



Neuroengineering PhD
Program
Graduate Student Handbook
Academic Year 2023-2024

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I. Introduction

A. General Information and Points of Contact

The purpose of this document is to outline the policies, procedures, and milestones for the PhD degree in Neuroengineering. The Neuroengineering (NE) degree is a joint program in the UAB School of Engineering and the UAB Heersink School of Medicine. Faculty with matching educational, research, and/or clinical interests throughout the university are encouraged to join as affiliated faculty.

Dr. Jamie Tyler (Professor, wjpt@uab.edu), and Dr. Mark Bolding (Associate Professor, mbolding@uab.edu) work with NE program faculty and the UAB Graduate School to develop and administer the graduate program. Either can sign forms and provide other assistance as students reach the milestones toward their degree.

Kristy Barlow (Program Administrator, kbarlow@uab.edu) provides administrative support for the NE Graduate Program. She is the primary contact for all questions related to the academic portion of the NE program.

Purchasing of supplies, key or OneCard access to laboratories and buildings, and travel reimbursements are handled per the procedures of the home department. A student's home department is that of his/her research advisor, after that faculty member is identified (see below).

B. Important Sources of Information

This Handbook supplements the [UAB Graduate Catalog](#) and the [UAB Graduate School](#) website, which present policies for all graduate students at UAB. The handbook policies may be more specific and stringent than university policies. Although the policies contained herein are intended to reflect current rules and policies of the university, users are cautioned that changes or additions may have become effective since the preparation of this handbook. In the event of such a conflict, current university policies (including catalogs) shall prevail.

Links to some other frequently used sources:

- [UAB Neuroengineering website](#)
- [BlazerNET](#)
- [UAB Graduate School Forms](#)
- [UAB Thesis and Dissertations](#)
- [UAB Graduate Faculty Listing](#)
- [UAB Student Health Services](#)
- [UAB Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\) training](#)
- [UAB Environmental Health and Safety](#)
- [UAB Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#)
- [UAB Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#)
- [UAB Graduate Academic Ethics and Misconduct Policy](#)

C. Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Collaboration, integrity, respect and excellence are [shared values](#) of our institution and are the core of what it means to be a UAB community member. And a key foundation at UAB is diversity, equity, and inclusion. At UAB, everybody counts every day. UAB is committed to fostering a diverse, respectful, and inclusive campus environment that values all community members regardless of background and embraces individual differences. UAB values and cultivates equity, diversity, and inclusion in our research, learning, clinical and work environments. Our students, faculty, and staff add diversity to our community through life experiences, perspectives and viewpoints that are enriching for the learning and work environment and are reflective of the students and communities we serve. Because UAB serves a diverse population, ODEI, along with our initiatives, aims to create an inclusive environment for all UAB faculty, staff, students, and patients through education, training, and awareness programs.

D. Disability Support Services (DSS) Accessibility Statement

UAB is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and you require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures. Requests for reasonable accommodations involve an interactive process and consist of a collaborative effort among the student, DSS, faculty, and staff. If you are registered with DSS, please contact course instructors or research advisors to discuss accommodations that may be necessary for your success. If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please call (205) 934-4205 or visit the [DSS](#) website.

E. Title IX Statement

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is committed to providing an environment that is free from sexual misconduct, which includes gender-based assault, harassment, exploitation, dating and domestic violence, stalking, as well as discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. If you have experienced any of the aforementioned conduct, we encourage you to report the incident. UAB provides several avenues for reporting. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources and supports, please visit the [UAB Title IX webpage](#) for UAB's Title IX Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Violence Policy; UAB's Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy; and the Duty to Report and Non-Retaliation Policy.

II. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program

A. Admission

Students admitted to the NE PhD program usually have earned a bachelor's degree in an engineering discipline or a closely-related field. Students with undergraduate degrees in computer science, neuroscience, physical sciences, life sciences, or mathematics will also

be considered for admission; however, such students must demonstrate preparation for the NE graduate curriculum. Graduate programs in the School of Engineering, including the Neuroengineering PhD program, will accept but do not require GRE scores.

B. Neuroengineering PhD Program Primary Advisor

The directors will serve as the primary advisors for students after they are admitted to the program and before they identify a research advisor. After a research advisor is selected, the primary advisor will continue monitoring course registration, reviewing the updated Planning Sheet (see below) each term, and assuring progress is made.

C. Requirements for the PhD Program

Students entering the PhD program are required to complete at least 72 semester hours of graduate work. Please note that 72 hours is a minimum requirement, and most students complete more hours than this minimum while earning the PhD degree. Students are required to be registered for a minimum of 9 credit hours/semester, 27 hours/year. Blazer fellowships pay for 9 credit hours/semester; students can take more than 9 hours in a semester with the approval of the program director and the research advisor, with the cost of the additional credit hour(s) tuition to be paid by the advisor.

NE graduate students take a set of required (core) courses with the remainder of their coursework (electives) selected for relevance to their research area and career goals. Please consult the current UAB Graduate Catalog for details on courses.

Elective courses are selected by the student in consultation with their research advisor. Electives and any course substitutions must be listed on the Neuroengineering PhD Planning Sheet (see below) and approved by a program director.

Special Topics courses and Independent/Individual Study courses are reviewed for applicability to the degree. No more than 6 combined hours of Special Topics and/or Independent Study courses will be applied to the Neuroengineering PhD without appeal to and approval of program directors.

UAB offers similar courses at the 300/600, 400/500, and 600/700-levels. While the higher numbered course has more advanced content, there is a significant overlap in topics. Therefore, students are not allowed to take a 500-, 600- or 700-level course for credit if they have previously taken the related 300-, 400- or 600-level course.

Before their degree is awarded, NE students are required to have at least one “first-author” journal article that has been published (or accepted for publication) and a second that has been submitted to a journal. Typically, a student’s doctoral research will result in at least two first-author articles. Please consult the Graduate Catalog for details.

Students are expected to complete their program in fewer than 7 years unless an exception is granted by the program director(s) and Dean of the Graduate School at the request of the student and with the approval of the advisor. Students requesting to stay in the program for longer than 7 years must have an approved completion plan. Doctoral courses taken 7 or

more years before graduation will not be applied toward a degree without the approval of a program director and Graduate Dean.

D. MD/PhD and DMD/PhD students

Students enrolled in UAB's MSTP and DMD/PhD programs may complete the PhD portion of their training in the NE Program. These students will follow the requirements in the Planning Sheet for MSTP students.

E. Planning Sheet and GPS

Each graduate student will maintain an updated individual Neuroengineering Degree Planning Sheet, which is developed collaboratively by the student, graduate program primary advisor, and research advisor (once selected). The Neuroengineering Degree Planning Sheet is used to document planned and completed coursework, selection of committee members, publications, presentations, defenses, and other academic milestones. Students should keep a copy of the Planning Sheet and use it as a guide for registering for courses. Changes in the Planning Sheet will be made in consultation with the student's research advisor and primary advisor. The Degree Planning Sheet will be updated each semester (e.g. courses completed, new publications); the updated document must be returned to the program administrator before the start of each semester. Students will not receive their Registration Access Code (RAC) for the following semester until the updated Planning Sheet is received.

Graduation Planning System (GPS) shows a student's progress at meeting graduation requirements. It is accessible via BlazerNET by the student, directors, and program administrator. In cases where a course was not previously approved and included in the curriculum in the catalog, a manual exception must be applied by the program administrator. The completed courses in the Planning Sheet and GPS should match, including which requirement the course meets.

F. PhD Milestones

Select Research Advisor and Project

Students should identify a research advisor (also termed a mentor) and project as soon as possible, ideally by the end of the first semester but no later than the end of the second semester. It is the student's responsibility to choose a research advisor with the faculty member's agreement. To help in identifying research advisors, doctoral students are required to take three half-semester laboratory rotations (IDNE 773) to be completed by the end of their second semester. Students may take one additional half-semester laboratory rotation in their second semester if needed. The Neuroengineering PhD Program will waive the requirement for rotations for students who are directly admitted into a faculty member's laboratory. The Neuroengineering PhD Program may waive the requirement for the third rotation for students who are on Blazer Fellowships and identify an advisor during their first semester and notify their primary advisor.

Students must update their Planning Sheet and email it to their primary advisor and the program administrator when a research advisor has been selected. Note that stipend and tuition support is not guaranteed if a student cannot identify a research advisor and laboratory after all rotation periods.

Select Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee should be selected by the end of the first year of study and a [Committee Form](#) completed. Include at least one of the directors and the program administrator, in addition to the research advisor and proposed committee members. If there is a change in the dissertation committee, a [Change of Graduate Study Committee](#) form is initiated at this same site. Please note that most graduate school forms are approved electronically through email. An incorrect email address can delay the process.

The dissertation committee is required to have a minimum of five people, including the research advisor, a minimum of one committee member with a primary appointment in Engineering and one committee member with an appointment in Joint Health Sciences. A dissertation committee member outside of UAB is also recommended. The research advisor can help in selecting committee members. It is up to the student to contact each faculty member selected to serve on the dissertation committee and explain to them the nature of the proposed research. Faculty members are not required to serve on dissertation committees, but most will agree if they are not already over committed. Each committee member should be able to bring some relevant expertise to guide the student's research. Additionally, faculty who are related cannot serve on the same student's committee.

All committee members must be appointed to the [UAB Graduate Faculty](#). If a faculty member is not already on the [Graduate Faculty](#), they must be approved. After gathering the required documentation as indicated at the links above, the student should forward them as a single PDF to the program administrator for processing.

Committee Meetings

Shortly after it is established, the dissertation committee should meet to discuss the student's current progress and intended research. Prior to admission to candidacy, PhD students should meet with their dissertation committee at least once a year. After admission to candidacy, students should meet with their dissertation committee at least every 6 months. These meetings may be in the form of a progress update, proposal, or defense. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure satisfactory progress toward the student's degree via timely communication among the student and members of the committee. The program administrator must be notified at least a week in advance of all committee meetings. Program directors may attend any committee meetings.

Dissertation Proposal (Qualifying Exam)

The dissertation proposal lays out a plan for completing the dissertation. The proposal defense consists of the submission of a written research proposal and an oral examination. The oral examination fulfills the role of a comprehensive or qualifying examination, which is required for admission to candidacy (see below). The Graduate School requires students

to be in candidacy for at least *two* semesters before graduation. Thus, students should not delay taking this step.

The student should present their dissertation proposal as soon as they and their research advisor feel it is sufficiently developed. This will typically be in the spring of the second year or fall of the third year but must be completed by the end of the third year. The proposal defense is a very important step in the student's pursuit of the doctorate. By approving the proposal and its oral defense, the dissertation committee indicates its confidence that the research project has appropriate scope and content for a dissertation and that the student is capable of completing the proposed research project. Changes to the project after the proposal defense are not unusual but must be approved by the committee.

The written dissertation proposal should follow the basic features of the [NIH NRSA predoctoral F31](#) application. (MD/PhD students use the [F30 application](#).) It should include a title page, abstract, hypotheses and specific aims (or goals and objectives), a literature survey, a significance section, data from preliminary studies, description of experimental design and methodologies, a discussion of expected results and interpretation, a discussion of potential problems anticipated and their solution, a timeline, and a list of references.

No later than four weeks prior to the oral defense date, the student must send a draft of the written dissertation proposal to the committee members and program administrator. The committee will read it and provide feedback 1-2 weeks before the oral examination.

Before scheduling the oral examination (usually a two hour block), students should check their committee membership as listed in BlazerNET to confirm that it is current. Students should also keep in mind that faculty members can be very busy, particularly near the end of a term. Therefore, students should start scheduling the meeting early, at least a month prior to the planned date. Also it is often more difficult to schedule meetings during the summer.

During the oral examination, the committee will examine the proposal and the student's background for conducting the proposed studies. The student must be able to explain the major techniques, reasoning, and limitations at a greater depth than is part of the written document as the comprehensive (knowledge) portion of the admission to candidacy. It is not meant to be an examination that questions the student's research advisor's science but instead tests the student's knowledge and ability to think like a scientist. The research advisor should attend but is not allowed to participate in questioning.

After the student has completed the oral phase of the examination, the committee will meet in a closed session and decide the outcome of the comprehensive examination. Three outcomes are possible: 1) unconditional pass; 2) conditional pass (meaning the student must meet other conditions agreed upon by the committee such as passing specified courses, rewriting portions of the proposal, re-defending the proposal, or re-examination on selected areas); or 3) fail.

In the event that a student fails to meet the standards set by the committee for the written and/or oral portion of the examination, the student will have one additional opportunity to pass that portion. If the committee determines that the student did not pass the examination the second time, the student is dismissed from the NE program.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to candidacy is an important transition during doctoral education. Advancement into candidacy reflects completion of the first stage of training and transitioning into dissertation research. Students do not have to complete all coursework prior to admission to candidacy if the student's dissertation committee ascertains that the student has an adequate foundation in the discipline. Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible for admission to candidacy,

Upon passing the written and oral portions of the examination, a student can be admitted to candidacy after completing the [Candidacy Application](#).

Candidacy forms must be submitted and approved by the dates posted on the Graduate School website. Students will not be able to register for dissertation research hours until they have been admitted to candidacy.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the program administrator when the official admission to candidacy notification is received from the Graduate School so that the process to increase the stipend by \$1,000/year can be initiated.

PhD Seminar Presentation Requirement

All PhD students are required to present their research progress annually during a NE program seminar. Attendance is expected of all NE students and encouraged for program faculty.

Dissertation Preparation

The dissertation must be prepared and formatted according to the UAB Graduate School's instructions described on the [UAB Graduate School Thesis and Dissertations website](#). The dissertation is expected to be of high-quality, excel technically, and meet proper standards for structure, grammar, and writing style. A typical dissertation contains a title page, an abstract, an introduction with comprehensive literature review, objective, hypotheses, methods, results, discussion, future work, conclusion, and a complete bibliography.

The dissertation is presumed to be the original research work of the student. If previously published material is used in the dissertation, written permission to use the material must be obtained from the copyright holder (for more information, see the [Theses and Dissertations Resources page](#)). Students who have manuscripts published, accepted or submitted for publication can organize their dissertation in the Preprint/Reprint style (for more information, see the [Theses and Dissertations Resources page](#)). The dissertation will be submitted to ProQuest for review of originality.

Dissertation Defense

At the beginning of the student's final semester, they must complete an [Application for Graduate Degree / Certificate](#).

After the student has completed their dissertation research, they will present the results to the dissertation committee at the dissertation defense, which will be open to the public. Students should attend a few of these events before their own defense.

The date of the defense must comply with the [Graduate School deadlines](#).

No later than 2 weeks prior to the dissertation defense date, the student must:

- Send their dissertation to their committee members,
- Send the program administrator the dissertation title, abstract, a list of committee members (indicating the committee chair), the date, time, and location of the defense for the digital announcement. It is the student's responsibility to distribute the announcement to committee members, other faculty, students, staff, and any others they wish to invite,
- Submit the Approval Form Request from the [Graduate School Forms website](#).

Students should keep in mind that faculty members can be very busy, particularly near the end of a term. Therefore, students should start scheduling the meeting early, at least a month prior to the planned date. Also it is often more difficult to schedule meetings during the summer.

Committee members are encouraged to read the student's dissertation well in advance of the defense. If there are significant problems with the document, the student, in consultation with their research advisor, may elect to postpone the defense.

After the dissertation presentation, the committee and the attending public can ask questions. The student is expected to be able to field these questions in a professional and efficient manner. The non-committee members are then asked to leave the room; The dissertation committee will ask additional questions and then decide if the student passes the final examination, the defense of their work. If the committee does not have unanimous vote to pass, the remediation policy outlined in the [Graduate Catalog](#) will be followed.

Submission of the Dissertation

The committee may have suggested edits and corrections. It is the responsibility of the student, working with the research advisor, to incorporate these changes.

One week (5 business days) before dissertation submission to ProQuest, the student should send the following information by email to the program administrator for review and approval:

- full references of the published or submitted original peer-reviewed journal articles on which the dissertation is based
- the final version of the dissertation in a PDF file
- the Dissertation Approval Form signed by each committee member
- updated CV, including all publications and conference presentations

No later than two weeks (10 business days) following the public defense, the final version of the dissertation must be submitted ProQuest online as a single PDF file. In addition, the student should submit the Dissertation Approval Form signed by each committee member and the Program Director, the [UAB Publication Agreement](#), the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#), and the Graduate School Exit Survey. The student should follow the Graduate School requirements on dissertation submission found on the [UAB Thesis and Dissertation](#) website.

An extension can be requested from the Graduate School if the defense was held well before the semester deadline for final defense and if the dissertation committee feels additional time is needed to complete the dissertation. Extensions cannot be granted past the semester submission deadline (10 business days after the final defense deadline).

III. Funding for NE PhD Students

A. Funding. The PhD program is a funded program, meaning students generally receive a stipend as well as paid tuition, fees, and UAB student health insurance. PhD students have the following funding options available to them with the support of a fellowship, their research advisor, or other faculty member.

- Graduate Student Trainee (T): For students doing funded research related to their dissertation. Trainees are funded either by a Blazer Fellowship, an institutional training grant, or an individual extramural funding source. PhD students with a Trainee assignment receive a monthly stipend (minimum \$30,000/year), plus in-state tuition, fees, and UAB student health insurance in exchange for work on a research project leading to their dissertation. Students must comply with traineeship requirements, which may include, for example, a service project or course participation.
- Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): For students doing funded research related to their dissertation. PhD students with a GRA assignment receive a monthly stipend (minimum \$30,000/year), plus in-state tuition and fees, in exchange for work on a research project leading to their dissertation.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): Students can work as a teaching assistant for one or more courses. Please note, if this is an additional assignment, GRA students cannot work more than 17.5 additional hours per week, and Trainees cannot work more than 10 additional hours per week. This is an hourly paid position and does not include payment of tuition, fees, or health insurance.

For more information about the different categories, visit the [Graduate School's Fellowships and Assistantships](#) page.

B. Taxes (Added 2023-02-28)

Taxes and withholding can vary by funding category and/or citizenship. It is sufficiently complicated that students should consult with qualified professionals. The information given below is derived from the GSG website and is believed to be accurate. However, it should not be construed as legal or accounting advice.

- Trainees and fellows are not considered UAB employees and do not receive a W-2 form nor are taxes withheld. However, the stipend (award beyond tuition, fees, and required books) is subject to federal income tax but is exempt from state and local taxes. Students are advised to pay estimated federal taxes quarterly.
- Research and Teaching Assistants are considered employees and, therefore, receive a W-2 and have taxes withheld.
- International Student & Scholar Services provides information and assistance for international students on taxation and filing.

IV. Additional Policies and Guidelines

A. Courses Acceptable for Neuroengineering PhD

A list of pre-approved elective courses can be found in the [catalog](#). Courses not on this list may be approved by the Graduate Program Directors.

The course work for the PhD degree must be at the graduate level (e.g. 500-level or above). UAB does not allow courses below the 500-level for graduate credit. Students should register for 700-level course if available. Except in unusual circumstances, all courses appearing on the Planning Sheet must be taken for a letter grade.

A grade of ‘C’ or better must be earned in each course. Students must maintain a UAB graduate GPA of 3.0 to remain in good academic standing in the NE PhD program.

B. Laboratory Safety

All graduate students must attend the [School of Engineering Safety Seminar](#) every year. The seminar is held in the fall semester. Students will be notified about the time and location of the seminar via e-mail well in advance of the seminar. Many students will need additional training, which is available from the UAB [Environmental Health and Safety website](#). Students should work with their research advisors to determine which online training modules to complete. This training will depend on area of research and the type of research performed by others in the same lab space. Use of chemicals, animals, radioactive agents, biologics, human blood or organs and human subjects all require additional training. Further safety information and links to training are available at the UAB [Environmental Health and Safety website](#). The current safety coordinator for student’s home department or building can also answer questions and provide information on training.

C. Animal and Human Research Subjects

If the student’s research involves use of animal subjects, approval from IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) must be obtained and kept current until the research is completed. The student must be listed on the IACUC protocol. Approval(s) must be submitted to the Graduate School for admission to candidacy and must also be included in the dissertation. Additional information regarding IACUC requirements is available from their [website](#).

If the student's research involves human subjects, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) must be obtained and kept current until the research is completed. The student's name must appear on all IRB Approval Forms. Approval(s) must be submitted to the Graduate School for admission to candidacy and must also be included in the dissertation. For more information regarding IRB requirements, visit [IRB](#).

D. UAB OneCard and Keys

The UAB OneCard is a valuable accessory at UAB, and students should carry it at all times. It guarantees free or reduced admission charges to special events, allows students to check out books from the UAB libraries, and is required for access to most UAB buildings, including the Campus Recreation Center.

Keys and key cards are issued to a particular person, and students are responsible for any issued to them. The key card access system monitors and records all card transactions presented to the card readers on the UAB complex. Keys and key cards must be returned when no longer needed or when the student leaves the university.

Duplication is not allowed. If lost, the student will be charged for replacement of lost keys and key cards.

E. Course Registration

Neuroengineering students are assigned a Registration Access Code (RAC) each term, which they will use when registering for classes in [BlazerNET](#). The code is unique to the term and will not allow registration during a subsequent term. The program administrator will send a student his/her RAC once an updated Planning Sheet is received. The student should follow the procedures for registration and register for each term during the dates specified in the [UAB Academic Calendar](#).

Students also register for research hours through [BlazerNET](#). If a research advisor is not listed for research hours, the student should email the program administrator, copying the research advisor, to request a section of IDNE 798 (for those not yet in candidacy) or IDNE 799 (for those admitted to candidacy) be added to the schedule.

Students should contact the program administrator if there is a hold or prerequisite which prevents registration.

Registration Access Codes may be withheld if program forms have not been completed and returned in a timely manner.

F. Tuition Payments

Graduate students in the Neuroengineering PhD program generally have in-state tuition and fees paid until the degree requirements have been met. As a condition to receiving this support:

1. Students must register for and successfully complete 27 hours of approved graduate credits each year. Any hours taken above 27 semester hours must be approved by the student's primary advisor and research advisor.
2. Students must remain in good academic standing. Support may be terminated for students who fail to meet requirements outlined by academic probation.

If any changes are made in a student's schedule after they have received notification that their tuition has been paid, they should contact the program administrator to make sure there are no changes in the total tuition bill. Late payment of tuition and fees may result in the student being dropped from classes and/or charged late fees. The Neuroengineering PhD program will not be responsible for late fees if a student does not notify the program administrator of any changes in a timely manner.

Each term, the deadlines for tuition payments are posted on the [UAB Academic Calendar](#). Student Accounting also sends automated emails concerning account balances. It is important that students are aware of these deadlines and pay attention to emails received. Any emails regarding student accounts should be forwarded to the program administrator or home department. Students are responsible for notifying the program administrator or home department if changes are made to course registration and about any outstanding balance and are responsible for any late fees incurred on their student account if notification is not timely. Funded students (trainees, including Blazer Fellows, and Graduate Research Assistants) should not make payments toward tuition, fees, or health insurance.

If there is an over-payment on the student account, the program administrator or home department should be notified immediately. In cases where the over-payment is not adjusted prior to the payment deadline for the following term, the student will be responsible for repaying the amount of the over-payment to offset a portion of the tuition balance for the current term.

G. Purchasing

The University has very specific procedures for purchasing and procurement and is required to meet numerous state and federal standards. For that reason, there are procedures in place for obtaining bids from vendors, entering into contracts, tracking equipment, surplus warehousing, transfer, and disposal of equipment, etc.

Purchasing of supplies is handled by the student's home department and/or research laboratory. Students must consult their home department and/or research laboratory prior to making any purchases.

H. Travel Guidelines

Travel reimbursements are handled by a student's home department and are subject to those policies and procedures. The following are general guidelines that may be superseded by the home department in some cases.

- Travel reimbursements and International Travel Request Forms are now subject to extra scrutiny by UAB due to repeated offenses. Late submissions of these items run the risk of being denied.
- Travel reimbursement requests should be submitted as a complete package as soon as possible upon return.
- ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND RELATED COSTS (including tax and tip) CAN NEVER BE REIMBURSED BY UAB. The traveler is responsible for excluding all alcohol costs from reimbursement requests prior to submission. It is recommended that the traveler request that all alcohol costs be put on a separate receipt to make things easier for the person who processes reimbursement.
- The final hotel bill is required, which must show it has been paid with a \$0.00 balance remaining.
- Original itemized receipts are required for all expenses.
- Conference registration fees and airline tickets can be paid directly using a P-Card in advance of the trip. The traveler will be responsible for all other travel expenses, which will be reimbursed after the trip.
- Travelers will be reimbursed for actual meal costs, not exceeding the maximum meal amount for employees (currently up to \$25.00 for breakfast, \$50.00 for lunch, and \$75.00 for dinner).

I. Changing Research Advisors

In rare cases, students need to change laboratories due to circumstances beyond their control, which may include, for example, the mentor leaving UAB, mentor illness or death, and incompatibility between mentor and student.

The student, mentor, and program director(s) should meet when a change in research advisor is being considered so that the mentor and student can express their concerns and points of view on the situation. If a change in research laboratory is found to be the best course of action, the person who wishes to end the mentor/mentee relationship is to provide written documentation giving the reasons on the date that the decision is communicated. The program director(s), program administrator, and dissertation committee are to be notified promptly to allow quick assistance with the student's new mentor selection.

The student will be allowed up to two four-week rotations to identify a new research advisor if one has not already been identified. Thus, the maximum total time available for a displaced student to settle with a new research advisor and dissertation laboratory is eight weeks. Upon acceptance of the student, the new research advisor assumes the financial responsibility from the time the student ended their involvement with the previous laboratory until the student has earned the degree. Continued support of stipend, tuition, and fees is not guaranteed beyond the eight-week period. Students who are not able to identify a mentor may be terminated from the program.