Workers' Compensation Office within 24 hours of the accident. Environmental Health and Safety should be notified at 352-392-1591 of any workplace hazards immediately.

## **H. Non-work Related Injuries and General Health Care**

General health and non-work-related injuries are the responsibility of the student. Students may use the Student Health Care Centers on campus ([shcc.ufl.edu](http://shcc.ufl.edu)), and the range of providers and covered services from the GatorGradCare health insurance provided as part of the Graduate Assistantship are delineated in the policy documents ([hr.ufl.edu/benefits/gatorgradcare](http://hr.ufl.edu/benefits/gatorgradcare)). Students are responsible for being aware of the terms and limitations of their health insurance policy. Students must enroll in the health insurance program at least every year, and strict deadlines apply.

## **I. College of Medicine & University Counseling & Development Office**

The Office of Student Counseling and Development (<https://counseling.med.ufl.edu>) is a resource available for graduate students in the College of Medicine. It provides counseling related to personal or professional situations. Student-counselor conversations are strictly confidential. The director of this office is Dr. Beverly Dede, Ph.D., Clinical Assistant Professor. You may reach her at 273-8383 or at [beverly@ufl.edu](mailto:beverly@ufl.edu). The following university offices also provide counseling and crisis management for students:

- [UF Counseling and Wellness Center \(3190 Radio Rd, behind the SW Recreation Center\)](#)  
(352) 392-1575
- [UF Crisis and Emergency Resource Center \(Peabody Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> floor\)](#)  
(352) 391-1575

## **J. Other University, HSC, and BMS Information**

### **Libraries**

The Health Science Center Library is located in the Communicore Building of the Health Sciences Complex. It has a large collection of medical, chemical, and biological journals and databases, as well as a wide array of texts, and reference materials (<https://library.health.ufl.edu>). Students are required to present their Gator1 card when checking out materials.

Another excellent source is the Marston Science Library on Newell Drive, diagonally across from Century Tower. It houses the combined holdings of the agriculture library, the chemistry library, and several others.

### **Fire and Police Emergencies**

All emergencies pertaining to fire or police should be reported to the University Police Department, Phone: 392-1111. SNAP (Student Nighttime Auxiliary Police) can provide an escort after dark to anywhere on campus. They can be reached at 392-SNAP.

### **Housing**

On-campus housing is available on a limited basis for both single and married students. Generally, a waiting period of at least several months is encountered. Contact the Division of Housing for information (352-392-2171 or [www.housing.ufl.edu/housing](http://www.housing.ufl.edu/housing)). This office also distributes extensive lists of off-campus apartments and houses available for renting, and provides useful information about each. The Division is located at Museum Road and 13th Street just east of Beatty Towers.

## **Traffic and Parking Regulations**

Eligibility for a parking permit at UF is determined by the student's local address and academic classification. Contact the Transportation and Parking Services for additional information on parking regulations and permits. They are located on 254 Gale Lemerand Drive. Phone: 352-392-7275 or <http://www.parking.ufl.edu>

## **K. Policy on Sexual Harassment**

### WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

According to the Sex Discrimination Guidelines promulgated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination (<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>). The following is the EEOC statement on sexual harassment.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

- The victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.
- The harasser's conduct must be unwelcome.

For more information, please see the following websites:

UF Human Resources

<https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>



### III. General Neuroscience PhD Program Information

#### A. Overview

During the first years of study, graduate students will complete a rigorous, foundational neuroscience curriculum as described below in Appendix A. Detailed course syllabi are available on the neuroscience website (<https://neuroscience.ufl.edu/training/course-offerings/>). After year 2, most of the scholarly activities involve innovative research activities as students work towards the completion of their doctoral degree.

#### B. Degrees Offered

The students in the Neuroscience PhD Program will graduate with a Doctor of Philosophy in Medical Sciences with a concentration in Neuroscience. Students that decide not to complete their doctoral studies may have the option to transfer to the Neuroscience Master's Program directed by Dr. Matt Sarkisian ([msarkisian@ufl.edu](mailto:msarkisian@ufl.edu)).

#### C. Transfer Students

The transfer of students into the Neuroscience PhD Program from other graduate programs and/or institutions (i.e., when their mentor moves to UF before the student has graduated) is done according to the University of Florida policies. According to these policies, each student must apply to our program (and be accepted) and must complete the qualifying examination at UF (regardless of whether they have already taken it at their prior institution).

1. Transfer of graduate course credit: Per UF Graduate School policy, up to 30 credits of graduate coursework from another institution or UF in a non-degree/postbaccalaureate classification, or from a master's degree program, are potentially eligible for transfer towards the doctoral degree. If a student holds a master's degree in a discipline different from the doctoral program, the master's work will not be counted in the program unless the academic unit petitions the Dean of the Graduate School. Coursework beyond a master's degree taken at another university may be eligible for transfer if it was received from an institution offering the doctoral degree. All courses to be transferred must be graduate-level, letter-graded with a grade of B or better, and must be demonstrated to relate directly to the degree being sought. All such transfer requests must be approved by the student's supervisory committee and a petition submitted to the Graduate School no later than the student's third term of Ph.D. study. The petition should be submitted by the relevant Concentration Administrator using a Graduate Credit Transfer Request Form and must describe how the prior course work is relevant to the current degree. A copy of the transcript listing the credits involved should accompany the justification letter and form. The credit transfer petition must be approved by the Program Directors and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education before submission to the Graduate School.
2. Applications: Students must submit the application materials that will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee.
3. Supervisory Committee: Following acceptance and arrival at UF, transfer students are required to form and meet with their supervisory committee within 90 days of enrolling in the program.

4. Qualifying Exam: All transfer students must take the qualifying exam at UF. Even students who have already taken a qualifying exam at their previous institution must re-take the exam.

## **IV. Degree Requirements for Doctor of Philosophy**

### **A. The Nature and Purpose of the Doctoral Program**

The following is quoted from the Council of Graduate Schools policy statement on the Doctor of Philosophy Degree:

"The Doctor of Philosophy degree is the highest academic degree granted by North American universities. It is a research degree and is to be distinguished from other doctorates such as the M.D., J.D., or Ed.D degrees, which are designed for professional training or which focus on applied rather than basic research. The Doctor of Philosophy program is designed to prepare a student to become a scholar, which is, to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as communicate and disseminate it. Such skills may lead to careers in social, governmental, business and industrial organizations as well as in university and college teaching, research and administration. The program emphasizes the development of the student's capacity to make significant original contributions to knowledge in a context of freedom of inquiry and expression. A well-prepared doctoral student will have developed the ability to understand and evaluate critically the literature of the field and to apply appropriate principles and procedures for the recognition, evaluation, interpretation, and understanding of issues and problems at the frontiers of knowledge. The student will also have an appropriate awareness of and commitment to the ethical practices appropriate to the field. All of this is accomplished in apprenticeship to and close association with faculty members who are experienced in research and teaching. A central purpose of scholarship is the extension of knowledge, and students in a doctoral program become scholars by choosing an area in which to specialize and a professor with whom to work. When all courses have been taken, the research finished, the dissertation written, and all examinations passed, the student should have acquired the knowledge and skills expected of a scholar who has made an original contribution to the field and has attained the expertise to continue to do so."

### **B. Appointment of Supervisory Committee**

Committee members recommended by the student and mentor are reviewed by the Program Directors, Chair of the Department of Neuroscience, and Associate Dean for Graduate Education. The *Supervisory Committee Appointment Form* listing the committee members must be signed by each person on the committee, Program Director, Chair of the Department of Neuroscience, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education BEFORE the graduate administrator can officially enter this information into the Graduate Information Management System (GIMS). The mentor is the chair of the supervisory committee.

Once the mentor contract has been fully signed, the mentee has 90 days to form and meet with their supervisory committee. The Dean of the Graduate School is an ex-officio member of all supervisory committees. Supervisory committees are required to have a minimum of four members. Registration for spring term of the second year will be flagged by the graduate school and it cannot be processed unless this committee has been formed.

### Supervisory Committee Membership:

- The supervisory committee must have a minimum of 4 graduate faculty members. At least two members, including the chair (mentor), must be from the student's graduate program unit. At least one member will be drawn from a different affiliation within UF Graduate School but with no ties to the student's graduate program and is to serve as the external member. The primary responsibility of the external member is to represent the interests of the Graduate School and the University at doctoral committee activities. The remaining supervisory committee member(s) can be graduate faculty from within or outside the student's concentration of study.
- The program administrators are available to assist in determining if the committee fulfills the Graduate School and Program requirements for the supervisory committee.
- The co-chair, if any, does not have to be in the student's concentration.
- The Chair is required to be present at both the qualifying exam and final defense.
- One or more of the committee members must be above the rank of assistant professor.
- Committee membership and any subsequent changes to the committee membership must be approved by the Program Directors, the Chair of the Department of Neuroscience, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education before the concentration administrator enters this information into GIMS.

### Duties of the Supervisory Committee:

- Coordinate the overall doctoral program in accordance with all regulations concerning the Ph.D. degree set forth by the university and the Neuroscience PhD Program. The student has the responsibility to be familiar with these regulations.
- Conduct the qualifying exam to evaluate the qualifications of the student to be admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree, to discuss and approve a program of study, and to evaluate the proposed dissertation research project.
- Meet with the student every 6 months to review progress.
- Once a year, the meeting can be virtual in which the student: 1) writes a detailed report of progress since the previous meeting, 2) the mentor approves the report, 3) the report is disseminated to the committee, and 4) the committee members review and approve of the report. The committee report form will be completed and signed with a designation of a "virtual" meeting having taken place. However, anyone in the process, from the student, the mentor, any committee member, the concentration coordinator, or the Associate Dean of Graduate Education, has the authority to call a face-to-face meeting instead of a virtual meeting. In any case, there may not be two consecutive virtual meetings. The time between face-to-face meetings cannot exceed one calendar year.
- Meet when the dissertation is completed and conduct the final oral defense to ensure that the dissertation is a piece of original research and contributes to scientific knowledge and that the student has fulfilled all requirements for the PhD degree.

### **C. Supervisory Committee Meetings**

Students are required to have two supervisory committee meetings annually at six-month intervals. There are no exceptions to this rule. A student's perceived lack of new data or progress is not an excuse to avoid a meeting. Faculty members (i.e., supervisory committee chairs/mentors) do not have the authority to waive this rule.

Following the supervisory committee meeting, the mentor must return the completed committee meeting and assessment forms so that all signatures can be obtained within two weeks of the meeting. The committee's assessment form provides feedback on the student's research, academic, and professional development, and should outline goals to be met by the next meeting.

#### **D. Qualifying Examination for the Ph.D. degree and Admission to Candidacy**

A graduate student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree when the student is granted formal admission to candidacy. Such admission requires the approval of the student's supervisory committee, Program Director, the Dean of the College, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The approval must be based on:

- The academic record of the student
- The supervisory committee's opinion on overall fitness for candidacy
- An approved dissertation topic
- A qualifying examination as described below

The student should apply for admission to candidacy as soon as the qualifying examination is passed and a dissertation topic is approved by the student's supervisory committee.

The qualifying examination consists of a written and an oral component. The written component is an NIH-type predoctoral fellowship proposal (F31 Research Training Plan) describing the student's proposed dissertation research project. The oral component consists of an examination of the student's general knowledge in his or her chosen area of research as defined by the written proposal. This is conducted by the supervisory committee and the Program Directors.

#### **Scheduling**

Administration of the qualifying examination is the responsibility of the student's concentration coordinator and supervisory committee. The program highly recommends that students complete their qualifying examination before the end of the second summer semester the second year of graduate study. Qualifying examinations must be scheduled by September 1 and completed no later than December 1, of the third year of graduate studies. Students who do not complete their qualifying exam by the December 1 deadline will not be allowed to register for the spring semester unless a waiver is obtained from the Associate Dean for Graduate Education. A petition request outlining the reason(s) for a waiver and a timeline for completing the qualifying exam should be sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education. The petition request must receive prior approval from the supervisory committee and the concentration coordinator before being sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Copies of the written proposal will be distributed to members of the student's supervisory committee at least ten working days before the scheduled examination. Students are responsible for scheduling a time and location of their exam that is suitable for their supervisory committee. The student should schedule 2.5 hours for the oral portion of the qualifying examination.

#### **Examination Committee**

It is required that the student and all members of the supervisory committee be physically present at a student's qualifying exam. The Program Directors, or their designated representative, should also be present. Under extenuating circumstances, committee members, excluding the chair, may petition the

Program Directors to attend this examination remotely via electronic media (i.e. Zoom). The petition should be submitted by the chair of the supervisory committee.

The supervisory committee will elect or appoint from its ranks an examination chair other than the student's mentor to moderate the examination. The chair of the supervisory committee (the mentor) and the concentration coordinator may ask questions during the exam. However, the mentor is not allowed to intervene on the student's behalf. The supervisory committee is responsible for deciding whether the student is qualified to continue working towards a Ph.D. degree

**Written Examination Proposal** (based on NIH instructions for F31 Individual Fellowship; <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-g/fellowship-forms-g.pdf>)

### *Format Specifications*

Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters. For figures, figure legends and tables, a smaller type size is acceptable, but it must be in black ink, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement. Use one-half-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right). The document must be single-spaced. Formatted subheadings and double spacing between paragraphs are encouraged, as they make the document easier to read.

### *Content*

#### **1. NIH Biosketch**

#### **2. Specific Aims**

*Specific Aims are limited to one page.*

State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.

#### **3. Research Strategy**

*This item is limited to six pages*

Organize the Research Strategy in the specified order using the instructions provided below. Start each section with the appropriate section heading—Significance and Approach. Cite published experimental details in the Research Strategy section and provide the full reference in the Bibliography and References Cited section.

##### **(a) Significance**

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.

- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
- Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

**(b) Approach**

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
- Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and precautions to be exercised.
- If an applicant has multiple Specific Aims, then the applicant may address Significance and Approach for each Specific Aim individually, or may address Significance and Approach for all of the Specific Aims collectively.
- As applicable, also include the following information as part of the Research Strategy, keeping within the two sections listed above: Significance and Approach.

**Oral examination**

*Format and Content*

There is no public seminar. The oral examination tests the student's general knowledge in their chosen area of research, as defined by the written proposal. Importantly, the oral examination is NOT intended specifically as a defense of the written research proposal, but rather uses the proposal as a springboard to define the content of the exam.

The student should prepare an oral presentation of the written proposal which, if presented uninterrupted, would require approximately 30 minutes. The student will deliver their oral presentation to the examination committee, during which the committee members will question the student on all aspects of the proposal, focusing in particular on general background knowledge underpinning both the theory and the technical execution of the proposal. The student may also be examined both on the importance and feasibility of the proposed research, and on the suitability of the proposed experiments to answer the questions posed. The student can expect extensive excursions into topics relevant to the proposed experiments. The student and the committee should expect to devote approximately two hours to the examination. The interruption of the student's presentation by the committee will often prevent the student from completing the oral presentation; however, the process should reveal the student's competence in their chosen area of research.

*Evaluation*

At the end of the examination, the student is asked to leave the room, and the examination chair asks for comments from all present regarding the student's general knowledge of the research area as defined by the written proposal. Substantial agreement among the examining committee will determine whether the

student has passed the oral examination. The student will then return to the room and the committee will inform the student of their decision.

**Possible outcomes of the qualifying exam include the following:**

1. Pass - Student is admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.
2. Conditional Pass - Student must remediate an area of weakness identified by the exam committee before being admitted into candidacy. A timeline for the remediation should be included in the qualifying exam report. The student will be admitted to candidacy upon satisfactory completion of the remediation.
3. Fail with Option for Reexamination - The student will be allowed to repeat the exam after extensive remedial work specified by the exam committee. At least one term of additional preparation is required by the Graduate School before re-examination, i.e., the qualifying exam may not be repeated during the same semester.
4. Fail - A re-examination is not recommended by the supervisory committee, and the student is not allowed to complete the Ph.D. program. The supervisory committee may recommend completion of a M.S. degree. A student who fails the examination may petition for re-examination per Graduate School policy.

**E. Admission to Candidacy**

A doctoral student does not become an actual candidate for the Ph.D. degree until granted formal Admission to Candidacy. Admission to Candidacy is based on the following: 1) identification of a dissertation advisor (mentor); 2) acceptable academic record; 3) satisfactory completion of the required curriculum; 4) positive recommendation of the supervisory committee concerning overall qualification for candidacy; and 5) satisfactory performance on both the written and oral qualifying examination.

**F. Guideline for the “next to last” committee meeting.**

Approximately six months prior to the anticipated date of the final oral doctoral defense, the supervisory committee should meet to decide if the student's research is sufficiently complete to comprise a dissertation and to approve the start of the writing of the dissertation. For this meeting the student should prepare an outline of the proposed dissertation. The committee will point out inadequacies and suggest corrective actions. The report for this committee meeting should clearly state that the committee grants approval for the student to write and defend their thesis and the expected semester of graduation. If significant additional work is required, an additional pre-defense committee meeting may be warranted. The purpose of this guideline is to enable students and their committee to efficiently plan the terminal stages of the student’s dissertation studies. Experience shows that a six-month time-frame for this meeting works well; however, longer or shorter time periods may be optimal for different students. Once a committee has agreed in writing to the terminal studies required to complete the dissertation, under only exceptional circumstances should this agreement be altered.

**G. Registration in the semester of graduation**

Students are required to register and complete all Graduate School and program requirements in the term they graduate (i.e., petitions, course requirements, the oral defense, and final submission of the corrected dissertation by the stated deadlines). Students who meet all requirements and deadlines except for *Final Submission/or Final Clearance* are eligible to “*Clear Prior*” and receive their degree in the subsequent semester. *Clear Prior* is only possible for dissertation students who have met all published deadlines for the current term except *Final Submission* and/or *Final Clearance* from the Graduate Editorial Office. No other students are eligible. Students who meet the conditions of *Clear Prior* are waived from registration requirements and fees in the following semester of graduation. However, students approved to clear prior are still required to file a new degree application by the published deadline in the term they graduate, since the degree application submitted in the prior term does not carry over into the subsequent semester in which the degree is awarded.

A student requesting to clear prior must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Student has successfully submitted a degree application for the current term within the published deadlines.
- Student has appropriately satisfied the current term registration.
- Student has successfully met the current term first submission deadlines for the thesis or dissertation, as confirmed by the Editorial Office, via a confirmation email to the student and supervisory committee chair.
- Student has successfully met all other degree and administrative requirements, within the published deadlines for the current term, except *Final Submission* and/or *Final Clearance* with the Graduate School Editorial Office.
- Student is in the process of finalizing the thesis or dissertation with the Graduate School Editorial Office. No other students are eligible.

Degree application is done online through ISIS (<https://student.ufl.edu/>). Registration of less than 9 hours in fall/spring terms, or 6 hours in the summer disqualifies the student from receiving a graduate assistantship and tuition waiver. If a student meets all graduation requirements before the beginning of a semester, including final acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate School Editorial Office, they may petition the Graduate School via the Associate Dean to have their final semester registration requirement waived. These requests are most often granted by the Graduate School.

## **H. Dissertation**

UF is a national leader in the development of electronic theses and dissertations (ETD). Among the benefits of ETDs are greater accessibility to scholarship, opportunities to include multi-media, and cost/space savings for libraries. Access issues are addressed by a three-tiered system allowing students options to post to the World Wide Web, to the university only, or totally restrict access for a certain period of time for patent and other publication purposes. The Graduate School is working with the Office of Instructional Resources and the Smathers Libraries to provide editorial, technical, and archival support for the ETD program.

For additional information regarding ETDs, contact Stacy Wallace in the Graduate School Editorial Office at 392-1282 or [beloved@ufl.edu](mailto:beloved@ufl.edu) or the Guide for Preparing Theses and Dissertations (<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/Guide-for-ETDs-2021.pdf>).



Each candidate for the Ph.D. degree is required to prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation of publishable quality and is acceptable in form and content to the Supervisory Committee and to the Graduate School. Students should consult the Editorial Office of the Graduate School for instructions concerning the format of the dissertation (<https://asc.helpdesk.ufl.edu/tutorials/etd-submission.html>). Dates for submission of the dissertation (<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/editorial-deadlines/>) to the Editorial Office of the Graduate School are also published in the University Calendar. The initial (first) submission date is generally about one-third of the way through the semester. The first submission does not have to be defended. The final, defended dissertation is due to the Editorial Office of the Graduate School towards the end of the semester. In addition to the electronic copies of the dissertation presented to the Graduate School and College, students should check with their mentor's department as to any departmental and/or mentor copies that are required by their mentor's department.

Each dissertation, at the time of submission for initial review by the Editorial Office of the Graduate School, must be accompanied by a brief General Audience Abstract, in addition to the academic abstract. The abstract should be written in a fashion that communicates in clear and effective nonspecialized language the contributions of the work to the state of Florida, the nation, society in general and/or the discipline.

## **I. Dissertation Defense and Final Examination**

Final dissertations must be submitted electronically according to UF Graduate School guidelines for electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) in the Graduate Catalog. More information is also available on the web at (<https://asc.helpdesk.ufl.edu/tutorials/etd-submission.html>) and from the Graduate School Editorial Office.

After first written submission of the dissertation draft to the Graduate School and completion of all other prescribed work for the Ph.D. degree, but not earlier than the term preceding the semester in which the degree is to be conferred, the candidate will be given a final examination, consisting of completion of a written dissertation (according to the UF guidelines for ETD), a public dissertation defense seminar, and a closed oral exam by the supervisory committee. The time and location of the defense should be scheduled by the student, in agreement with the attending supervisory committee members. At least 2-3 hours should be scheduled for the defense and committee meeting that follows the defense. The defense will take the form of a formal, public one-hour presentation of the work to the full faculty and students. Proper announcement of the defense should be made by the program administrator. These announcements are distributed to supervisory committee members and Associate Dean for Graduate Education, and posted. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this announcement precedes the actual defense by at least ten business days and that committee members receive copies of the dissertation at least ten business days in advance of the defense. Following the formal presentation, the student will meet privately with their supervisory committee members for a final oral examination on the dissertation.

It is required that the student and all members of the supervisory committee be physically present at a student's final examination. The Program Directors, or their designated representative, should also be present. Under extenuating circumstances, committee members, excluding the chair, may petition the Program Directors to attend these examinations remotely via electronic media (i.e. Zoom). The petition should be submitted by the chair of the supervisory committee.

Committee members must sign the *ETD Submission Approval Form* and *Final Examination* form at the defense. The candidate and the supervisory committee chair sign the UF Publishing Agreement Form. The concentration administrator prepares these forms. If dissertation changes are requested, the supervisory committee chair or his or her designee may hold the ETD Signature Page until all are satisfied with the dissertation. However, this form must be submitted electronically, via GIMS, by the Final Submission Deadline for the Graduate School Editorial Office, during the term of the intended degree award.

All work for the doctorate, including the final examination, must be completed within five calendar years after the qualifying exam. The final exam must be at least 2 terms after the qualifying exam.

## **J. Certification**

Doctoral candidates, who have completed all requirements for the degree, including satisfactory defense and final acceptance of the dissertation, may request certification to that effect prior to receipt of the degree. The "Degree Certification Status Verification Form" form, which is available at <http://www.graduateschool.ufl.edu/academics/graduate-student-forms> must be signed by the chair of the supervisory committee and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education of the College of Medicine before being submitted to the Graduate School Editorial Office in Room 160 at Grinter Hall. Your assigned concentration administrator can assist you with this form.

## **V. Selection of Concentration and Major Professor**

### **A. Mentor Selection**

The first-year laboratory rotations (GMS6090) are the most important mechanism for the selection of a concentration and mentor. During the first year, students are given the opportunity to do 3 research rotations to identify a dissertation mentor. Research rotations must be completed with faculty members of the Neuroscience PhD Program. Students have the option of selecting a faculty member as their doctoral mentor at the conclusion of their rotation with that faculty member. This is a mutual decision reached between the student and the mentor. All students must complete 2 rotations.

Students who select a mentor any time prior to the start of the third rotation ("fast-tracking") will complete their remaining research rotation(s) with their mentor. The primary intent of fast-tracking is to move students into their dissertation research more quickly. Students who fast-track are still required to present their research progress and submit a written report at the conclusion of any remaining rotation(s), a requirement of the GMS6090 research rotation course. However, if a fast-track student forms their supervisory committee prior to the start of their third rotation (before drop/add of spring semester) they can replace GMS6090 with GMS7979 (Advanced Research).

Students who fast-track with a mentor should immediately cancel any remaining research rotations they have arranged with other faculty members. Conversely, faculty who commit to becoming a mentor, and who do not plan on accepting additional students, should immediately notify any students who have scheduled subsequent rotations with them so that these students can arrange to rotate with other faculty members.

Once a student has committed to a laboratory, the mentor should immediately inform the Program Directors and Ikiah Young so that a mentor contract is created via DocuSign for electronic signatures from

the student, mentor, and the chair of the mentor's primary department. Once the mentor contract is completed, students have 90 days to form their Supervisory Committee and schedule their first Supervisory Committee meeting.

## **B. Changing Major Professors**

Students wishing to change major professors should consult first with the Program Directors. After evaluating the situation and if the request appears to be in the best interests of all parties, a strategy will be devised for implementing the change in the least disruptive manner. A new *Supervisory Committee Appointment* form must be completed.

## **C. Transfer of the Major Professor to another Institution**

If a student's mentor transfers to another institution, the following policies apply:

- 1) Students who have not passed their qualifying examination and who wish to remain with the departing mentor must transfer to the graduate program of the new institution. Students who wish to remain in our program must transfer to another mentor and take their qualifying examination.
- 2) Students who have passed their qualifying examination may a) transfer to a program in the other institution, b) transfer to another mentor in the Neuroscience PhD Program and submit a new research proposal, or c) remain in the Neuroscience PhD Program BMS and move to the new institution with their mentor. To exercise option c, the following conditions must be met:
  - i) The student and the mentor must return at their own expense every 12 months after departure for a supervisory committee meeting. Six months before the anticipated date of the dissertation defense and final examination, the student and mentor must attend the penultimate supervisory committee meeting. At this time, the student will present an outline of his proposed dissertation and a summary of his research results. The supervisory committee will determine if the research is sufficient for a dissertation and must give its approval to complete the dissertation. Failure to comply with these conditions will result in termination from our program.
  - ii) The student and mentor must return to the University at their own expense for the Dissertation Defense/Final Examination.
  - iii) To prevent any misunderstandings, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be prepared by the Associate Dean for Graduate Education stating the specific conditions under which the student may continue in our program. Acceptance of the conditions of the MOU agreement requires the signatures of the student, mentor, Associate Dean for Graduate Education, and any additional parties relevant to the agreement.

## **VI. Standards and Grades**

### **A. Grades**

Students must obtain a graduate grade point average of B (3.0) or better in each semester of their first year, regardless of overall GPA. Failure to meet this standard is grounds for dismissal from the program. Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 throughout their graduate career. Students who fail to do this cannot hold assistantships or fellowships and do not qualify for in- or out-of-state tuition fee payments without special permission from the Dean of the Graduate School. Students who fall below a GPA of 3.0 may request that the Associate Dean for Graduate Education petition the Graduate School for exemption from this policy for one semester. If the petition is approved, but the student fails to improve their cumulative GPA to 3.0 during that semester, or if they fall below 3.0 in any subsequent semester, they will be subject to immediate dismissal from the program.

Grades of S and U are not computed into the GPA; however, all U grades must be removed before a student may graduate.

### **B. Identification of a Mentor**

Students are expected to identify a mentor who can financially support them by the end of the research rotations. If a student's failure to identify a mentor is not due to unsatisfactory academic progress, a student may request to do an additional fourth rotation during the spring semester to identify a mentor. This request should be submitted to the Program Directors for approval at least one week prior to the end of the third rotation. Although rare, a student may request to do an additional fifth rotation during the summer term. To maintain their graduate assistantship appointment and continue in the program, students must identify a mentor who can financially support them by the end of their first year.

### **C. Admission to Candidacy**

A graduate student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree when the student is granted formal admission to candidacy. Students must pass their qualifying examination and be admitted to candidacy in order to continue in the Ph.D. program.

### **D. Annual Student Evaluation**

The University requires an annual written evaluation for Ph.D. students. The evaluation should be done at the time of the annual supervisory committee meeting by the student's mentor. The student should also be given the opportunity to discuss the evaluation with the mentor. This evaluation becomes a part of the student's file.

### **E. Individual Development Plan (IDP)**

Graduate School Policy requires all Ph.D. students to create and update an IDP on an annual basis (<https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/planning-resources/idp/>). "The IDP is intended to be a working document, to guide new and continuing Ph.D. students in identifying, pursuing, and meeting their professional and personal goals." The template for the IDP of BMS students can be found at <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>. Completion of the student's annual IDP requirement is recorded on the supervisory committee meeting assessment form: <https://biomed.med.ufl.edu/students/forms/>

An additional resource for planning a strategic roadmap for doctoral student success at the University of Florida can be found at: <https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/planning-resources/doctoral-roadmap/#d.en.859823> .

## **VII. Grievances**

The University of Florida is committed to a policy of treating all members of the University community fairly in regard to their personal and professional concerns. The procedures outlined below, based on the student grievance procedure specified by UF rule 6C1-4.012, are designed and intended to provide College of Medicine graduate students with a fair and expeditious resolution of their disputes with University of Florida faculty and/or staff.

A grievance is defined as dissatisfaction occurring when a student believes that any decision, act or condition affecting him or her is illegal, unjust, or creates unnecessary hardship. Such grievances may include academic problems (excluding grades, except when there is an allegation of illegal discrimination or where a grade penalty has been imposed without proper authority), scientific misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, and employment-related concerns.

In general, it is desirable to settle concerns in an informal fashion rather than initiating a formal grievance. Communication is a key element. Students may wish to consult with Dr. Beverly Dede of the COM office of Student Counseling and Development for advice or counsel.

The student is strongly encouraged to discuss his or her grievance with the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. The discussion should be held as soon as the student first becomes aware of the act or condition that is the basis of the grievance. Additionally, or alternatively, the student may wish to present his or her grievance in writing to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. In either case, the person alleged to have caused the grievance must respond to the student either orally or in writing.

The student should also consider speaking with their supervisory committee chair or the concentration coordinator. If neither of these individuals is available or if they are part of the circumstance of concern, the student may seek advice from the department chair, the GSO Advocate, or Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

### **(1) Initial Review**

If a student decides not to present his or her grievance to the person alleged to have caused the grievance or if the student is not satisfied with the response, he or she may present the grievance in writing, with all supporting documentation, to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education who will present the grievance to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). After review, the GSC will submit a recommendation to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

The Associate Dean for Graduate Education will provide a written report of the outcome of the review to the student within ten business days from the date the written grievance was received. If the disposition extends beyond ten business days, the Associate Dean for Graduate Education should inform the student of the delay and the expected response date.

## (2) Appeal

A student has the right to appeal a decision by the Associate Dean for Graduate Education, but must do so in writing to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education within 10 business days after receiving a decision. If a student decides to appeal, it is recommended that they work with Dr. John Aris (student advocate, [johnaris@ufl.edu](mailto:johnaris@ufl.edu)) on a presentation to the GSC. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal process, they have the right to submit a final appeal, in writing, to the UF Ombudsman for graduate and professional students (<https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/>) within 10 business days after receiving the decision from the Associate Dean for Education.

## APPENDIX A

### Course Curriculum\*

#### Year 1

##### Fall Semester

- GMS 5924 Navigating the Neuroscience PhD Program (1 credit)
- GMS 6022 Principles of Neurophysiology (2 credits)
- GMS 6090 Laboratory Rotations #1 (1 credit)
- GMS 6090 Laboratory Rotations #2 (1 credit)
- GMS 6701 Functional Human Neuroanatomy (3 credits)
- GMS 7794 Neuroscience Seminar Series (1 credit) or GMS 6029 AI Journal Club (1 credit) *ERS-AI students only*

#### Year 1

##### Spring Semester

- GMS 6023 Molecular Neuroscience and Neuropharmacology (3 credits)
- GMS 6025C Statistics for Neuroscientists (4 credits) or CLP 6527 Research Design and Statistics (3 credits)
- GMS 6090 Laboratory Rotation #3 (1 credit)  
If PI committed "Fast track" GMS 7979 Advanced Research (1 credit) *in dissertation lab*
- GMS 7877 Responsible Conduct of Biomedical Research (1 credit)

#### Year 1

##### Summer Semester

- GMS 7979 Advanced Research (in dissertation lab)(1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

#### Year 2

##### Fall Semester

- GMS 5905 Neuroscience Grant Writing (1 credit)
- GMS 6XXX Behavioral and Cognition Neuroscience (2 credits)
- GMS 6792 Graduate Research Seminar Series (1 credit)
- GMS 7979 Advanced Research (1-5 credits)  
Electives (0-4 credits) *optional*

#### Year 2

##### Spring Semester

- GMS 6XXX Rigor and Experimental Design (2 credits)
- GMS 6719 Computational Skills in Neuroscience (2 credits)
- GMS 6792 Graduate Research Seminar Series (1 credit)
- GMS 7979 Advanced Research (1-5 credits)  
Electives (0-4 credits) *optional*

#### Year 2

##### Summer Semester

- GMS 7979 Advanced Research (6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

Students typically should pass their qualifying examination during this semester. Once passed, students will then be enrolled in **GMS 7980 Doctoral Research**. Students will also start to have their choice of journal clubs in year 3.

### **Year 3**

#### **Fall Semester**

**GMS 6029** Brain Journal Club (1 credit)  
**GMS 6792** Graduate Research Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7794** Neuroscience Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7980** Doctoral Research (1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

### **Year 3**

#### **Spring Semester**

**GMS 6029** Brain Journal Club (1 credit)  
**GMS 6792** Graduate Research Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7794** Neuroscience Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7980** Doctoral Research (1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

### **Year 3**

#### **Summer Semester**

**GMS 7980** Doctoral Research (1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

### **Year 4**

#### **Fall Semester**

**GMS 6029** Brain Journal Club (1 credit)  
**GMS 6792** Graduate Research Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7794** Neuroscience Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7980** Doctoral Research (1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

### **Year 4**

#### **Spring Semester**

**GMS 6029** Brain Journal Club (1 credit)  
**GMS 6792** Graduate Research Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7794** Neuroscience Seminar Series (1 credit)  
**GMS 7980** Doctoral Research (1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

### **Year 4**

#### **Summer Semester**

**GMS 7980** Doctoral Research (1-6 credits)  
Electives (0-5 credits) *optional*

Updated 12/20/2024

\* The Neuroscience PhD Program Curriculum will be reviewed yearly by the Neuroscience Curriculum Committee to evaluate the syllabi and course evaluations to make changes for improvements if needed.



## APPENDIX B

### Additional useful websites

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** [my.ufl.edu](http://my.ufl.edu) (Main Menu, My Account, Update My Directory Profile) or Registrar Information Counter, 222 Criser Hall, PO Box 114000, Gainesville, FL 32611-4000

**AID DISBURSEMENT QUESTIONS:** [fa.ufl.edu/bursar](http://fa.ufl.edu/bursar) or University Bursar, S-113 Criser Hall, PO Box 114050, Gainesville, FL 32611, 392-0181 email: [askbursar@admin.ufl.edu](mailto:askbursar@admin.ufl.edu)

**BUS SERVICE:** RTS [www.go-rts.com](http://www.go-rts.com), 100 SE 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, 352-334-2600 or 352-334-3676

**CAMPUS MAPS:** [campusmap.ufl.edu](http://campusmap.ufl.edu)

**CAREER GUIDANCE (Career Resource Center):** <https://career.ufl.edu> Suite 1300, Reitz Union, 352-392-1601

**COUNSELING CENTER:** [www.counseling.ufl.edu](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu), 301 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1575

**DIVISION OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS:** Southwest Recreational Center or Student Recreational Fitness Center, 352-846-1081, <https://recsports.ufl.edu>

**FEDERAL WORK STUDY (award letters, work permits):** [www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/employment/](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/programs/employment/), Student Financial Affairs, S-107 Criser Hall, PO Box 114025, Gainesville, FL 32611-4025, 352-392-1275

**FEE PAYMENT VERIFICATION (tuition/fees):** [www.fa.ufl.edu/bursar/current-students/tuition-fees/](http://www.fa.ufl.edu/bursar/current-students/tuition-fees/) University Bursar Customer Service counter, S-113 Criser Hall, PO Box 114050, Gainesville, FL 32611-4050, 352-392-0181

**FINANCIAL AID:** [www.sfa.ufl.edu](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu) Student Financial Affairs, S-107 Criser Hall, PO Box 114025, Gainesville, FL 32611-4025, 352-392-1275

**GATOR DINING:** [www.bsd.ufl.edu/dining](http://www.bsd.ufl.edu/dining), 114 Recreational Center, PO Box 112282, 352-392-2491

**GRADUATE SCHOOL:** [graduateschool.ufl.edu/](http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/) or- Graduate Student Records, 103 Grinter Hall, PO Box 115500, Gainesville, FL 32611-5500, 352-392-4643

**HOUSING, ON-CAMPUS:** [www.housing.ufl.edu/](http://www.housing.ufl.edu/) or Contact Housing and Residence Education, corner of SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Museum Road, PO Box 112100, Gainesville, FL 32611-2100, 352-392-2161

**ID CARD (Original or Replacements):** ID Card Services [www.bsd.ufl.edu/G1C/idcard/location.asp](http://www.bsd.ufl.edu/G1C/idcard/location.asp) Welcome Center, 352-392-8343 (UF Bookstore) or 273-5044 (HSC Branch)

**ONE.UF** : <https://one.uf.edu/>. Provides access to academic and financial records. Gatorlink Username and password required to access individual student record.

**LIBRARIES, GEORGE A. SMATHERS**: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-0355

**OSA (Office of Student Activities)**: [www.studentinvolvement.ufl.edu](http://www.studentinvolvement.ufl.edu), Reitz Union room 300, 352-392-1671

**PARKING DECALS**: [www.parking.ufl.edu](http://www.parking.ufl.edu) or- Transportation and Parking Services, 254 Gale Lemerand Dr, Gainesville, FL 32611-2400, 352-392-7275

**STUDENT HEALTH CARE CENTER**: [shcc.ufl.edu/](http://shcc.ufl.edu/) Infirmary Building, 352-392-1161

**TRANSCRIPTS**: [www.registrar.ufl.edu/transcript.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/transcript.html)

Suggestions for changes to this handbook?

Please contact [Ikiah Young](#), [Dr. Benoit Giasson](#) or [Dr. Eduardo Candelario-Jalil](#)