
GRADUATE BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2017-2018

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INTRODUCTION

ASSOCIATE DEAN'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Congratulations and welcome to Graduate Biomedical Sciences (GBS) at UAB. I am pleased to have you join our community of scholars on the journey toward discovery. GBS is dedicated to nurturing the curiosity of our trainees and equipping them with the skills to drive biomedical research forward in our state, in our country, and beyond.

My primary goal as Associate Dean is to encourage our ongoing pursuit of excellence in scholarship and research. This handbook is provided to assist you in these endeavors. In addition, GBS staff members are always on hand to support you during your transition into and through the program.

During your journey, I encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities offered within GBS, UAB, and Birmingham. Our interdisciplinary program is designed to expose students to a wide range of experiences. In addition, we value a commitment to service as well as personal and professional development as part of your scholarly activities. We look forward to supporting your academic, professional, and personal success during your training at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and for years to come.

Sincerely,

David Schneider, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Sciences



UAB GRADUATE SCHOOL

Graduate Biomedical Sciences (GBS) is an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental umbrella program under the UAB Graduate School. This document is an overview of general academic regulations specific to the GBS program at UAB. It is not a contract between UAB and the student. Although UAB will make its best efforts to abide by this Handbook, UAB reserves the right to interpret and apply its procedures and policies, and to deviate from these guidelines, as appropriate in the particular circumstances and in accordance with the mission and goals of the program. UAB also reserves the right to address issues not covered in this Handbook and to make changes to the policy without advance notice. Please refer to our [website](#) for the most up-to-date version. For more complete and detailed information regarding UAB's academic regulations, see the [UAB Graduate Catalog](#). All students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the general University rules and regulations pertaining to graduate study at UAB and the specific academic requirements of their particular degree program.

Mission Statement: *Inspiring minds today to transform tomorrow*

Vision Statement: *Improving lives globally through the accomplishments of our scholars*

Core Values

Core Value 1 - We value an academically excellent learning environment.

Therefore, we will:

- Strive for excellence in graduate programs and postdoctoral training by continually upgrading program offerings to compete with other leading graduate schools.
- Recruit students and postdoctoral fellows in a competitive manner by providing high quality and rigorous research and training programs.

Core Value 2 - We value and celebrate diversity in cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

Therefore, we will:

- Recruit graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and other research scholars both nationally and internationally.
- Promote the importance of diversity in research and pedagogical philosophy in order to provide well-rounded educational and professional opportunities for our students and postdoctoral fellows.

Core Value 3 - We value a student-centered learning environment.

Therefore, we will:

- Prepare graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to participate successfully in both academic and other professional arenas.
- Develop and sustain interdisciplinary graduate and postdoctoral training programs that will promote creative thinking across disciplines.
- Advocate for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows while serving as a liaison between trainees and the University administration.

Core Value 4 - We value University growth.

Therefore, we will:

- Create and enforce policies that promote progress for both trainees and the University.
- Provide leadership in the development and evaluation of innovative graduate and postdoctoral training programs.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

WELCOME

Welcome to UAB's Graduate Biomedical Sciences (GBS) Program! This student handbook has been compiled to provide you with information to assist you as you progress through the individual interdisciplinary themes. Here are some reasons you made the right choice in selecting GBS:

- GBS prepares graduates in research-related fields in the biomedical science workforce.
- The themes are built on a strong biomedical sciences curriculum that includes advanced coursework in cell biology, genetics, neuroscience, physiology, pharmacology, biochemistry, microbiology, immunology; all taught in an integrated systems-based approach.
- Numerous advanced course options allow students to delve into their desired research area.
- GBS offers an annual stipend as well as tuition, fees, and single-coverage health insurance opportunities for students.
- UAB is located in the heart of the thriving city of Birmingham!

Please take the time to read the student handbook and use it as your guide as you matriculate through GBS. Where appropriate, the contact for more detailed information on various topics has been included. The UAB web page links are included for some of the sections of this handbook and you are encouraged to review the links for further information. The Graduate Biomedical Sciences website offers further details, forms, news, and upcoming events available [here](#).

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) offers a tremendous, diverse community of scientists focused on innovation in modern biomedicine. As evidence of the excellence and innovation of the research community, UAB is routinely ranked among the top research-intensive universities for extramural funding and research productivity. The thrill of discovery is evident across campus.

The Graduate Biomedical Sciences (GBS) interdisciplinary themes are designed to provide our trainees with rigorous, interdisciplinary education and mentorship in a wide array of scientific disciplines, ranging from the study of fundamental cellular processes to translational therapeutic strategies. Students enter with a chosen theme but have the opportunity to switch themes. GBS trainees can perform their doctoral research in more than 350 different labs across UAB's campus. Because of the scale of GBS and the number of affiliated faculty, GBS is subdivided into eight individual themes, based on scientific disciplines. These themes provide discipline-specific training and opportunities for smaller-scale connections within the overall community.

The eight GBS themes are:

- Biochemistry, Structural, and Stem Cell Biology
- Cancer Biology
- Cell, Developmental, and Molecular Biology
- Genetics, Genomics, and Bioinformatics
- Immunology
- Microbiology
- Neuroscience
- Pathobiology and Molecular Medicine

Our students capitalize on UAB's research team that includes many of the nation's top principal investigators. UAB is consistently listed in the top 25 in the nation on U.S. News & World Report's list of "America's Best Graduate Schools". UAB is the only Alabama university recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for both "highest research activity" and "community engagement." As a measure of this scientific excellence, UAB attracts over \$470 million per year in extramural grant support and ranks in the top 20 in the nation in National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant support among the 125 accredited medical schools in the USA.

The goal of GBS is to provide our students with all of the resources they need to cultivate excellence in their careers, irrespective of individual goals or aspirations. To accomplish this goal, we take advantage of the exceptional research capacity of our community, the commitment of our faculty to excellence in mentorship, and modern, flexible methods for educating young professionals in advanced scientific topics. We realize that the decision to pursue a PhD in science is serious. Each trainee in our program has a different goal or dream. Our mission is to help each student reach those goals, to the best of his or her ability.

GBS MISSION STATEMENT

Driving biomedical discovery through interdisciplinary training and innovative research.

GBS VISION

Demonstrating world-class excellence in all areas of biomedical research through the achievements of our students.

GBS COMPETENCIES

GBS offers a wide array of courses, seminars, journal clubs, research opportunities, and professional development that are designed to support the growth and development of our students. The following list consists of desirable competencies for our students to achieve while in GBS.

- Content-Specific Conceptual Knowledge
- Critical Thinking and Data Evaluation
- Quantitative Analysis
- Research-Skill Development
- Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Leadership & Management Skills
- Career Exploration and Preparation
- Personal Development
- Responsible Conduct of Research

THEMES

Biochemistry, Structural, and Stem Cell Biology Theme (BSSB)

The BSSB theme provides training opportunities in a multitude of contemporary areas of basic and translational research. Our goal is to prepare our students for independent research careers in academic research institutions and industry. Our students have access to a large pool of mentors from across UAB with expertise in varied research areas, specializing in:

- understanding the chemistry of life (biochemistry),
- a mechanistic understanding of life at the molecular level (structural biology), and
- the study of self-renewal, differentiation, and regeneration of cells (stem cell biology).

Our theme leaders and mentors are intimately involved in training students to achieve their potential, both in the classroom and in experimental settings. Our faculty are leaders in their respective fields but also have a passion for training the next generation of scientists. Research conducted by our students and faculty provides the groundwork for a fundamental understanding of a diverse array of biological and pathobiological processes- supporting the development of novel treatment options for human diseases and provides novel molecular tools for research and medicine.

Cancer Biology Theme (CANB)

The CANB theme provides training opportunities in multiple and contemporary areas of cancer research. Outstanding basic and translational research faculty from various schools, departments, and centers participate in training the next generation of basic and translational cancer researchers.

The CANB theme works in close association with the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC). The UAB CCC is the only NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center located in a six-state area. Thus, our students work in close association with expert and well-established research faculty and clinicians who use diverse approaches to focus on cancer. Graduate students joining the CANB theme will train extensively in basic, translational, and precision medicine research in various cancer types using an integrative approach. The interdisciplinary and collaborative research environment fostered and nourished at UAB enhances our team science approach and hasten the progress in tackling this dreaded disease.

Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology Theme (CMDB)

The CMDB theme is designed to provide maximum flexibility that prepares students to launch into a career in the dynamic field of biomedical science. Our graduates have exciting careers in scientific research in both academic and industrial settings, scientific-related writing, business, law, forensics, administration, and education.

Cell, molecular and developmental biology exists at the forefront of biomedical research. Our cutting-edge theme allows exceptional preparation in biological and biomedical research through an interdisciplinary approach utilizing advanced, innovative techniques and equipment.

Genetics, Genomics, and Bioinformatics Theme (GGB)

The GGB theme provides flexible, didactic, and integrated training opportunity across the broad disciplines of genetics, genomics, and bioinformatics. Our goal is to prepare our students for independent research careers in experimental and computational disciplines, or the combination of those in academic research institutions and industry. To support this broad subject, the academic departments at UAB offer a large pool of mentors with expertise in varied research areas. The research interests of our mentors and students span the fields of genetics, genomics, bioinformatics, cancer biology, biochemistry, cell biology, developmental biology, immunology and neuroscience. In addition, we teamed up with the UAB Informatics Institute and HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology to accommodate training in their specific areas.

Our theme leadership and mentors offer day-to-day, personal interactions between students and faculty, both in the classroom and in experimental settings. Our faculty are not only leaders in their fields, but outstanding mentors as well. Research conducted by our students and faculty lead to identification of human disorders, their causes, and pathomechanisms. The results of these studies support the development of novel treatment options for human diseases and create new technologies for research and medicine. Our students have a vibrant community that supports not only collaborations between students and faculty, but recreational activities as well.

Immunology Theme (IMM)

From the outset, UAB has been recognized as a leading academic research institution in the country and one of the world's premier centers for immunology research. Over 100 UAB faculty are actively engaged in immunological research, including the following:

- studies to understand the basic function of the immune system and the underlying pathophysiological processes that contribute to a range of immune-mediated diseases,
- translational studies that are focused on the development of vaccines and immunotherapeutics, and
- clinical studies that test novel therapies designed to mitigate immune-mediated diseases.

Immunology plays such an important role in the ongoing research endeavor at UAB that Inflammation, Infection, and Immunity (I3) was recently named as one of the five pillars of emphasis in the strategic plan for the UAB School of Medicine. We strive to provide outstanding mentorship to our students as well as unique training experiences. Dedicated faculty – including the theme director and co-directors – oversee the program and serve as advisors for our students. An Admissions/Advisory Committee oversees theme operations and the Student Advisory Committee serves as a liaison between the directors and students. Many of our students are funded by our top-ranked Immunology training grant, which is one of the oldest and most well-established in the country. In addition, our students have outstanding success in obtaining their own funding through the NIH and research foundations. UAB is a founding member of the annual Southeast Regional Immunology meeting that provides students with outstanding opportunities to present their research and meet immunologists from around the southeast region. To foster student travel to meetings and away courses, the Department of Microbiology and GBS provide opportunities to obtain travel funding for students pursuing immunologically relevant research and training.

Microbiology Theme (MIC)

MIC is an interdisciplinary theme emphasizing the study of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Over 40 faculty members from the Departments of Microbiology, Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, Genetics, Pathology, Medicine, and Dentistry are involved in internationally renowned research and the training of PhD-level graduate students. UAB has rapidly become a major center for biomedical research and ranks among the most prestigious research institutions in the world.

Our students' primary areas of research interests include the genetics, physiology, and molecular biology microbes and how microbial pathogens cause disease. Our faculty laboratories study basic cellular processes, host-pathogen interactions, and the design of innovative strategies for the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. Students graduating from GBS are well-versed in modern microbiology and have the experience to pursue a diversity of career opportunities.

Neuroscience Theme (NESC)

The NESC theme provides training opportunities in multiple and contemporary areas of neuroscience research – from fundamental discovery science at the molecular, cellular, systems, and behavioral levels, to translational studies in cellular and animal models of diseases of the nervous system. Outstanding research faculty from various schools, departments, and centers participate in training the next generation of neuroscientists. NESC seeks to equip and train students to become tomorrow's innovative neuroscientists by:

- Teaching fundamental neuroscience concepts that are the stepping-stones needed for a deeper understanding of nervous system function.
- Providing unique professional and scientific avenues through which they can develop their presentation skills and learn critical thinking and experimental design.
- Offering the opportunity to choose neuroscience research from multiple options available through laboratories across the UAB campus – not limiting students to a department but, rather, a discipline.
- Providing opportunities for informal interactions with other students to discuss research, scientific writing, and life outside and beyond graduate school.

The NESc theme works in close association with the [UAB Comprehensive Neuroscience Center \(CNC\)](#), experts and well-established research faculty and clinicians who use diverse approaches in a collaborative environment to focus on neuroscience research. NESc students will train extensively in fundamental-discovery and translational research in various nervous system disorders using an integrative approach. The interdisciplinary and collaborative research environment fostered and nourished at UAB enhances our team science approach and accelerates the progress in tackling devastating nervous system disorders. A Curriculum & Advisory Committee oversees NESc theme operations.

Pathobiology and Molecular Medicine Theme (PBMM)

The PBMM theme provides our graduate students the broadest training within the emerging and exciting field of molecular medicine. We have a flexible, didactic, integrated educational program directed by faculty with diverse research interests ranging from molecules to whole organisms and disease processes to new therapies.

Our goal is to provide you with multidisciplinary training opportunities that foster your research and career development. Our students have full access to all 350+ GBS faculty, of which 130 are directly affiliated with the PBMM theme and represent various schools, departments, and research centers within UAB. We also partner with outside groups such as [Southern Research](#). PBMM students can participate in a vibrant and energetic community, [GBSO](#), that not only enriches the graduate school experience, but also promotes leadership and network opportunities that enhance career development. Our students are successful in publishing their research and receive fellowships and other prestigious awards during their training. PBMM alumni are highly accomplished, with diverse careers in academic, industrial, and medical research and education worldwide.

CURRICULUM

Please see the following training plans for theme specific requirements:

- [BSSB](#): Biochemistry, Structural, and Stem Cell Biology
- [CANB](#): Cancer Biology
- [CMDB](#): Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology
- [GGB](#): Genetics, Genomics, and Bioinformatics
- [IMM](#): Immunology
- [MIC](#): Microbiology
- [NESc](#): Neuroscience
- [PBMM](#): Pathobiology and Molecular Medicine

COURSE REGISTRATION

Students will receive registration announcements through Blazernet and via the GBS newsletter. GBS students will follow the dates listed below for registration deadlines:

- Fall- July 1st
- Spring- December 1st
- Summer- May 1st

Students are responsible for registering for classes on time, even if you are not on campus. Incomplete or inappropriate registration can affect stipend distribution and result in the student paying tuition and fees. If a student needs to withdraw from a class or make any changes to the course schedule after the registration date, please notify the Curriculum Manager, Jessica Stephenson at jstephenson@uab.edu. Failure to do so may result in the student being responsible for tuition payment, late fees, etc.

You may register online until the GBS registration deadline. [Blazernet](#) is available 24/7. If you experience difficulty with Blazernet, please call One Stop at (205) 934-4300 or email onestop@uab.edu.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to be aware of their academic standing at all times. The student is responsible for maintaining the accuracy and integrity of their academic record. We highly recommend that students review their academic records/transcripts each semester. If problems are identified, contact the GBS office for guidance.

Each student is required to register for 9 hours per semester. Any courses over 9 hours must be documented and approved by the mentor and GBS office. All students are required to register for 27 credit hours per academic year (fall, spring and summer terms). Students on certain diversity grants are required to register for 10 hours fall, 12 hours spring, and 10 hours summer, totaling 32 hours in an academic year.

All students are required to complete first-year fall modules in basic content knowledge.

- GBS 707: Basic Biochemistry/Metabolism
- GBS 708: Basic Genetics and Molecular Biology
- GBS 709: Basic Biology Organization

All students are required to complete training in statistics (GBSC 722: Intro to Biostatistics, offered in the summer) and ethics (GRD 717: Principles of Scientific Integrity, offered every term) or HudsonAlpha approved alternative courses.

GBS students are expected exhibit a working knowledge of the content in the three core topic courses (Biochemistry, Genetics, and Biology). A letter grade of “C” or below is considered a failing grade. If a student does not pass any one of the three core courses (GBS 707, 708, 709), they will be required to retake that course as soon as it is offered. Upon earning a failing grade, the student will meet with their theme director to discuss training resources and academic remediation plans. **If a passing grade is not obtained in the second attempt, the student will be dismissed from GBS.**

All students are required to complete four spring semester modules. Please reference theme training plans for recommendations and requirements by theme. Students that earn a “C” or lower in a first-year spring modular course must retake the course. **If a student receives a failing score (“C” or lower) in the same course twice, the student will be dismissed from GBS.**

Three failing grades (“C” or lower) in any combination of first-year courses or rotations will result in dismissal from GBS.

Dismissal will be effective at the end of the spring semester (Typically in late April).

A student who wishes to appeal their dismissal decision must file a written appeal to the Associate Dean of GBS, who will present the appeal to UAB. Appeals must include supporting documentation on behalf of the student which addresses the reasons for dismissal, lists specific actions the student believes that s/he has taken to remedy the reasons for dismissal, and a realistic completion plan for graduation that includes a listing of GBS requirements yet to be met with a timeline for each. If an appeal is granted, a written remediation plan and expectations will be provided. This plan will detail the benchmarks that must be reached and allotted time for completion. **Failing to reach the benchmarks indicated will result in dismissal from GBS.**

Academic Probation

In the event that expectations/requirements of GBS are not met satisfactorily, a student may be placed on academic probation. Probation is not intended to be punitive, rather, the probation system is designed to clearly identify academic issues and provide remediation plans for each issue. Academic issues should be brought to the attention of the student’s theme director as soon as they are identified. Mentors, committee members, course directors, or GBS staff can raise issues of concern. If the theme director agrees that probation is justified, they will discuss the issue with the Associate Dean of GBS, and if applicable, fill out a remediation plan.

The remediation plan must clearly articulate the identified issue(s), describe the benchmarks that must be reached to overcome the issue(s), and set a date by which the benchmarks must be achieved. The theme director will discuss the remediation plan, in detail, with the student, and the student must sign the plan during that meeting, if he/she agrees with the plan.

If benchmarks for remediation are not achieved, the student will be dismissed from the program. The timing of this dismissal will be agreed upon by the Associate Dean for GBS, the research mentor, the theme director and the student. It is expected that in most cases, dismissal will occur within 30 days of the failure to comply with the remediation plan and the indicated deadline.

If the student does not agree with the benchmarks or wishes to appeal dismissal, they can follow the standard GBS grievance policy. The GBS grievance policy is the mechanism used in cases involving academic probation; the failure of a student to secure a lab home/mentor; and also in cases in which a student has been displaced and is unable to secure a new lab home/mentor within the established timeframe as identified by GBS policy. **For further information, please reference the [GBS website](#).**

LAB ROTATIONS

Research rotations provide an opportunity for each student to experience the research environment in several different labs. These experiences are critical for choosing an appropriate lab/mentor for one’s thesis work. All students receive instructions on best practices for successful lab rotations at orientation and all students are encouraged to work with the Theme Directors concerning selecting lab rotations.

Students must complete at least three lab rotations in three different labs prior to joining a thesis lab*. The decision to join a lab is by mutual agreement between the student and mentor, with approval by the mentor’s department chair. No later than 10 days after the end of a lab rotation the student and the mentor complete and submit the appropriate GBS mentor or student lab rotation evaluation form to document the lab rotation experience from each perspective.

*A student may join a lab after two rotations if the student can document that he/she has extensive research experience prior to joining GBS. To forego the third rotation, the student must have identified a lab to join and discussed the options with his/her theme director. The theme director will request permission to waive the third lab rotation from the Associate Dean for GBS, providing a brief description of the student's past experience.

The academic year is designed to accommodate four lab rotations within the fall and spring semesters for first-year students. If a student cannot identify a permanent lab after these four rotations, the student may begin a shorter series of 4-week lab rotations designed to rapidly identify a proper mentor and student match.

Students who are not placed in lab homes at the end of the fourth GBS rotation period must schedule a meeting with the Theme Directors. This meeting will result in a plan tailored to the student's specific needs and will be designed to assist the student in selecting potential lab rotations that are more likely to result in a lab home for the student. The plan will be based on a review of the student and mentor lab rotation evaluation forms from each of the student's previous lab rotations; results of discussions concerning the learning/work environment best suited for the student's success in the GBS program and how this relates to various laboratories of interest to the student; and input related to observations of the Theme Directors based on the student's experience in the program to date.

A student will be allowed up to three additional lab rotations during the summer semester. If a student who has not identified a suitable lab after six rotations, they may follow the GBS grievance policy by submitting documentation no later than 10 days after the sixth lab rotation, or the date that the sixth lab rotation would have ended should the student have followed the published GBS lab rotation dates, whichever date comes last. **If a student cannot identify a suitable lab after seven rotations, they will be dismissed from GBS.** For further information, please reference the GBS [website](#).

ADVANCED COURSES

At least three advanced courses are required for students in all GBS themes. Each theme defines what constitutes an advanced course relevant to their respective discipline and may display on the theme website pre-approved advanced courses. If a course is not listed, then the student must contact the Curriculum Manager or Theme Director to see if the course qualifies. Each theme may require more than three advanced courses, particularly if the advanced courses taken are listed for fewer than three credit hours each. One advanced course can be an exemption course such as those offered by Cold Spring Harbor or AAI Advance Immunology Course. These courses must be pre-approved by the Theme Director (or theme curriculum committee) and the mentor. These courses are typically at least one week long and have class/lab times of 40 hours or more.

Completion of the course with a grade of "B" or better is required to count toward the advanced courses requirement. The three advanced courses have to be 700 level or above classes with letter grades assigned (not pass/fail) to count toward this requirement. Other courses, such as 500 or 600 level classes, can be taken for graduate credit, but they will not count toward the "three advanced courses" requirement.

Graduate courses offered by other UAB Schools require prior mentor approval and documentation of approval to the Curriculum Manager. The mentor and the student's thesis committee will decide the appropriateness of all advanced courses taken by each student. Graduate classes can be taken off-site, such as those for GBS students in labs outside of UAB, with the prior approval of the Theme Director and mentor. In order for a student to receive credit for a 2-hour course as an advanced course, they must complete an [Advanced Course Verification Form](#). **For further information, please reference the GBS [website](#).**

JOURNAL CLUBS

Students are strongly encouraged to attend journal clubs throughout their time in the program. Journal club courses help students develop competency in several areas: fundamental understanding of modern research topics, scientific writing, critical evaluation of research findings, and oral presentation skills. There are many diverse journal clubs taught every semester. Specific requirements for journal club enrollment vary between themes. Please reference theme training plans for theme specific journal requirements. **For further information, please reference the GBS [website](#).**

QUALIFYING EXAM (QE)

Students must achieve a letter grade of B or higher in all required first year courses before advancing to the qualifying exam (QE). Students are expected to complete the QE as early as possible during the third year and no later than July of the 3rd year. All GBS students are required to pass a QE prior to being admitted to candidacy.

The QE has both a written and oral component. The student will present a written research proposal and orally defend this proposal. Always check with your theme director(s) to ask if your theme has any additional requirements for the QE. Students must have at least one committee meeting before scheduling the QE to get approval of the planned topic of their thesis research. It is also strongly suggested that a student complete a grant-writing course, but it is not a general GBS requirement.

The written portion of the QE must be delivered to the committee members at least 14 days prior to the scheduled oral defense. Failure to deliver the document to the committee by this deadline may result in rescheduling the oral defense.

The QE is specifically designed to examine the student's oral and writing skills, but more importantly to allow the committee to assess whether the student has established both the fundamental knowledge base and intellectual acuity to move into the dissertation phase of his/her project. It is incumbent upon the committee to critically evaluate the student's understanding of his/her work as well as related and unrelated areas of modern science. The QE is not intended to be an average committee meeting.

After successful completion of both the written and oral components of the QE, the student may apply for candidacy. It is the student's responsibility to notify Felita Milon (fmilon@uab.edu) in the GBS office when the official admission letter is received from the Graduate School, so that the student can receive the \$1,000.00 increase in stipend.

GBS has general requirements for the successful completion of the QE which can be found here: [Qualifying Exam](#). However, each theme has the option of including additional requirements for the QE as needed, such as the attendance of theme directors or other individuals who are not the student's committee members. Students must meet both the general and specific theme requirements to successfully complete the QE.

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

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

The Graduate School has minimum course credit requirements for students in doctoral programs. Program requirements for course work may exceed the Graduate School minimum but may not be less than the Graduate School minimum.

If entering with a baccalaureate degree, a student is required to earn a minimum of 72 credit hours comprised of the following:

- Completion of 48 semester hours of coursework prior to candidacy:
 - A minimum of 22 hours of core coursework directly related to the discipline
 - No more than 16 hours of non-dissertation research (i.e. 798) can be counted
 - No more than 10 hours of labs, seminars, directed study credits, or GRD and CIRTL courses can be counted

If entering with a previously earned master's degree appropriate to the doctoral degree field, a student is required to earn a minimum of 51 credit hours comprised of the following. These requirements also apply to students with previously earned M.S., D.V.M., D.M.D., D.D.S., etc.:

- Completion of 27 semester hours of coursework prior to candidacy:
 - A minimum of 15 hours of core coursework directly related to the discipline
 - No more than 6 hours of non-dissertation research (i.e. 798) can be counted
- No more than 6 hours of labs, seminars, directed study credits, or GRD and CIRTL courses can be counted

GBS students taking the standard course load (9 credit hours during the fall, spring and summer semesters) will fulfill this requirement before the end of the second year. Students must have successfully completed GRD 717-Principles of Scientific Integrity, or its approved equivalent, in order to be eligible for Admission to Candidacy.

For further information, please reference the Graduate School [website](#) under Admission into Degree Candidacy.

THESIS DEFENSE

The thesis defense is the final certification of the student's achievement of a deep, expert-level understanding of his/her research area as well as the ability to critically evaluate scientific concepts and develop rationale arguments supporting his/her positions. Over the course the student's training and during the thesis defense, the thesis committee must evaluate the student's intellectual strengths as well as evaluate his/her growth over the course of training. The PhD degree prepares an individual for a large variety of high achieving careers, and intellectual fortitude and acuity are key areas of competency that must be developed.

Future success in research or in related areas requires proof that a scientist has been productive. In science, original research papers are the standard currency for proof of productivity. Publications are concrete demonstrations that the student has asked important questions, answered those questions convincingly and articulated those findings concisely and compelling to the public. For this reason, GBS requires that each student publish at least one “first-author” original research paper during their dissertation. This is the minimum requirement. Most students far exceed this level of productivity. GBS expects that most students will publish two or more first-author papers and one or more collaborative works as a result of his/her dissertation research. The format of the thesis defense can vary between themes. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the specific requirements of your theme, which may have requirements above those of the Graduate School and the general GBS requirements.

The written thesis is a summary of the student’s research and scholarship over several years. Each committee member is expected to read the thesis prior to oral defense of the dissertation, thus the student must deliver the written thesis to each committee member at least 14 days prior to the oral defense. Failure to meet with deadline may result in rescheduling the oral defense.

For further information, including format requirements and a graduation checklist, please reference the GBS [website](#).

TIME LIMITATION

Students are generally expected to complete their program in fewer than seven years from the date of admission to the doctoral program unless an exception is granted by the Theme Director and Dean of the Graduate School at the request of the student and with approval of the faculty Advisor. Students requesting to stay in the program longer than 7 years must have an approved completion plan.

UAB Graduate School Policy on Graduate Student Progress Reviews

- The progress of each student enrolled in a graduate degree-granting program toward meeting his/her degree requirements must be reviewed on at least an annual basis.
- The review format and timing of reviews are the prerogative of the program. Progress Reviews may be performed by either the student’s thesis or dissertation committee or by the Theme Director.
- Written documentation (usually one page or less) of review group consensus regarding progress made and/or goals met since the previous review, as well as timelines for meeting specific goals during the next review period must be prepared and submitted to the program director who is responsible for maintaining a “progress record” for each student in the program.
- In the event that progress is considered to be unsatisfactory, or a student is nearing the 5-year (Masters) or 7-year (Doctoral) limit for completing their degree requirements, the student’s thesis or dissertation committee, or the Theme Director should implement a “Completion Plan.”

COMPLETION PLAN

A “Completion Plan” should include specific goals and specific deadlines for meeting those goals, as well as prescribed consequences if the goals are not met within the proposed deadline time points. The plan should include a stipulation that the student will meet with his/her committee to review progress at each of the proposed deadline times. It is recommended that the time intervals between proposed committee meetings be no longer than three months. The plan should be incorporated into a written document, signed by the student, by his/her advisor, and by the theme director. The plan must be submitted to the Graduate School Dean for review and approval. **For further information, please reference the Graduate School [website](#).**

EXAMS AND GRADING

Examinations in GBS 707, 708, 709 and selected other GBS courses will be mixed format examinations (essay, short answer, and/or multiple choice). The course instructors who have lectured on the topics to be tested, the heads of the relevant lecture blocks, and the course director will determine the exact composition of each examination.

All examinations will be closed book and will be held for a maximum of 3 hours each. For in class examinations, the use of dictionaries, calculators, and other electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, pagers, etc.) will be at the discretion of the course director.

Each examination will be graded and returned to the students within 2 weeks. Grades will be determined based on the following criteria:

- A: Scores that are > 1 standard deviation (SD) above the class mean
- B: Scores that are +/- 1 SD around the class mean
- C: scores that are > 1 standard below the mean.

Lower grades can be assigned for final scores > 2 standard deviations below the mean. **A letter grade of C or below is considered a failing grade.**

Students who miss an examination will be allowed to make up the test only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. This documentation must be provided immediately before or after the date of the examination. The decision to administer a make-up examination, and the format of that examination, will be at the discretion of the course director.

Many classes (journal clubs, seminars, non-dissertation and dissertation research) are scored as pass/fail, rather than assigned letter grades. To receive a passing grade, the student must complete all expectations of the course to the satisfaction of the course director. Research grades (GBS 798 and GBS 799) are assigned in consultation between the Associate Dean/GBS office and the research mentor. In addition to progress in the laboratory, to receive research credit, students must also report their research and other scholarly activities to the program each semester.

Temporary Grade Notations

The temporary notation of "I" may be reported at the discretion of the instructor to indicate that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, is unable to finish all the course requirements. An "I" should never be given to enable a student to raise a deficient grade. This notation should not be used unless there is reasonable certainty that the requirements will be completed during the following semester. The student will have one semester to complete the remaining course requirements. If the student does not complete the remaining course requirements within one semester, the "I" will be changed to an "F." If the course is offered once per year, the theme may request an extension for the amount of time that the student has to complete the course requirements. Requests for extensions must be approved by the course instructor, graduate theme director, and GBS Associate Dean. Requests for extensions should be made well in advance of the semester's end, in order to avoid the "I" being changed to an "F." Students should not register for the course during the extended period since they are completing the requirements for a course from a prior term.

The temporary notation of "N" denotes late or no submission of a grade by the instructor. If no permanent grade is reported by the end of the following term, an "F" will be automatically assigned to replace the "N".

CHANGING LABS

This policy covers students who need to change laboratories due to circumstances out of their control, including but not limited to the following: mentor leaving UAB, mentor illness or death, incompatibility between mentor & student. If a student needs to change labs, then the Theme Director, the Associate Dean for GBS, and the thesis committee must be notified promptly. These individuals will work with the student to quickly find a new rotation mentor.

The person who wishes to end the mentor/mentee relationship is to provide written documentation explaining why, on the date that the decision is communicated. The student will meet with the Theme Directors to make a plan tailored to the student's specific needs and which will be designed to assist the student in selecting potential lab rotations that are more likely to result in a lab home for the student. The plan will be based on a review of the documentation concerning the end of the previous mentor/mentee relationship, the student and mentor lab rotation evaluation forms from each of the student's previous lab rotations; results of discussions concerning the learning/work environment best suited for the student's success in the GBS program and how this relates to various laboratories of interest to the student; and input related to observations of the Theme Directors based on the student's experience in the program to date.

The student will be free to choose a rotation mentor from any GBS Faculty at UAB. Rotation within the same theme is not a requirement. If the mentor is not in the student's theme, then this choice and the impact on coursework requirements need to be discussed with the current and future theme director before the rotation will be approved.

If, at the end of the 4 weeks following the receipt of notification of the need for a new lab home, the student does not have agreement for a new lab home, the student is to provide documentation of circumstances related to this situation and in support of the student's continuation in GBS. This documentation will be considered with all other information concerning the student's status in the program. The rotation with the potential new thesis mentor is approximately four weeks in length. If a second rotation is necessary, it will also be four weeks in length. Thus, the maximum total time available for a displaced student to settle in a new thesis lab is eight weeks. **If the student has not been accepted in a new thesis lab within 8 weeks of leaving the initial lab, then the student will be dismissed from GBS, may withdraw from the program, or may take a leave of absence for up to one year from the program.**

The time taken to find a rotation lab is included in the eight-week period. Thus, a student who requires 4 weeks to identify a rotation lab may only have time to have one rotation before he or she either is accepted for thesis research by a new mentor or is terminated from GBS. **If the displaced student has not identified a rotation lab within four weeks of leaving the original thesis research lab, then the student may be dismissed.**

The student's stipend during these rotations will be initially covered by the department of the previous mentor. If the student chooses a faculty mentor in the same department, then the Chair will decide when the stipend cost is transferred to the new faculty mentor. If the student chooses a new faculty mentor in a different department, then the stipend costs for the time of the final determinate rotation (four weeks) will be reimbursed to the original department by the new department.

There will be no reimbursement of the charge back monies already paid by the original department.

Permission for more than two four-week rotations may be given on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Associate Dean for GBS, the original Theme Director, and original Department Chair. If additional rotation time is warranted, beyond the initial eight weeks, no stipend will be provided to the student during that rotation time unless special permission is granted. The student and the "additional" rotation mentor will be informed, in writing, of this condition.

TUTORING

Tutoring is available for first-year GBS students in the core courses (GBS 707, 708, and 709). Student tutors will be chosen from GBS peers. If a student needs a tutor, please contact the Curriculum Manager, Jessica Stephenson at jstephenson@uab.edu.

FINANCE

Finance Manager: Felita Milon fmilon@uab.edu 205.934.7810

In general, students accepted into GBS receive an annual stipend and fully paid tuition and fees. The sources of support for students vary, but generally Graduate School Fellowships support the first sixteen months for each student. In subsequent years, students are supported by their advisors' research grants, institutional funds or training grants. All students are encouraged to apply for individual fellowship awards, with the guidance and assistance of their advisors. Upon successful completion of requirements for admission to candidacy, the GBS student's annual stipend will increase by \$1,000.

GBS Policy Regarding Stipend Increases for Students Admitted to Candidacy

Upon successful completion of the qualifying exam, GBS students applying for admission to candidacy will receive a \$1,000 stipend increase effective the start of the next pay period following the GBS Finance Manager receiving documentation that the candidacy paperwork has been approved by the Graduate School. It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the GBS Finance Manager, Felita Milon at fmilon@uab.edu after receiving an approval email from the Graduate School.

In order to register for dissertation research credits for the subsequent term, candidacy forms must be approved by the dates posted on the Graduate School [website](#).

Tuition Payments, Late Fees and Overpayments Policy

Graduate students in GBS are awarded a tuition scholarship, which covers in-state tuition and fees until the degree requirements for your theme have been met. As a condition to receiving this tuition scholarship:

1. Students must register for and successfully complete at least **27 hours** of approved graduate credits each year. Any hours taken above 27 semester hours must be approved by your theme.
2. Courses offered by entities outside of the GBS curriculum must be pre-approved by your mentor and theme director in advance.
3. Students must remain in good academic standing. This tuition scholarship may be terminated for students who fail to meet requirements outlined by academic probation.

All coursework must either fit within your theme's training plan or be pre-approved by your research mentor and/or thesis committee. If not, the student will be responsible for the associated tuition/fees and may be subject to non-resident tuition rates. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Finance Manager concerning an outstanding student accounting balance. **Students who do not contact the Finance Manager in a timely manner are responsible for any late fees incurred on their student account.**

Each term, the deadlines for tuition payments are posted on the Academic Calendar, which is available on the UAB website under UAB Quicklinks. Students are also sent emails from Student Accounting. It is important that students are aware of these deadlines and that emails about their student accounts be forwarded appropriately.

If for some reason there is an overpayment on your student account, immediately notify the Finance Manager. Overpayments must be corrected immediately. In cases where the overpayment is not adjusted prior to the payment deadline for the following term, the student will be responsible for repaying the amount of the overpayment to offset a portion of the tuition balance for the current term.

Tax Information | Understanding the taxes on financial aid to graduate students found [here](#).

Types of Financial Aid:

1. Scholarships: Scholarships are generally given to graduate students to cover tuition and fees. If there is no requirement for service to the university or a third party, a scholarship is not subject to state, local, or federal taxes. Most scholarships are applied directly to student fees. No W-2 form is issued by UAB.
2. Fellowships: Fellowships typically provide a stipend to defray living expenses, tuition and fees. If no service is required to receive the fellowship, it is exempt from state and local taxes. Any portion of a fellowship in excess of tuition, fees, and required books and equipment is subject to federal income tax. UAB does not withhold taxes from fellowships or issue W-2 forms. Students are advised to pay quarterly estimated federal taxes.
** Most 1st year GBS students are funded by Graduate School Fellowships or UAB Comprehensive Minority Faculty and Student Fellowships*
3. Assistantships: Assistantships are compensation given for work performed. The most common forms of assistantships are teaching and research assistantships. These awards are not exempt from taxes. UAB will deduct taxes from checks and issue a W-2 form at the end of the year.
**Graduate students funded by grants and sources other than individual fellowships and training grants are considered to receive assistantships.*

INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS

Rationale and Goal

The Graduate School has established an incentive plan designed to encourage more students to apply for individual fellowships. By implementing this incentive plan, it is hoped that a significant number of additional individual fellowships will be awarded to UAB pre-doctoral students.

Plan Description

The Graduate School will provide a monetary incentive for GBS students to APPLY FOR individual fellowships funded by extramural agencies or foundations. Graduate students who apply for an individual fellowship (e.g. NSF Individual, NIH NRSA, or other) will be awarded \$500 from the Graduate School through the UAB Financial Aid office as a reward for submitting the application. To qualify for this award, the application must be reviewed prior to submission by the student's program director or mentor, who must provide a written verification to the Graduate School that the application is considered to be competitive. After submission of the grant application, the student will provide a PDF of the application to the Graduate School and the incentive reward will be authorized when the student provides evidence that the application has been received by the granting agency. **The \$500 award is given for first submissions only.**

If a GBS student's application is funded, the student will receive an additional financial reward. For an NIH NRSA or other grant that provides less than the base stipend currently being offered to all students in that student's program, the student will receive supplementation of the fellowship stipend to an amount equal to the base stipend plus \$1,500 per year for the term that the grant is funded. The supplemental funding will be provided by the Graduate School. If the stipend amount from the external award is equal to or greater than the equivalent of \$1,500 more than the current base stipend in the student's program, the student is entitled to receive the full amount of the stipend. The form used to apply for provision of the supplement from Graduate School resources can be downloaded from the Graduate School [website](#).

If a student receives a National Science Foundation (NSF) pre-doctoral fellowship, he/she will receive no supplement to his/her stipend during the three-year term of the NSF fellowship. This stipulation is necessary because the NSF stipend of \$34,000 exceeds the current maximum stipend recommended by the Graduate School. After the NSF grant terminates, the student's mentor or department will be responsible for providing the current base stipend in that student's program and the Graduate School will provide the supplement until the student completes his/her degree requirements.

Eligibility

This plan is available to students in any graduate program in which extramural individual fellowship funding is available. To be eligible for both the reward for submitting the application and the supplement to a student's stipend, the award must provide more than half the current base stipend in the student's program. Applications for and receipt of travel and other small grants will not be eligible for an incentive award under this program. Additional details for students and faculty concerning the Graduate School-

sponsored Fellowship Incentive Plan follow below.

To receive the application incentive (\$500) the following materials are required:

- A letter from the student's advisor verifying that the advisor reviewed the application and believes that it is competitive.
- Documentation that the amount of the fellowship provides greater than half of the student's current base stipend.
- An electronic or hard copy PDF of the application.
- Verification of receipt of the application by the funding agency.

These materials may be submitted to Thomas Harris, Executive Assistant to the Dean, LHL 103, (205) 996-4062, tharris@uab.edu and Cyndi Ballinger, Graduate School Business Officer, LHL 103, (205) 975-7188, cknight@uab.edu.

If the application is successfully funded, the student should provide a copy of the award notice and the Request for Individual Fellowship Supplement Funding Form to one of the individuals above (Thomas Harris or Cyndi Ballinger in the Graduate School Dean's Office) in order to receive the additional financial reward as described in the Plan Description. We strongly encourage our graduate students and faculty to participate in this incentive program.

GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL

Graduate students who are traveling for professional reasons may apply to trips for the purpose of attending a scientific conference or learning new techniques. With appropriate documentation, travel costs can be paid by grant or other sources. The specific documentation required will be determined by the student's status as a graduate research assistant (GRA) (employee policies apply) or as a trainee/fellow (i.e., funded by a training grant or individual fellowship). For information, please visit the following [website](#).

International Professional Travel

All UAB-Related Foreign Travel Requests must be made online through the UAB Forms [site](#). **UAB policy requires prior approval through this online request process for all UAB-related foreign travel, including for all students who participate in Study Away programs and/or travel overseas as part of UAB-related activities.**

Students may direct questions to the Office of Study Away at 205.975.6611 or via email to studyabroad@uab.edu.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

NIH has encouraged institutions to develop Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for all graduate students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NIH awards. Use of IDPs is to be reported in all progress reports submitted after October 1, 2014, using the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR).

Individual development plans are important tools in career planning. It is required that all GBS students participate in IDP instruction, with each newly matriculating student receiving initial IDP instruction by October 1 of their year of entry. The Graduate School offers IDP instructional sessions that include participant initiation of IDP using the Science Careers website tool myIDP [here](#). Individual themes may also establish their own IDP instruction and related requirements. MSTP students will participate in MSTP-organized IDP training rather than GBS theme-related IDP sessions.

Primary responsibility to assure that GBS students receive IDP instruction resides with the GBS curriculum manager. A record of IDP must be provided to the Graduate School by October 1st, to be forwarded to and monitored by the UAB Compliance Office. A session sign-in list or screen shots of the myIDP personal information summary page can provide evidence of participation.

The initial IDP information session is scheduled for incoming students during the entering fall semester. The GBS office will arrange these sessions with first-year students.

For more information, please visit [here](#).

GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Responsibilities of the Graduate Student

A fundamental responsibility of the graduate student is to work closely with the faculty supervisor in carrying out research activities, while at the same time making good progress toward the completion of the degree program. If the student's assistantship responsibilities and academic program are properly coordinated, these responsibilities will be compatible. The student should articulate his or her goals early in the term of appointment and work with the supervisor to achieve them. The graduate student is obligated at all times to maintain high ethical standards in academic and nonacademic activities and to report violations of these to the

faculty supervisor or other appropriate leader (e.g. theme director or Associate Dean of GBS). The graduate students should keep well informed of departmental, school, and institutional regulations, and follow them consistently. If problems arise in the assistantship assignments, the graduate student should seek help first from the faculty supervisor. If problems cannot be resolved, the student should consult the Theme Director or Associate Dean for GBS.

In general, GBS graduate students are expected to be available in the periods between academic terms*. Graduate assistants are entitled to the following short-term leaves:

- A maximum of 15 calendar days (one-half month) paid leave of absence (personal time) per calendar year
- 3 calendar days paid sick leave of absence per calendar year
- Parental leave of absence (with pay) of 30 consecutive days per calendar year upon the birth or adoption of a child. Either or both parents are eligible for parental leave.

These leaves (personal leave, sick, parental) do not accrue. All leaves must be requested and require approval by the mentor and theme director. With the agreement of the mentor and theme director, extended, unpaid, nonemergency absences from campus for periods up to a month may be approved. Extended absences (without pay) for non-academic purposes should be limited. GBS policies regarding leaves of absence must apply equitably to all full-time students in good standing in the program. Students should consult the Graduate School policies and procedures concerning academic leaves of absence. In emergencies, graduate assistants should inform their mentors or theme directors as soon as possible about the need for an academic leave of absence. NOTE: Graduate students (Trainees and Research Assistants) are not eligible for [Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#).

**GBS Policy on Winter Break*

- First year students: First year rotation students should not be expected to be present in the lab during the week between the winter holidays, regardless of whether or not UAB remains open. Rotation schedules and courses are organized to accommodate this break.
- Second year students and beyond: All breaks, including winter break, are a matter of individual negotiation to be decided between the student and the student's research mentor.

POLICIES ON CONDUCT

GBS Academic Ethics and Conduct Policy and Procedure

GBS students will be informed of UAB Academic Ethics and Conduct guidance contained in the Graduate School Handbook in a mandatory session to occur during new student orientation. Students are expected to be and stay familiar with the guidance as well as the UAB Honor Code and will sign a copy of the UAB Honor Code, to be retained in their theme files.

Issues regarding potential infractions must be reported to the Theme Director who will communicate with the Associate Dean for GBS. A faculty member, staff member, or student, who sees cause to charge a student with academic misconduct, must inform the Theme Director and/or Associate Dean for GBS as soon as practical, and preferably within seven (7) calendar days of noting the incident. A failure to report the incident within seven (7) days will not prevent the SFAC from considering the allegation.

The Associate Dean may convene a GBS Student & Faculty Affairs Committee (SFAC) should the GBS Associate Dean deem the circumstances warrant this. This committee is assembled ad hoc and will consist of two graduate student (peer) representatives, two faculty representatives, and the Associate Dean for GBS. The SFAC will review allegations of Honor Code and professional standard violations for any GBS student.

A meeting to review the charge will be convened within 7 calendar days after the SFAC is assembled. The student will be notified in writing of the date of the meeting and the topic(s) that will be addressed. The student will meet with the Committee to respond to the charge or to accept responsibility. A student who accepts responsibility will be subject to discipline for the violation(s). A student who accepts responsibility cannot appeal the decision to the Graduate School Appeals Board ("GSAB").

At the meeting, the student may present any information he/she wishes for the SFAC to consider, including presenting any witnesses or witness statements. The student may also have an advisor present to consult with the student. The advisor, however, may not address the SFAC or otherwise participate in the meeting. The student's theme director will attend as a non-voting participant. The meeting may be recorded and the recording will be the property of UAB.

The Committee will deliberate and determine the validity and consequences of the allegation and may recommend expulsion or other discipline. Generally, a first violation shall result in the assignment of a failing grade in the assignment or in the course in which the violation occurred, at the discretion of the instructor. A notation on the student's permanent academic record may also be made to indicate that a reduced or failing grade was assigned because of an Honor Code or Professionalism Standard violation (e.g., "F,

Academic Misconduct violation, June 15, 2006"), on the judgment of the SFAC. A second violation of the Honor Code shall result in expulsion from the University. Should a student withdraw from the GBS program before a decision on an outstanding issue be made, the process will be finished and documentation of the final decision will be placed in the student's GBS academic record. No student may graduate until pending allegations of an Honor Code violation have been resolved. Should a student withdraw from the GBS program before a decision on an outstanding issue be made, the process will be finished and documentation of the final decision will be placed in the student's GBS academic record.

The SFAC's decision will be communicated to the student and the theme director via UAB email, within 7 calendar days of the meeting. The student may have the right to appeal the SFAC's decision to the GSAB if certain grounds are met. These grounds are described here: [Graduate School Appeals Board](#). If the SFAC's decision is to dismiss the matter, the decision will not be a part of the student's record.

Ethical Standards in Research and Other Scholarly Activities

Allegations of GBS student research misconduct will be managed according to [UAB Responsible Conduct of Research](#) policies. Proper procedures for reporting concerns about proper procedures for reporting concerns about potential research/scholarly activity misconduct at UAB:

- For most cases, reports should follow the "chain of command". The immediate supervisor should be first notified unless the problem involves that individual, in which case the next highest supervisor should be notified. Any situation that endangers personnel safety should be reported directly to UAB Police, Occupational Health and Safety (205.934.2487), Facilities, or others as appropriate with subsequent notification of a supervisor.
- Scientific misconduct, defined as "fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices which seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research" should be reported to the UAB Research Integrity Office, Pam Bounelis at 205.934.9693. UAB's Policy Concerning the Maintenance of High Ethical Standards in Research and Other Scholarly Activities can be found [here](#) and provides information about the ethical standards expected of UAB faculty and staff.
- Concerns about research or research administration can also be reported directly to the UAB University Compliance Office [here](#) or through the hotline maintained by this office. Anonymous reports are accepted.
- Problems related to personnel issues should be reported through the supervisory chain of command unless it is more appropriate to go directly to Human Resource Management Relations 205.934.4701.

Non-Academic Conduct

The university is a community of scholars and learners; therefore, all participants are expected to maintain conduct that (1) facilitates the institution's pursuit of its educational objectives, (2) exhibits a regard for the rights of other members of the academic community, and (3) contributes to the maintenance of a healthy learning environment. Through appropriate procedures, action will be taken in response to behavior that violates these principles. The office of Non-Academic Student Conduct supports the mission of the university by protecting the rights of all members of the university community and by promoting civility, integrity, responsibility, openness, mutual respect and justice by enforcing community standards. A more detailed description of nonacademic misconduct can be found in the [UAB Student Handbook](#). It is the student's responsibility to be fully aware of the policies and procedures described. The Office of Student Life and the Vice Provost for Student and Faculty Success have the responsibility for coordinating policies and procedures regarding students' nonacademic misconduct.

Grievance Policy and Procedures

Although rare, disagreements can arise that may affect a student's progress towards the completion of the degree. The parties involved in such a dispute should make a good faith effort to discuss and resolve the disagreement. The following guidelines may be helpful.

Step 1. Identify the problem; clearly define what happened and what you perceive is needed to resolve the issue.

Step 2. Approach the other person or group involved with the dispute one-on-one. Set up a mutually agreeable time to talk; listen and ask to be listened to; use "I" statements when speaking; avoid assigning blame or leveling accusations.

Step 3. If these steps do not culminate in a resolution, the parties involved with the dispute should agree to approach an impartial third party, a mediator, who will respect confidentiality and with whom the situation can be discussed. The Theme Director will suggest such a third party if asked. The mediator may be able to help the parties involved reach a resolution.

Step 4. If no resolution is found then you may submit the disagreement to the Graduate Program for resolution. Please follow these procedures:

- Each party in the dispute should submit a written description of the disagreement to the Theme Director and the department Chair. Please include a description of the actions taken to resolve the dispute to date and the name of the mediator who was involved.
- The Associate Dean for GBS will review the written documents. The Associate Dean, in consultation with the GBS Theme

Directors, will make a determination as to whether or not the disagreement is Program-related and thus appropriate for resolution at the Program level.

- If the dispute is found to be Program-related, the Associate Dean, together with the GBS Theme Directors, will form a Committee to resolve the dispute. If the dispute involves the Associate Dean, Theme Director, Associate Director or any member of the GBS staff, then that individual will be excused from the deliberations. The Committee may request additional information from the parties involved. The Committee will meet to discuss the problem within 14 calendar days following receipt of the written documents or following the receipt of any additional materials.
- The result of the group's deliberations will be communicated via UAB email to the parties involved in the dispute within seven (7) calendar days after the meeting.

Step 5. If a party involved in the dispute is not satisfied with the outcome of the resolution process, an appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School Appeals Board, the Dean of the Graduate School, or the GBS Associate Dean. Please see the Graduate Student Handbook, [Graduate School Appeals Board](#) for specific information about the appeals process.

Note that issues involving conduct actions covered by the UAB Honor Code and related UAB Codes are to be handled by the SFAC and that issues involving GBS student academic conduct/GBS policy will be heard through the GBS grievance procedures.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The faculty and staff of GBS are prepared to deliver high quality education to all GBS students and are committed to the growth of future professionals. GBS draws faculty from many disciplines and professional programs in the School of Medicine, the Joint Health Sciences, and other departments across campus.

GBS Theme Directors:

Biochemistry, Structural, and Stem Cell Biology (BSSB)



Theme Director

Thomas Ryan, PhD

205.995.2175

tryan@uab.edu



Theme Co-Director

Chad Petit, PhD

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Cancer Biology (CANB)



Theme Director

Lalita Shevde-Samant, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

Soory Varambally, PhD

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Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology (CMDDB)



Theme Director

Alecia K. Gross, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

John Parant, PhD

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Genetics, Genomics, and Bioinformatics (GGB)



Theme Director

Kevin Dybvig, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

Zsuzsa Bebok, MD

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Immunology (IMM)



Theme Director

Louis Justement, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

Christopher Klug, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

Laurie Harrington, PhD

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Microbiology (MIC)



Theme Director

Janet Yother, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

Sunnie Thompson, PhD

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Neuroscience (NESC)



Theme Director

Karen Gamble, PhD

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Theme Co-Director

Lucas Pozzo-Miller, PhD

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Pathobiology and Molecular Medicine (PBMM)



Theme Director

Yabing Chen, PhD, MBA

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Theme Associate Director

Robert van Waardenburg, PhD

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rvanwaar@uab.edu

GBS STAFF:



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SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

All dates related to registration, add/drop dates, administrative requirements, and official school holidays are recorded on the UAB Academic Calendar available [here](#).

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE (UAB)

UAB expects the highest ethical and professional behaviors from the academic community. The code, including penalties for violation, is published on the UAB website [here](#).

The UAB Academic Honor Code

The University of Alabama at Birmingham expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Students, faculty, and the administration of the institution must be involved to ensure this quality of academic conduct. Academic misconduct undermines the purpose of education. Such behavior is a serious violation of the trust that must exist among faculty and students for a university to nurture intellectual growth and development. Academic misconduct can generally be defined as all acts of dishonesty in an academic or related matter. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following categories of behavior:

ABETTING is helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Allowing someone to copy your quiz answers or use your work as their own are examples of abetting.

CHEATING is the unauthorized use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids, the work of others, or computer-related information.

PLAGIARISM means claiming as your own the ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by someone else. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, the use of commercially available scholarly papers, failure to cite sources, or copying another person's ideas.

FABRICATION means presenting falsified data, citations, or quotations as genuine.

MISREPRESENTATION is falsification, alteration, or the misstatement of the contents of documents, academic work, or other materials related to academic matters, including work substantially done for one class as work done for another without receiving prior approval from the instructor.

Violations of the UAB Academic Honor Code are punishable by a range of penalties, from receiving a failing grade on an assignment, to an F in the course, to dismissal. Any course grade of F for academic misconduct supersedes any other grade or notation for that class. Withdrawal from a course while a possible violation of the Academic Honor Code is under review will not preclude the assignment of a course grade that appropriately reflects the student's performance prior to withdrawal if the violation is substantiated.

ASKIT

AskIT is the technology help desk for faculty, staff, and students. AskIT staff provides free support via telephone, email, or in-person. AskIT is physically located in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the Education Building, Room 238. You can make contact through the website [here](#) or by telephone at 205.996.5555. Questions or problems can also be submitted by email to askIT@uab.edu.

BLAZERID

All students are assigned a unique identification, their BlazerID, which is established by the student [here](#). Blazernet is the official portal to the UAB information networks. The portal can be accessed from any Internet-accessible computer, on or off campus [here](#). Your BlazerID is required to access Blazernet and other campus information resources, such as your UAB email account. Your UAB email is the official communication medium and should be monitored routinely. UAB student email is provided through Microsoft Office 365, a cloud based email and file storage system.

BLAZERNET

To register for courses, please sign in to [Blazernet](#).

Access to Blazernet requires a BlazerID and password. If you do not have a BlazerID, you may obtain one at [BlazerID Central](#) or you may [view the schedule of classes](#).

How to Register through Blazernet

- Once logged in to Blazernet, click on the "Registration" link on the green ribbon.
- On the Registration menu, click the "Add, Drop, or Withdraw from Classes" link.

To look up the Course Reference Number for your course(s)

- Click on the "Look Up Classes" link to search the available courses for the term. You may search for classes with several different criteria, but the only block that must be utilized is the *Subject* block.
- Once the classes are visible, register for the course(s) by clicking on the empty checkbox to the left of the CRN and clicking on the Register button at the bottom of the screen.

If you already know the CRN for your course(s)

- Click on the "Add/Drop Classes" link in the "Registration Tools" channel.
- The Add/Drop worksheet will appear. There will be a row of empty blocks. Type in the 5-digit CRN for your course in any of the blocks. If you are registering for more than one course, tab over to another block and enter in all of the courses at one time. (You do not need to type in the subject or number for the course, only the CRN is required!)
- Click on the *Register* button at the bottom of the screen when complete.

To verify that you have successfully registered

- If you would like a Registration Confirmation, click Registration Confirmation in the "Registration Tools" channel.
- If you would like to see your classes in a schedule format, follow these steps:
 - On the Student Resources tab, click on the link "Banner Self-Service."
 - Click on *Student and Financial Aid*
 - Click on *Registration*
 - Click on *Student Detail Schedule* or *Week at a Glance*

If you receive a Registration Error Message

Please see the list below of common registration errors and solutions:

- **RAC:** A Registration Access Code (RAC) is required for your account. This is a 6-digit number given to you by your advisor.
- **CORQ:** Course has a co-requisite. The CRN of the required co-requisite should follow the CORQ error message. Please submit the courses simultaneously.
- **PREQ/TEST SCORE:** Course has a prerequisite or test placement requirement. The CRN or title of the required prerequisite should follow the PREQ error message. See your advisor for permission.
- **TIME CONFLICT:** Course has a time conflict with another course already added to your schedule.
- **CLOSED SECTION:** There are no more seats available in the course.
- **NEED INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION:** Permission of the instructor is required to take this course. Please contact instructor for an online override.
- **LEVEL RESTRICTION:** Your classification level is invalid for this course. Contact the department or instructor for online permission.
- **HOLDS:** Holds are on your account, which restrict you from registering. Please scroll down until you see a "View Holds" icon. This icon will show your specific holds. Please see the department listed to remove the hold.

BLAZER EXPRESS

The UAB Blazer Express Transit System is a bus service offering transportation throughout the University campus. With a valid UAB ID badge, students, employees, and authorized visitors can enjoy fare-free bus transportation along designated routes. For an update schedule, route maps, and hours of operation please go [here](#).

BOOKSTORES

Two bookstores are located on the UAB campus, both offering a wide variety of products and services to students, including online purchasing and shipping. Both bookstores stock UAB memorabilia and college wear in addition to all required textbooks and course material.

UAB Barnes and Noble Bookstore

Location: 1400 University Blvd (Hill Student Center)

Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

Telephone: 205.996.2665

uab.bncollege.com

Snoozy's Bookstore

Location: 1321 10th Ave S

Hours: Monday-Friday 7:45am-6pm and Saturday 10am-2pm

Telephone: 205.328.2665

snoozysuab.com

CAMPUS ONECARD

The UAB OneCard is the official University identification card. It is used for personal identification, for entry to campus events and the recreation center, library check-outs, and other UAB services. It also serves as a declining balance card for the UAB meal plans and for Blazer Bucks accounts. Additional information is available [here](#).

CAMPUS MAP

A downloadable campus map is available [here](#).

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Canvas Learning Management System is the platform used for managing instructional materials online. Canvas course sites can be accessed through Blazernet or [here](#). Students should monitor their course sites routinely for communications from faculty and to manage course assignments.

COUNSELING SERVICES

The Counseling and Wellness Center offers no cost, confidential counseling for UAB students related to physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual concerns. The center is located in the UAB Student Health & Wellness Center- 1719 9th Ave S. For more information, call 205.934.5816 or visit [here](#).

DATA STORAGE AND MANAGEMENT

Proper management of research data is essential to the responsible conduct of research. The guidelines are set forth to build awareness of good data management practices and to establish in broad terms the expectations for Principal Investigators and project personnel in collecting, documenting, storing, securing, and retaining research data at UAB. Additional information is available [here](#).

DIRECT DEPOSIT

UAB does not issue paychecks. Instead, the university will deposit your earnings directly into your bank account, issuing you a pay stub summary only.

To set up direct deposit:

- Go to the [website](#).
- Click on Oracle HR & Finance
- Under Administrative Systems Status, click on "You may log into the application here".
- Enter your Blazer ID and password
- Click on "I Agree"
- Go to "UAB Self Service Applications"
- Click on "Manage Direct Deposit Account". Enter information.

If you need more information, please visit UAB Financial Affairs [website](#).

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Offices for UAB's Disability Support Services (DSS) are located at the Hill Student Center, Suite 409. The mission of DSS is to identify and remove barriers, provide individualized services, and facilitate accommodations in order to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to all university programs, activities, and services. In order to receive accommodations, students must register with DSS. It's best to register with DSS upon application to UAB. A request for assessment and accommodations can be made at any time, but keep in mind that accommodations cannot be granted retroactively. For more information about DSS, contact the office directly or visit their website [here](#). Although most of the policies, procedures, and accommodations for students with disabilities are the same for graduate and undergraduate students, DSS also has a website dedicated solely to graduate students with disabilities, which can be found [here](#).

Disability Support Services

Location: Hill Student Center, Suite 409, 1400 University Blvd

Phone: 205.934.4205

Email: dss@uab.edu

uab.edu/students/disability

EMERGENCIES

Any suspicious or threatening activity should be reported to the UAB Police Department immediately. In addition to calling via telephone, more than 300 emergency blue light telephones connected directly to the police dispatcher are located throughout the campus. Police are staffed 24 hours, seven days a week. If there are concerns that a student is potentially harmful to himself or others, Student Health and Wellness and/or the UAB Threat Assessment Team should be immediately notified.

UAB Police Numbers: 911 from a campus phone; 205.934.3535; 205.934.HELP (4357); 205.934.4434

Emergency situations affecting the campus are communicated to students in several ways:

- uab.edu/emergency
- uab.edu
- Cell phone and SMS text- Register to receive these notices with the UAB Emergency Notification System (B-ALERT) [here](#).
- Announcements on the Blazernet portal
- [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#): B-ALERT integrates with these media and @UABALERT
- Weather and Emergency Hotline: 205.934.2165

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) provides protection for all educational records related to students enrolled in an educational program. Information about your rights and protection of your records is available [here](#) and [here](#). If you have questions or concerns about FERPA issues, you may email FERPA@uab.edu.

FINANCIAL AID

The Office of Student Financial Aid is located in the Lister Hill Library, Room G20. Hours of operation are Monday & Wednesday-Friday 8am-5pm and Tuesday 9:15am-5pm. For additional information, please call 205.934.8223, email finaid@uab.edu or visit the website [here](#).

HEALTH SERVICES

All students in the GBS program are required to have single-coverage health insurance. Students may choose to be covered by VIVA UAB or provide their own private insurance. If the student elects to be covered by their own private insurance and waive VIVA UAB, verification of comparable coverage must be on file with the UAB Student Health Office. Support is available for single coverage health insurance only. Family coverage (for spouses or dependents) can be obtained at additional cost to be paid for by the graduate student. For additional information regarding health insurance and policies, please contact Candace Ragsdale by email at craggs@uab.edu or by phone at 205.996.2589.

The University provides prevention, counseling, and treatment services to students through the UAB Student Health Services (SHS) clinic located at 1714 9th Avenue South. The clinic is open Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, but is closed between noon and 1pm daily. Detailed information about services and operating practices is located on the SHS website [here](#).

LIBRARIES

UAB's libraries house excellent collections of books, periodicals, microforms, and other media. The libraries have online remote access to catalogs and online collections. Customer services are extensive. All facilities have computers available for student use during regular hours of operation.

Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences- This is the largest biomedical library in Alabama and one of the largest in the south.

Location: 1700 University Boulevard

Hours: Monday-Thursday 7am-9pm, Friday 7am-5pm, Saturday 9am-4pm, Sunday 12pm-8pm

Phone: 205.934.2230

[Website](#)

Mervyn H. Sterne Library- A collection of more than one million items supporting teaching and research in the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences.

Location: 913 13th Street South

Hours: Monday-Thursday 7:30am-2am, Friday 7:30am-7pm, Saturday 9am-5pm, Sunday 1pm-2am

Phone: 205.934.6364

[Website](#)

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

UAB prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability unrelated to program performance, veteran status, or genetic or family medical history. Students who have experienced or witnessed discriminatory harassment other than that based on sex or gender should refer to UAB's Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, found [here](#). Students are also encouraged to contact the UAB Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The mission of the UAB Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is to "increase, retain and enhance faculty, student, and staff diversity at all levels of the University and to ensure equity." UAB defines diversity as "the full range of human difference and potential...". This administrative office supports faculty recruitment, provides scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students, and promotes programs to enhance the campus diversity experience. The office provides a diversity awareness training program for employees. Additional information is available [here](#).

PARKING

Student vehicles must be registered with UAB Parking and Transportation Services, located at 608 8th Street South. The office is open Monday-Friday 7:30am-4:30pm. Parking is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking fees are established by location, payable by semester or year, and are billed to the student's account. Additional information is available [here](#).

RECREATION CENTER

The Campus Recreation Center, located at 1501 University Boulevard, is open to faculty, staff, students, and their families. A valid student OneCard is required for access. Facilities include basketball courts, racquetball courts, weight rooms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, and indoor track. Additional information is available [here](#).

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in employment and education programs and activities. Because UAB receives federal funding, it is required to abide by Title IX.

The University's Commitment to Title IX Compliance- Notice of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its programs or services. UAB is committed to providing an environment that respects the dignity of its students, faculty, and staff and is free from sexual misconduct. Consistent with this commitment, UAB has developed a comprehensive policy to address allegations of sexual misconduct. That policy can be found [here](#). Students can also visit the Title IX website, found [here](#).

UAB STUDENT HANDBOOK

The UAB student handbook may be accessed online [here](#).