

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of
Chemistry & Biochemistry



AUBURN

UNIVERSITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Auburn University!

For general regulations regarding graduate studies at Auburn University, please check out the [Graduate School Bulletin](#) online, or contact [The Graduate School](#):

The Graduate School
106 Hargis Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849
(334) 844-4700

This handbook contains only specific information about policies and requirements concerning degrees offered in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Auburn University, and as such, it is designed to be a *supplement* to, rather than a replacement for, the Graduate School Bulletin.

Each student is responsible for meeting all the requirements and deadlines specified in the Graduate School Bulletin and in this handbook. Please refer to the [Graduate School Calendar](#) for important dates throughout the academic year. If you need assistance with any aspect of the graduate program, your Research Advisor, the Graduate Program Officer (GPO), the Department Chair, and the administrative staff in the Chemistry Building main office are available to help you. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them for assistance.

The checklists in the Appendix of this handbook will help ensure that students meet all requirements in a timely manner as they progress through the graduate program.

2. GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Admission

Applicants to the graduate program in Chemistry should have a Bachelor's degree with a major in Chemistry, Biochemistry, or one of their equivalents. Although this is not required, applicants are encouraged to take the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the GRE Chemistry Subject Test. GRE scores will be considered as part of the application, but there is no minimum score requirement.

International students must also present satisfactory scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) as follows: At least 79 on the internet-based TOEFL with at least a 16 on each of the sections of the exam (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking). The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam may be taken in lieu of the TOEFL. The IELTS scores required for admission are at least a 6.5 overall, and at least a 6.5 on each section of the exam (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking). Please note these are **admission** requirements -- in order to be eligible for a graduate teaching assistantship without taking additional English

course(s), an international student must score at least a 23 on the Speaking section of the TOEFL (or for the IELTS, at least a 7.0 on the Speaking section).

Applications for admission to the graduate program in Chemistry should be submitted [online \(chgrcom@auburn.edu\)](mailto:chgrcom@auburn.edu) or mailed to:

Graduate Admissions Committee
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Chemistry Building, Room 179
Auburn University, AL 36849-5312

Make sure to submit your application *directly* to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry to avoid having to pay the application fee levied by the Auburn University Graduate School. All applications must be approved by both the Chemistry and Biochemistry Graduate Admissions Committee and the Graduate School.

B. Choosing a Research Advisor

After admission to the Graduate School, students are assigned the Graduate Program Officer (GPO) as a temporary advisor in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department. In this capacity, the GPO will advise students and help them with registration when they first arrive on campus. Toward the end of the first semester, each student will be matched with a permanent Research Advisor who will direct the student's Thesis or Dissertation research. The Research Advisor must be a Level 2 member of the Graduate Faculty, and must be mutually agreed upon by the student, the faculty member, and the Department Chair.

To facilitate the advisor selection process, the faculty will give a series of presentations on their research within the first few weeks of the first semester. New graduate students are required to attend these presentations, which will help them decide which research groups to join. Once all the faculty have presented, students will be given a form to fill out to indicate their research group preferences. Students will then interview the faculty with whom they are interested in working, and then have them sign the research group preference form. On the form, students will rank the top three faculty with whom they wish to work, and submit their choices to the Department Chair in writing. The faculty will then decide who they wish to join their research groups. Note that all student/advisor pairings are subject to approval by the Chair.

C. Advisory Committee

Before the end of the first year of study, students, in consultation with their Research Advisor, should arrange for the appointment of an Advisory Committee. For Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) students, the Advisory Committee should be made up of the Research Advisor and at least three faculty members, one of which may be from another Auburn University Department. All committee members must be members of the Auburn University Graduate Faculty. The Research

Advisor and at least two of the other faculty must be members of the Graduate Faculty at Level 2. Additional voting members may be appointed to the committee (including no more than one non-Auburn University faculty member, who must hold the terminal degree in the field). After consulting with the Research Advisor and receiving the signatures of each proposed committee member on the [Graduate Research Advisory Committee Selection Form](#), the completed form should be returned to the Graduate Program Officer. Members of the Advisory Committee for a Ph.D. student accept this responsibility by signing the Graduate Research Advisory Committee Selection Form. The student's choice of Advisory Committee is subject to approval by the Department Chair. Upon receiving approval from the Department Chair, the student should [finalize their committee selection](#) with and receive final approval from the Graduate School.

For Master of Science (M.S.) degree students, the Advisory Committee should be made up of at least two faculty members in addition to the Research Advisor. The Research Advisor and the majority of the Advisory Committee should be members of the Graduate Faculty. After consulting with the Research Advisor and receiving the signatures of each proposed committee member on the [Graduate Research Advisory Committee Selection Form](#), the completed form should be returned to the Graduate Program Officer. Members of the Advisory Committee for a Masters student accept this responsibility by signing the Graduate Research Advisory Committee Selection Form. The student's choice of Advisory Committee is subject to approval by the Department Chair. Upon receiving approval from the Department Chair, the student should [finalize their committee selection](#) with and receive final approval from the Graduate School.

For either Ph.D. or Masters students, in the event that a change in Advisory Committee becomes necessary, use the [Revision to Existing Plan of Study Form](#).

D. Temporary Advisor and Advisory Committee

In the event that a graduate student remains unmatched with a Research Advisor at the conclusion of the student's first semester, the Graduate Program Officer (GPO) will remain in place as the temporary advisor, and the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) will serve as a temporary advisory committee. The GPO and GPC will assess the extent to which substandard performance in courses, substandard performance in GTA responsibilities, and/or unprofessional behavior have contributed to an inability to find a research group. In consultation with the student, the GPO and GPC will develop a plan for the student to address deficiencies and engage in a second attempt to identify a Research Advisor. If a student is still unable to find a Research Advisor, the student's assistantship will end at a point not later than the end of the third semester (Summer) in the program.

E. Graduate Student Plan of Study

Following assignment of a Research Advisor, students should consult with their Research Advisor and develop a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study will include the balance of formal graded courses. These should be selected to align with the research project and interests of the student. The Plan

of Study will also include a proposed timeline for completing Seminar, Formal Presentations, Directed Individual Study, as well as Research and Dissertation (Ph.D.) or Research and Thesis (Masters) hours (CHEM 7950, CHEM 7750, and CHEM 8990 or CHEM 7990, respectively). By the end of the first year of study, a formal Graduate Student Plan of Study should be approved by the student's Research Advisor and Advisory Committee, and then submitted to the Graduate Program Officer. Students are responsible for carrying out their planned program of study and for requesting any changes through the Research Advisor, Advisory Committee, and Graduate Program Officer. Students should **complete** the courses outlined in their Plan of Study at least one term before they intend to graduate.

In the event that a change in Plan of Study becomes necessary, students should use the [Revision to Existing Plan of Study Form](#).

F. Registration Procedures

The Graduate Program Officer (GPO) will help students with registration for the first semester of study. For registration for all subsequent semesters, students will be guided by their individual Research Advisors. Students should carefully read the sections in the Graduate School Bulletin dealing with [Registration](#), and make sure that they consult with their Research Advisor and register for courses before the beginning of each semester. In order to maintain eligibility for GA, GTA, or GRA support, a student **must** be registered for **at least** one credit hour every semester, including summers.

Note that additional credit hours on a semester-by-semester basis may be required for immigration or student-loan deferral purposes. To maintain a valid F-1/J-1 immigration visa status, international graduate students must be enrolled in a full course of study each semester (at least 9 hours). Once a student has completed all required course work and is conducting research full-time to complete their thesis or dissertation, they can be exempt from being full-time (see also [Section 3](#)). However, they must submit the [Gold Form](#) to the Office of International Programs in order to be certified as exempt. Students may not use this exemption for more than four semesters (Masters) or six semesters (Ph.D.). Any exceptions to this rule will require a letter from the student's Research Advisor.

To be certified as full-time for student-loan deferral purposes, domestic students should submit the [GRAD 7@@@/8@@@ Thesis/Dissertation Completion Registration Request Form](#) to the Graduate School.

G. Course Requirements

As partial fulfillment of the course requirements, all M.S. and Ph.D. students must complete a [Plan of Study](#) approved by their Advisory Committee. The Plan of Study is to be filed with the Graduate Program Officer no later than the end of a student's first year in the program. Given that the Plan of Study approval requires the consent of the Advisory Committee, students (in

consultation with their Research Advisor) should assemble the committee within the third semester in the graduate program, which will normally be the summer after their matriculation. Students in the Ph.D. program are required to complete at least 60 semester hours of graduate course work. Students in the M.S. program are required to complete at least 30 semester hours of graduate course work.

The graduate programs of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry are designed to allow students and Research Advisors a great degree of flexibility in determining which courses will compose the Plan of Study. This is so that courses may be tailored to individual students and their interests and goals within the disciplines of chemistry.

A Plan of Study for the Ph.D. degree must meet the following requirements:

- At least 60 semester hours total
- At least 30 semester hours that are graded (i.e., A – F, not S/U).
- At least 7 formal graded courses (not CHEM 7750 or CHEM 7930)
- At least 6 semester hours of CHEM 7950 (Seminar)
- At least 2 semester hours of CHEM 7750 (Formal Presentations)
- At least 10 semester hours of CHEM 8990 (Research and Dissertation)
- No more than 15 semester hours of CHEM 7930 (Directed Individual Study)

A Plan of Study for the M.S. degree must meet the following requirements:

- At least 30 semester hours total
- At least 7 formal graded courses (not CHEM 7750 or CHEM 7930)
- At least 4 semester hours of CHEM 7950 (Seminar)
- At least 1 semester hour of CHEM 7750 (Formal Presentations)
- At least 4 semester hours of CHEM 7990 (Research and Thesis)

Given the wide latitude afforded students and Research Advisors in composing the Plan of Study, it is imperative that the Plan of Study be approved by the Advisory Committee and filed with the Graduate Program Officer by no later than the end of a student's first year in the program. In a student's first year, no courses outside the CHEM or BCHE listings are permitted without the written consent of the student's Research Advisor, and following Plan of Study approval, only courses listed in the Plan of Study may be taken. The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry will not endorse tuition waivers for courses that are not in a student's Plan of Study. Likewise, within the first year, the Department will only endorse tuition waivers for courses that have been approved by the Research Advisor and/or Graduate Program Officer. In the event that adjustments to the Plan of Study become necessary (e.g., change of research direction, availability of a new course, etc.), an amendment can be undertaken through consultation with your Research Advisor and Advisory Committee and formalized by submitting a completed [Revision to Existing Plan of Study Form](#). In the event that a change in Advisory Committee becomes necessary an amendment can be undertaken with the Research Advisor, Graduate Program Officer, and Department Chair and formalized by submitting a completed [Revision to Existing Plan of Study Form](#) to the Graduate Program Officer and the Graduate School.

H. Grade Requirements

M.S. and Ph.D. students are expected to maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale). This is the standard established by the Graduate School. Procedures for academic probation and academic suspension will be carried out as prescribed by the Graduate School. Grades below "C" will not be accepted for graduate credit. For more details, see the Graduate School's academic probation and suspension policy [here](#).

I. Seminar Requirements

Ph.D. students are required to take two semesters of Formal Presentations in Modern Chemistry (CHEM 7750). The primary requirement of this course is to present a formal seminar for a grade. M.S. students are required to take one semester of CHEM 7750. Ph.D. and Masters students are also required to give a final seminar on their dissertation or thesis research, respectively. The final seminar will be presented to the entire Department immediately before the Final Oral Dissertation or Thesis Defense.

Ph.D. students are also required to register for one hour of seminar credit (CHEM 7950) in each of six semesters prior to graduation. M.S. students are required to register for one hour of seminar credit in each of four semesters prior to graduation. Students will be graded on attendance at both departmental colloquia and divisional seminars.

J. Requirements and Expectations for Graduate Teaching Assistants

The vast majority of incoming Ph.D. and M.S. students receive support in their first year through a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA). In subsequent years and at the discretion of the Research Advisor, a student may be put on a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA), provided that extramural funds are available. Students without GRAs must serve as GTAs in order to receive support through the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. GTAs are typically required to help teach undergraduate laboratory or lecture courses, as well as help with grading and proctoring undergraduate lecture courses as part of grading teams.

The relative proportion of support a student will receive by GTA and GRA will be determined by the Research Advisor prior to the start of each semester. However, the teaching, grading, and proctoring assignments are made by the Director of Instructional and Research Labs (DIRL) in consultation with the lab managers. The assignments are based on expected hours worked, not on the number of lab sections and grading teams, as not all lab sections are equal in work load. A full TA load is considered to be 20 hours of work per week. A GTA's assignment generally consists of a combination of any number of lab or lecture sections and grading teams, adding up to the total number of expected hours worked.

GTAs report directly to the lab manager(s) or instructor(s) in charge of the labs/classes to which they are assigned.

As a GTA, students are required to meet the following expectations. Failure to meet these expectations could lead to the student losing their teaching assistantship.

1. **Provide an accurate availability schedule.** GTAs will be asked to fill out a “TA Preference and Availability Form” prior to each semester. GTAs must provide the DIRT with their upcoming schedule that includes **ALL** classes, seminars, and group meetings that they will be attending.
2. **Attend GTA training sessions, and be prepared to teach the lab/class.** Safety is the number one priority in the labs. If GTAs are unprepared or unfamiliar with the experiments, this creates risks to the safety of the undergraduate students and the GTA(s).
3. **Arrive on time to teach.** GTAs should arrive at least 5-10 minutes prior to the start of lab/class so that they will be ready to teach when their students arrive.
4. **Inform the lab manager/instructor at the earliest possible time of an inability to cover a teaching, grading, or proctoring assignment.** Unexcused absences are not permitted. The GTA should make arrangements with their lab manager/instructor to ensure that the missed assignment is covered.
5. **Wear appropriate lab attire and personal protective equipment (PPE).** Proper lab attire means long pants, sleeved shirts, and closed-toed shoes. No shorts/skirts/leggings or open-toed shoes will be allowed. Long hair should be tied back. Wear appropriate PPE, such as safety glasses and a lab coat. Set a good example and enforce safe laboratory practices.
6. **Actively help the students.** GTAs should walk around to check on their students to make sure they are doing things correctly, to answer their questions, provide explanations, and help them with their experiments.
7. **Be attentive.** GTAs should not be engaged in other activities (e.g., using a phone or laptop) while they are teaching. A GTA’s main responsibilities are to teach the students and to ensure that they are being safe.
8. **Proctor and grade.** GTAs should attend any and all grading team meetings, arrive on time to proctor and grade, and inform the instructor at the earliest possible time of an inability to cover a proctoring or grading assignment. GTAs should make arrangements with the instructor to ensure that the missed assignment is covered.

Graduate students will be evaluated by their lab managers/instructors for each semester they serve as GTAs. The evaluations will be used by the Department Chair in the student’s annual review and will also be submitted to the Graduate School. If a lab manager/instructor finds that a GTA is not meeting expectations, there will be progressive disciplinary consequences:

1. The student will receive up to three verbal warnings. Serious violations (e.g., safety, insubordination, etc.) will result in an immediate formal written warning and could lead to the termination of the student’s TA position.
2. If the student’s performance does not improve after verbal warnings, a formal written warning will be recorded, sent to the Department Chair, and placed in the student’s file with the Graduate Program Officer.
3. A final written warning will be given before a decision is made about whether or not to terminate the student’s TA position.

If a student's TA position is terminated, they will no longer receive financial support through the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and they will lose their [tuition waiver](#).

K. Time Limit

Ph.D. students will be allowed a maximum of five years on GTA support, while M.S. students will be allowed a maximum of three years on GTA support. Note that M.S. students have four years to complete their thesis and graduate, or change to Ph.D. status – they will be allowed to receive a teaching assistantship during their fourth year only if they have applied and have been accepted into the Ph.D. program prior to the start of their fourth year.

Exceptions to these rules can be granted by a majority vote of the Graduate Program Committee and approval of the Department Chair. In the event that the Department is in need of GTAs, students who have exceeded their GTA eligibility can be hired on a semester-by-semester basis without a special vote of the Graduate Program Committee.

Transition from the Masters program to Ph.D. Candidacy

Students who wish to make the transition from the Master's program to the Ph.D. program will need to pass the [General Doctoral Examination](#). This exam, which is required by the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, consists of a written component ([Research Plan](#)) and an oral component (oral defense). See below ([Section L](#)) for the written Research Plan requirements.

L. Research Plan Requirements

Ph.D. students are required to write a Research Plan and submit it to their Advisory Committee for evaluation and approval. An approved Research Plan fulfills the written component of the General Doctoral Examination. The Research Plan will be graded by the student's Advisory Committee on an Unsatisfactory/Satisfactory/Exceptional basis (see [Written Research Plan Approval Form](#) and its instructions for review procedures). To pass this written component of the General Doctoral Examination, a student's Research Plan must receive a grade of at least Satisfactory from no less than three fourths of the members of the Advisory Committee.

These are the minimum requirements for the Research Plan:

- The document shall be no fewer than 10 pages and no more than 20 pages. These page limits include figures, graphs, and tables, but they do not include the cover page, references, or evaluation page. Page margins are to be 1" on each side, and the text is to be double-spaced, 12-point font.
- The [Written Research Plan Evaluation Form](#) should be included as the document's last page.

- The Research Plan is to have the following sections. (Note: section page lengths are provided as a guide; individual Research Plans may vary).
 - Overview and Research Goals (1 – 3 pages)
 - Background and Significance (3 – 4 pages)
 - Preliminary Data (1 – 3 pages) – can be combined with Background and Significance
 - Experimental Plan (5 - 10 pages)
- Each Research Plan will be evaluated on the basis of two main criteria: *scientific content* and *writing quality*. Scientific content includes knowledge of the subject area (significance, background literature, etc.), research plan coherence, and technical expertise. Writing quality addresses the clarity of writing, the quality of figures, and the proper use of source material. Students are referred to the [Written Research Plan Evaluation Form](#) (see the Appendix) for additional details on each of these criteria.
- A research proposal written in the style of one submitted to an extramural agency (e.g., the Project Description of an NSF proposal) is an acceptable format for the Research Plan. The document must still meet the overall length/margin/font-size requirements above. It is the decision of the Research Advisor to require a student to produce a proposal-style Research Plan. When the Research Advisor sets specific requirements, he or she is to communicate in writing to the student and the Advisory Committee the specifics of the expected format (e.g., agency, sections, and other specific requirements not stipulated above).

Additional Guidelines:

- As with any research plan, preliminary data are desirable, and students are encouraged to engage in the research of their laboratories to the greatest extent possible upon joining a group. However, students, advisors, and committees should bear in mind that the purpose of the Research Plan is not to report large quantities of preliminary data. A satisfactory or exceptional plan can be produced with relatively few preliminary results. Given that the Department strongly recommends that the initial Research Plan be submitted within five semesters (including Summers) in the Ph.D. program (i.e., only four semesters in the laboratory), expectations for preliminary results should be scaled accordingly.
- Although students are permitted to consult with their Research Advisors during the preparation of their research plans, the Research Plan is to represent the ideas and writing of the student, not the advisor. Good models of student-advisor interaction in this context would be that of a proposal writer to a funding agency program officer, and the level of input from advisor to student similar to that of a manuscript's reviewer to its corresponding author.
- Plagiarism is a serious breach of scientific integrity. Passing off the work of others (your advisor, other scholars, and/or other students) as your own in the Research Plan is grounds for failure of the written component of the General Doctoral Examination.

If a Research Plan is judged to have passed the written component of the General Doctoral Examination (i.e., at least satisfactory from at least three fourths of the committee), the student,

in consultation with the Advisory Committee, will schedule the General Oral Examination. Students must fill out an [Oral \(General\) Examination Application Form](#) and submit it to the Graduate School. Note that the Graduate School requires one week between completion of the application and the time of the oral exam. If a Research Plan is judged unsatisfactory by more than one fourth of the Advisory Committee, a student may revise and resubmit the plan for reevaluation by the Advisory Committee. Provided the revision/reevaluation process can be completed within the time limit for achieving Ph.D. candidacy (see below), a student will have up to two opportunities to revise and resubmit the plan for reevaluation. If a revised Research Plan is judged to have passed, as above, the student will proceed to schedule the General Oral Examination.

If the third version of the Research Plan still receives an Unsatisfactory grade from more than one fourth of the Advisory Committee, the student will have failed the written component and will not proceed forward to the General Oral Examination. As such, the student will have failed the General Doctoral Examination and will not advance to Ph.D. candidacy. A student who fails to advance to candidacy may apply his or her research progress toward a Master's Thesis. What constitutes a complete Master's Thesis project shall be the determination of the Research Advisor and Advisory Committee. In terms of time limits for obtaining the Master's Degree, the starting point will be the semester of original matriculation into the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Time Limits

As stated above, a student may have up to two opportunities to revise and resubmit an unsatisfactory Research Plan for reconsideration by the Advisory Committee. However, it must be borne in mind that the deadline for achieving candidacy (i.e., passing both the written and oral components of the General Doctoral Exam) is the end of the seventh semester (including Summers) in the program. Students are advised to plan accordingly. It is strongly recommended that students write and submit a Research Plan within their fifth semester (including Summers) in the program.

M. Research and Thesis/Dissertation Requirements

The Ph.D. degree requires the student to write a dissertation based on original research on a significant problem in chemistry or biochemistry. Students are required to give their Advisory Committee at least fourteen days to review their dissertation. Upon approval by the Advisory Committee, the student can submit the approved draft of the dissertation to the Graduate School for assignment of an outside reader (University Reader). Upon approval by the Graduate School, students can then write up the final draft of the dissertation and arrange a date and time for the Final Seminar (see [Section I](#)), with the Final Oral Examination to follow immediately after. The successful defense of the written dissertation in front of the Advisory Committee fulfills the oral component of the Final Doctoral Examination. For more general information on dissertation requirements, refer to the Graduate School's [guide on thesis and dissertation requirements](#).

The M.S. degree requires the student to write a thesis based on original research carried out by the student. The thesis content must be approved by their Research Advisor and the rest of the Advisory Committee. Students are required to give their Advisory Committee at least fourteen days to review their thesis. Upon approval, students can then write up the final draft of their thesis and arrange a date and time for the Final Seminar, with the Final Oral Examination to follow immediately after. The successful defense of the written thesis in front of the Advisory Committee fulfills the oral component of the Master of Science Thesis Examination. For more general information on thesis requirements, refer to the Graduate School's [guide on thesis and dissertation requirements](#).

N. Summary of Examinations

All Ph.D. students must take the following examinations:

- 1. The General Doctoral Examination:** The General Doctoral Examination (also known as the “preliminary examination” or the “qualifying examination”) is required by the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. The exam, which should be completed by the end of the seventh semester (including Summers) of study, consists of two parts – written and oral. To fulfill the written part of the General Doctoral Examination, students must write up a Research Plan that is approved by their Advisory Committee (see [Section L](#) above). As a reminder, upon approval of the Research Plan, students must fill out an [Oral \(General\) Examination Application Form](#) and submit it to the Graduate School. To fulfill the oral part of the exam, students must successfully defend their Research Plan in front of their Advisory Committee. Students who fail to pass the General Doctoral Examination will be dropped from the Ph.D. program, but will be given the opportunity to write up the research work they have already completed and submit it in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the M.S. degree.
- 2. The Final Oral Examination:** Students may apply to take the Final Oral Examination once they have completed the first draft of their dissertation and their Advisory Committee has approved it. An application to take the Final Oral Examination must be made to the Graduate School by submitting a signed [“First Submission Approval Form”](#). Immediately preceding the Final Oral Examination, students are required to present the results of their dissertation in a departmental seminar (Final Seminar). The Final Oral Examination will include a defense of the dissertation, and may include an examination in their field of specialization. Re-examinations are usually not allowed – but if allowed, they must be approved by the Advisory Committee.

All M.S. students must take the following examination:

The Final Oral Examination: Students may apply to take the Final Oral Examination once they have completed the first draft of their thesis and their Advisory Committee has approved it. Immediately preceding the Final Oral Examination, students are required to present the results

of their thesis in a departmental seminar (Final Seminar). The Final Examination will consist of an oral defense of the student's thesis. Re-examinations are usually not allowed – but if allowed, they must be approved by the Advisory Committee.

3. GRADUATE TUITION FELLOWSHIPS

For students admitted before Fall 2014:

Alabama non-resident graduate assistants may receive an out-of-state tuition waiver if they are on at least a 0.25 FTE (at least 10 hours/week) graduate assistantship and are paid a minimum monthly stipend set each year by the Provost. The 0.33 FTE (at least 13 hours/week) assistantship provides for both. Such graduate assistants who have been on assistantship for at least two consecutive semesters will automatically have their out-of-state tuition waived for the next semester whether or not they are on assistantship that semester. The Graduate School provides in-state tuition fellowships for students on graduate teaching assistantships and graduate research assistantships for the first 80 hours of attempted work for a Ph.D. degree, and for the first 40 hours for a M.S. degree. If a student has been accepted into the Ph.D. program after being in the M.S. program, only a total of 80 hours of work will be eligible. To be eligible for a graduate tuition fellowship, the student must be on at least a 0.25 FTE graduate assistantship and must be paid a minimum monthly stipend set each year by the Provost. They must also maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.

For students admitted in Fall 2014 and later:

University-funded in-state tuition support will be limited to 110% of the number of hours required for a graduate degree. Exceptions to this limit can be provided with documentation of the academic need, and demonstration of good stewardship of the support already provided, with the approval of the Graduate Dean. The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry has been granted an exception that allows 75 hours for the Ph.D. degree. Tuition support will be provided for one of the following:

- One M.S. degree or recognized dual-degree M.S. program.
- One Ph.D. degree.
- One M.S. degree plus one Ph.D. degree within the same or complementary field.

University-funded full tuition support will only be provided to graduate assistants receiving a 0.33 or higher FTE (at least 13 hours/week) assistantship for each semester during the academic year. Those with 0.25-0.32 FTE (10 to under 13 hours/week) assistantships will receive 50% tuition support. Those with less than 0.25 FTE (less than 10 hours/week) will not be provided tuition support. Graduate students with at least 0.25 FTE assistantships will continue to be classified as in-state residents for the purposes of determining tuition charges. Graduate assistants who have received a 0.33 FTE or higher assistantship for both Fall and Spring semesters of a given academic year will receive tuition support during the corresponding Summer semester. For every two FTE on-campus graduate students within a college/school who received full-tuition support from

external sources (either self-funded or from external grants), the associated college/school is allowed to provide one 0.25 FTE graduate assistant with full tuition support for up to 110% of the hours required for that student's degree program.

Domestic Students Nearing Completion of Their Graduate Degree:

As a student nears completion of their graduate degree program, they may submit to the Graduate School the [GRAD7@@0/GRAD8@@0 Thesis/Dissertation Completion Registration Request](#) form to certify that they are considered full-time for financial aid qualification and for loan payback deferment purposes, even when they are enrolled in less than 9 hours per term. Students must submit this form to the Graduate School at least 12 days before the first day of classes.

International Students Nearing Completion of Their Graduate Degree:

As a student nears completion of their graduate degree program, they may submit to the Graduate School the [Full Course of Study Gold Form](#) to certify their full-time status as a student for immigration purposes. To be considered full-time, graduate students holding an F-1 or J-1 visa must be enrolled in at least 9 hours per term. To qualify for certification, a graduate student must have completed all of the formal course work in their Plan of Study and must be engaged in full-time research towards completion of their thesis/dissertation. As such, the Gold Form can only be used with course numbers CHEM 7750, CHEM 7950, CHEM 7990, and/or CHEM 8990. Students must register for at least one credit hour. The Gold Form is only valid for one semester, so in order to maintain full-time status, a new form must be submitted every semester (except for the summer term) where students will be enrolled in less than 9 hours. Students may not use this exemption for more than 4 semesters (M.S.) or 6 semesters (Ph.D.). Any exceptions to this rule will require a letter from the student's Research Advisor.

4. EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Each student's progress with regard to course work, research, teaching, professionalism, and professional development will be [evaluated](#) annually. The student will be given a copy of the evaluation. Students are expected to use this as an opportunity to discuss with their Advisory Committees their assessment of their own professional growth, as well as research or course opportunities they would find beneficial in their paths toward their degrees and their careers thereafter. Likewise, this is an opportunity for the Advisory Committee to provide feedback along similar lines, in addition to monitoring progress with respect to program milestones.

Doctoral Student/Candidate Annual Evaluation: Each Ph.D. student/candidate will be evaluated on an annual basis in a face-to-face meeting with the student/candidate's Research Advisor *and* Advisory Committee. The evaluation procedure shall be composed of three steps:

1. At least one week in advance of the annual evaluation meeting, the student/candidate will provide their Research Advisor and Advisory Committee with a brief report (not more

than two pages) summarizing the progress of the past year and putting forward the anticipated goals for the coming year.

2. The student/candidate, Research Advisor, and Advisory Committee will meet to discuss the report and provide feedback.
3. The Research Advisor will complete a [Doctoral Student/Candidate Annual Evaluation](#) form (see Appendix H), including the Advisory Committee's finding of satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress toward the degree and a summary of the committee's observations and recommendations. Upon completion, the Research Advisor will supply a copy of the evaluation to the student/candidate and the Graduate Program Officer. The Graduate Program Officer will furnish a copy of the evaluation to the Graduate School.

These annual evaluations must be turned in to the Graduate Program Officer by **September 1** of each year.

Teaching: Graduate Teaching Assistants will be [evaluated](#) by their Laboratory Managers and Instructors according to the expectations outlined in [Section J](#) (Requirements and Expectations of Graduate Teaching Assistants). GTAs will receive copies of these evaluations. The results of the evaluations will also be submitted to the Graduate School.

In cases where there is a noticeable lack of research progress, unsatisfactory teaching, unprofessionalism, or unsatisfactory professional development, the student's Advisory Committee and/or the Graduate Program Committee may request reports at the end of subsequent semesters. If there is continued, long-term lack of progress, unsatisfactory teaching, unprofessionalism, or unsatisfactory professional development, the student's Advisory Committee and/or the Graduate Program Committee may recommend termination of the student's teaching assistantship.

5. ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT GRADUATE PROGRAM

The graduate program is administered by the Graduate Program Committee. The Graduate Program Officer serves as the chair and as a continuing member of the Graduate Program Committee as well as the liaison to The Graduate School and advisor to the new graduate students.

The Chemistry & Biochemistry Department has four committees that include a graduate student representative: Graduate Program, Graduate Recruiting, Safety, and Seminar. Four graduate representatives elected by a popular vote of the current graduate students will serve a one-year term. Each representative will be assigned to one of the four committees by the Department Chair. If they choose to run and are elected a second time, a graduate student may serve a second term. A graduate student may serve up to, but not exceeding, two terms. To coincide with the annual assignment of Faculty to the committees, election of graduate student representatives is to be completed by June 1 of each year, with terms to commence at the beginning of the Fall semester that same year. In addition to participation in their respective committees, these

graduate student representatives will also act as liaisons between department leadership and the graduate students.

The primary role of a graduate student representative is to help foster better and more open communication between the Faculty and the graduate students. Their role is to observe, learn, and provide input from a graduate student's perspective. Graduate student representatives are not official committee members, and as such, should not be asked to perform any duties of the committees to which they are assigned.

6. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The [Office of International Programs](#) (OIP) is responsible for assisting international students with visa matters and other international student requirements. The International Student Advisor is located at the OIP in Foy Hall. The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry is particularly interested in the special policies listed below:

1. All international students whose native tongue is not English must score a minimum of 79 on the internet-based TOEFL, including a minimum score of 16 on each section of the exam (Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking) to be admitted to the Graduate School. Please note that requirements for International students to be eligible to receive GTA positions are more stringent (see [Section 7, item 4](#)).
2. All international students are required to have comprehensive medical insurance for themselves and their dependents while attending Auburn University. Auburn University automatically enrolls all international students and charges a modest fee.
3. A U.S. driver's license and personal liability insurance are required for the operation of any private vehicle in Alabama.
4. Off-campus employment is specifically prohibited during the first 12 months in F-1 student status. After one year, an F-1 student may apply to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for off-campus employment if he/she can demonstrate an economic necessity due to unforeseen circumstances arising subsequent to entering the U.S. The Department prohibits outside employment while on a full-time teaching assistantship or research assistantship (0.33 FTE or more for a semester, or 1.0 FTE for a year).
5. An F-1 student may accept employment at the institution which he/she is authorized to attend without prior approval of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This employment requires that the student is enrolled in a full course of study, and that the student is in good academic standing. On-campus employment is limited to a maximum of 20 hours per week. For students with less than a full-time GTA or GRA, employment outside the Department is allowed but not encouraged. Seeking employment outside the Department requires written permission from the student's Research Advisor and the Department Chair.

6. Any F-1 student who has completed one educational program and who desires to complete another educational program at the same level (e.g., a second M.S. degree) must apply for an extension of stay.

7. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Graduate students receiving Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) must accomplish the following as soon as possible after arriving on campus:

1. *International Students:* Complete application (in person) for a **Social Security Number** at the local [Social Security Administration](#) office.
2. Complete **Federal and State Income tax withholding information**. Forms will be available in the [Payroll Office](#).
3. Complete an [Auburn University Personal Data Form](#).
4. In order to be eligible for a GTA position, all graduate students whose native tongue is not English must achieve **one** of the following:
 - 1) A Bachelor's degree from a program whose language of instruction is English;
 - 2) A score of at least a 23 on the Speaking portion of the TOEFL;
 - 3) A score of at least a 7.0 on the Speaking portion of the IELTS;
 - 4) A score of at least a 50 on the on-campus ITEP test;¹
 - 5) A grade of Satisfactory in the INTL 1820 (Classroom Communication Skills for International Teaching Assistants) course;
 - 6) Registration and progress toward a grade of Satisfactory in INTL 1820.

8. TUTORING POLICIES

Graduate students are allowed to engage in tutoring. However, graduate students may not tutor undergraduate students who are taking classes/labs to which the graduate student has been assigned as a teaching assistant or proctor/grader. One mechanism graduate students can use to indicate their availability to tutor departmental courses is to sign up on the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry's "tutor list". This can be done in the Chemistry Building main office.

¹ The ITEP test is administered by the English as a Second Language (ESL) program during Graduate Student Orientation in the two weeks prior to the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester.

APPENDIX

CHECKLIST – DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY STUDENTS

Deadlines	Important Action Items
First Year 1 st week	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan a schedule of study for the first semester with the Graduate Program Officer (GPO) and register for courses.
First Year By end of 1 st semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Select a Research Advisor.
Each semester (See Graduate School Calendar)	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with your Research Advisor and register for courses before the beginning of each semester.
First Year Early in 2 nd semester	<input type="checkbox"/> In consultation with your Research Advisor, select a research Advisory Committee.
First Year End of 2 nd semester	<input type="checkbox"/> In consultation with your Research Advisor, submit a formal Plan of Study to your Advisory Committee and the GPO.
Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue working on completing course and credit hour requirements as defined by your approved Plan of Study.
Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Write up a Research Plan and submit it to your Advisory Committee for approval. An approved Research Plan fulfills the written component of the General Doctoral Examination.
Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Upon Research Plan approval, arrange with your Advisory Committee a mutually agreeable date/time for your General Oral Examination. Submit the " Oral (General) Examination Application Form " to the Graduate School. (Must be submitted at least one week before the date of the Oral Exam.)
Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Defend your Research Plan in front of your Advisory Committee. A successful defense fulfills the oral component of the General Doctoral Examination.

Continued on next page...

Deadlines	Important Action Items
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue working on completing course and credit hour requirements as defined by your approved Plan of Study.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete all course and credit hour requirements as defined by your approved Plan of Study.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete original research.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Write up a complete draft of your dissertation and submit it to your Advisory Committee for approval.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit signed “First Submission Approval Form” to the Graduate School.
Fourth Year + One term before you plan to graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply to graduate through AU Access (Graduation Application).
Fourth Year + The term you plan to graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit PDF of your dissertation to doctoral@auburn.edu for Format Check.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule your Final Oral Examination.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Defend your dissertation in front of your Advisory Committee and University Reader.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit signed Report on Final Oral Examination to the Graduate School.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit signed Electronic Thesis/Dissertation Final Approval Form to the Graduate School.
Fourth Year +	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit your dissertation on AUETD

CHECKLIST – MASTER OF SCIENCE STUDENTS

Deadlines	Important Action Items
First Year 1 st week	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan a schedule of study for the first semester with the Graduate Program Officer (GPO) and register for courses.
First Year By end of 1 st semester	<input type="checkbox"/> Select a Research Advisor.
Each semester (See Graduate School Calendar)	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with your Research Advisor and register for courses before the beginning of each semester.
First Year Early in 2 nd semester	<input type="checkbox"/> In consultation with your Research Advisor, select a research Advisory Committee.
First Year By end of 2 nd semester	<input type="checkbox"/> In consultation with your Research Advisor, submit a formal Plan of Study to your Advisory Committee and the GPO.
Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue working on completing course and credit hour requirements as defined by your approved Plan of Study.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete all course and credit hour requirements as defined by your approved Plan of Study.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete original research.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Write up a complete draft of your thesis and submit it to your Advisory Committee for approval. An approved written thesis fulfills the written component of the Master of Science Thesis Examination.

Continued on next page...

Deadlines	Important Action Items
Third Year One term before you plan to graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply to graduate through AU Access (Graduation Application).
Third Year The term you plan to graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit PDF of your thesis to thesis@auburn.edu for Format Check.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule your Final Oral Examination. The successful defense of your written thesis fulfills the oral component of the Master of Science Thesis Examination.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Defend your thesis in front of your Advisory Committee.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit signed Thesis Master's Final Examination Form to the Graduate School.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit signed Electronic Thesis/Dissertation Final Approval Form to the Graduate School.
Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit your dissertation on AUETD

Graduate Research Advisory Committee Selection Form
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Student Name: _____

Degree: Ph.D. M.S.

Advisory Committee Selection

	Printed Name	Signature
Research Advisor/ Committee Chair		
Committee Member		
Committee Member		
Committee Member		

Student Signature

Date

Department Chair Signature

Date



AUBURN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

REVISION TO EXISTING PLAN OF STUDY

Date _____

Student's Full Name _____ ID Number _____

This form is to be used when requesting substitutions, additions, or deletions for courses or committee members on a previously-existing and approved PLAN OF STUDY. Submit two signed copies to the Graduate School. If more than three changes are needed, please submit two completely new "Proposed Plan of Study" forms.

CHANGE IN COURSES

Removed Course Numbers	Removed Course Names	Credit Hours		Added or Substituted Course Numbers	Added or Substituted Course Names	Credit Hours

CHANGE IN COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Note: Current members to be removed should sign to indicate agreement.

Member(s) to be Removed

Name

Name

Member(s) to be Added

Name

Name

Member(s) to be Removed

Signature

Signature

Member(s) to be Added

Signature

Signature

Approved by:

Note: The committee chair and department head or chair, in signing, certify that all committee members are in agreement.

Committee Chair Name

Committee Chair Signature

Department Head/Chair Name

Department Head/Chair Signature

Dean , Graduate School

Date

Written Research Plan Approval Form Guidelines

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

A written Research Plan is required by each Ph.D. student to fulfill the written component of his or her General Doctoral Exam. According to the Graduate Student Handbook, upon receipt of a written Research Plan, each member of a graduate student's Advisory Committee is to evaluate the document and return a grade of *Exceptional*, *Satisfactory*, or *Unsatisfactory*. At least a three-fourths majority of the committee must rate the Research Plan as *Satisfactory* or better in order to proceed on to the oral component of the General Doctoral Exam. For the purposes of this form, the grades *E*, *S*, and *U* are taken to mean the following:

E = Exceptional: The Research Plan is excellent in its conception and writing, and it fulfills the required written component of the Ph.D. qualifying exam. The student is free to proceed with scheduling the oral examination component of the General Doctoral Examination.

S = Satisfactory: The Research Plan is of sufficient quality to pass the written requirement of the General Doctoral Exam; the student is free to proceed to the oral component of the exam. An Advisory Committee member may have critiques or concerns with the Research Plan that do not preclude its rating as *Satisfactory*. These can be addressed during the oral exam.

U = Unsatisfactory: The Research Plan is of insufficient quality to pass the written requirement of the General Doctoral Examination. A revised Research Plan addressing the critiques of the members of the Advisory Committee is required before the student can proceed to the oral exam.

A student who receives a grade of *U* from two or more Advisory Committee members has two weeks to prepare and submit to the Advisory Committee a revised Research Plan which addresses the critiques raised by the committee members. A student who receives a grade of *U* on the revised Research Plan from two or more committee members will have two weeks to submit a third and final version of the Research Plan. If the third version receives a grade of *U* from two or more committee members, the student will be deemed to have failed the written component of the Ph.D. qualifying exam and will not proceed on to the oral component of the exam.

Instructions to the Student: 1) Send your research plan to each committee member and the Graduate Program Officer as an e-mail attachment; make sure that the Written Research Plan Evaluation Form is appended to the last page of your research plan. 2) For your advisor, fill out the Written Research Plan Approval Form (see the following page) by checking which draft of the proposal is being evaluated, and filling in the spaces indicated with your name, and the names of your committee members. In our department, only four committee members (including your Research Advisor) are required. Space is provided for additional committee members if it applies in your particular case. If not, simply fill in N/A for the name. Sign and date the form and give it to your Research Advisor.

Instructions to the Committee Member: Two weeks are given for research plan review. Use the Written Research Plan Evaluation Form appended to the end of the Research Plan to score the document and provide constructive comments to improve the Research Plan, particularly if a grade of *U* is going to be given. Upon completing your review, send your filled Written Research Plan Evaluation Form to your Research Advisor along with the overall grade (*E*, *S*, or *U*).

Instructions to the Research Advisor: Upon receipt of committee feedback, fill in the grade provided by each committee member and determine whether or not the student has passed the written component of the General Doctoral Exam (i.e., has an *S* or better from at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the committee). Compile the feedback of the Advisory Committee into a summary statement, and sign the Written Research Plan Approval Form. Arrange a meeting with the student to communicate the grade received and summarize the feedback from the committee, and in cases where a *U* has been assigned, provide advice for submitting an improved Research Plan. Turn in the signed Approval Form and the Research Plan Evaluation Form from each committee member to the GPO, and provide copies of the same for the student.

Written Research Plan Approval Form
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

This approval form accompanies the Research Plan prepared by _____,
submitted as fulfillment of the written requirement of the General Doctoral Examination.

This Research Plan represents (check one):

- The first submitted draft of the Research Plan
- A first revision of a previous unsatisfactory document
- A second revision of a previous unsatisfactory document

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Committee Member	Grade		
	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>U</i>
<i>research advisor</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>committee member #2</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>committee member #3</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>committee member #4</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>committee member #5</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>committee member #6</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Summary statement:

Research Advisor Signature _____ Date: _____

Written Research Plan Evaluation

Research Plan Submitted by:
Research Plan Evaluated by:

Date:

Please rank the following items on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is poorest and 5 is best.

Scientific Content

- _____ 1. **Knowledge of subject/background/significance.** To what extent does the writer exhibit knowledge of the field pertaining to and forming the foundation of the research plan? Is the expertise of the writer undermined by misstatements, factual errors, or omission of important details? To what extent does the writer adequately communicate the significance of the research to be undertaken? Scientific significance may be expressed in terms of actual or potential applications to technology *and/or* contributions to understanding fundamental principles or phenomena in nature.
- _____ 2. **Research Plan Coherence.** To what extent does the research plan have clear goals and objectives? Does the introductory material logically lead to the research problem to be addressed? Are the basis and rationale for the experimental approach clear?
- _____ 3. **Technical Expertise.** To what extent are the methods appropriate to the research questions/problems being addressed? Does the writer exhibit a sufficient grasp of the methodology to be used and what/how it would contribute to the research plan?

Writing Quality

- _____ 4. **Clarity of Writing.** Is the research plan well organized? Are sections, paragraphs, and sentences clearly written and free of ambiguity? Does the document conform to the page limits prescribed by the Graduate Handbook? To what extent does the writer use proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, etc.?
- _____ 5. **Quality of Figures.** Are the figures and schemes used by the writer legible, clearly described, and appropriately called out in the text? To what extent do the figures/schemes used by the author help to effectively communicate the key points of the research plan?
- _____ 6. **Citations and use of source material.** Does the writer appropriately and correctly cite the sources used to support the research plan? Does the writer misattribute or fail to attribute the published work of others relevant to the research plan?

Summary score

- _____ 7. Provide an overall rating of the Written Research Plan.

Comments for improvement:

Summary Score	Grade
Score \geq 4	<i>E</i>
$2 \leq$ Score $<$ 4	<i>S</i>
Score $<$ 2	<i>U</i>

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Doctoral Student/Candidate Annual Evaluation Form
(Due September 1 of each year)

Part I: To be completed by the student/candidate

1. Academic Year:
2. Student Name:
3. Semester and year matriculated (i.e., joined the program):
4. Advisory Committee Members:

Part II: To be completed by the Research Advisor in consultation with the Advisory Committee

5. Over the last year, which semesters was this student supported on RA?
Fall Spring Summer
6. This student has submitted a Plan of Study (Y/N):
7. This student has passed the General Doctoral Examination (Y/N):
 - a. If yes, what semester and year is anticipated to defend the dissertation:
 - b. If no, what semester and year is anticipated for the oral candidacy exam:
8. On a scale of 1-5, rate this student's progress toward the Ph.D.:
(For the purposes of this review, a score ≥ 3.0 will constitute satisfactory, and a score < 3.0 will constitute unsatisfactory.)
9. Comments:
(Under Recommendations, please provide specific corrective action, especially if an unsatisfactory rating is being given.)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Recommendations:



GRADUATE SCHOOL

GRAD 7@@0/8@@0 Thesis/Dissertation Completion Registration Request

GRAD7@@0 and GRAD8@@0 are used to certify certain students as full-time for financial aid qualification and for loan payback deferment without requiring registration for a

minimum of 9 hours. This form must be returned to the Graduate School for action. For proper financial aid dispersal, initiation, and deferment, students must submit this completed form to the Graduate School no later than 12 days prior to the first class day of the following semester.

Instructions: Please fill out this form and print the page and have your Major Professor sign it OR save the form and email it to your Major Professor to obtain an Electronic Signature. Once the form is completed, submit it to the Graduate School in Hargis Hall between 7:45 A.M. and 4:45 P.M., M-F.

Student Name: _____ Banner ID: _____

Curriculum (Please list your Degree Program): _____

Degree Level: _____ Master's _____ EdS _____ PhD

Term Requesting: _____

REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY

- _____ 1. Must be a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident
- _____ 2. Must be engaged full time in the completion of thesis/dissertation research or in the preparation of the thesis/dissertation
- _____ 3. Must be concurrently enrolled in 7910/6, 7920/6, 7950/6, 7980, 7990, 8910, 8920, 8940, 8950, 8980 or 8990 for a minimum of 1 credit hour
- _____ 4. Must be making significant progress towards the degree
- _____ 5. Must make minimal use of the University facilities and resources

CERTIFICATION

By signing below, the student and Major Professor certify the eligibility requirements have been met.

Student

Date

Major Professor

Date

Auburn University
Office of International Programs

228 Foy Hall | Auburn University, AL 36849-5150 | E-mail: intledu@auburn.edu | Phone: (334) 844-5001 | Fax: (334) 844-4983

FULL COURSE OF STUDY GOLD FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Revised: March 2014

As part of maintaining a valid immigration status, F-1/J-1 students must attend school full-time. To be considered full time, F-1/J-1 undergraduate students must be enrolled for at least 12 hours per semester, and graduate students must be enrolled for at least 9 hours per semester. Students in the Intensive English Program (IEP) must be enrolled in at least 12 clock hours of class per week. A student may be exempt from being full time in three circumstances: 1) during the summer, if summer is not the student's first semester at Auburn University, 2) if the student has been authorized to *drop below a full course of study*, 3) *be certified as pursuing a full course of study*.

Certification for Full Course of Study

Full course of study can be defined in two ways:

1. Full time enrollment (9 credit hours for graduate students and 12 credit hours for undergraduate students per semester).
2. Normal progress toward the attainment of a specific educational or professional objective (BA, MA, Ph.D., Certificate, etc.) according to the plan of study approved by the faculty advisory committee and Graduate School.

Acceptable Conditions for Certification of Full Course of Study:

1. **Concurrent enrollment** at Auburn and another institution of higher education pre-approved by academic units and by OIP. Enrollment in both schools must amount to a full time course of study.
2. **Student is/will be on Part Time/Full Time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Pre-Completion Academic Training (AT)** approved by OIP. Students engaging in full time CPT must be enrolled in an internship course or other course for which student will receive credit for his/her Curricular Practical Training (minimum of 1 credit). Work may not begin prior to authorization by OIP.
3. **Student is/will be on Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)** approved by OIP and USCIS. Graduate students engaging in full-time pre-completion OPT must be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour. Work may not begin until EAD card is received from USCIS.
4. **GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY: Student has completed all the plan of study course work or all available required course work** and is engaged in full-time research towards completion of his/her thesis/dissertation/ final project. Students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour of research or appropriate alternative as recommended by the graduate advisor. Graduate students who will be graduating this term, should also use this form.
5. **GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY:** When specific degree programs have set a full course load to be less than 9 hours.

NOTE: Students may use this exemption for no more than 4 semesters (Master's) or 6 semesters (Ph.D). Any exceptions to this rule will require a letter from your Academic Advisor or major professor..

Each form is only valid for one semester, after which time students must return to full time enrollment the following semester or submit a new form authorizing them to be less than full time. This form should not be submitted during the summer term, since most students are not required to be enrolled or to be full time.

NOTE: Submission of the Full Course of Study form in and of itself does not constitute approval. It is only valid if you qualify for one of the conditions outlined in the instructions for the forms, and are approved by OIP staff.

FULL COURSE OF STUDY GOLD FORM

Auburn University, Office of International Programs *Revised March 2014*

Date Stamp

APPLICATION DEADLINE: If enrolling for less than full time this document must be submitted by the 8th class day of the term in which you are requesting. If dropping a course during the semester this form must be completed PRIOR to dropping any hours. **Students who fail to obtain proper authorization from OIP before dropping below full time will be out of status.**

Last Name (print): _____, First Name (print): _____
Banner ID: _____ Visa Status: F-1 J-1
SEVIS ID: _____ Email address: _____
Department: _____ Level of study: Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D., Other _____
(Grad students only) I am pursuing: ___Thesis/Dissertation Option ___Non-Thesis/Dissertation Option
Program start date (current degree): _____ Expected date of completion: _____

I am requesting to drop below a full course of study for FALL, SPRING, SUMMER* Semester, _____ (year)

During the term requested, I will carry _____ credit hours Advisor's Email: _____

Select the reason you are requesting to be certified as pursuing a full course of study. Attach any required documentation to this form and submit it to OIP.

- 1. **Concurrent enrollment** at Auburn and another institution of higher education as pre-approved by AU academic units and OIP or, OIP special enrollment authorization. Concurrent/Special enrollment must be pre- approved before applying for certification for full course of study.
- 2. **Student is/will be on** **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** or **Academic Training (AT)**. Student will be enrolled in _____ credit hours while on CPT/AT this semester.
- 3. **Student is/will be on Pre-Completion OPT** approved by his/her Academic Advisor, OIP and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Student will be enrolled in _____ credit hours while on OPT this semester.
- 4. (Graduate students only) Student has **completed all the plan of study course work or all available required course work** and is engaged in full-time research towards completion of his/her thesis/dissertation/final project. Graduate students who will be graduating this term, should also use this form.
- 5. (Graduate students only) **When specific degree programs have set a full course load to be less than 9 hours.** Student must attach a current copy of plan of study. Plan of study does not have to be signed or approved.

I hereby request that the above named student be considered to be pursuing a full course of study this semester for the reason outlined above. I have read the instructions and understand the conditions by which I am making this request. If required, I have attached a letter with additional explanation.

Department Chair's Signature

Printed Name

Date

Academic Advisor's Signature

Printed Name

Date

Student's Signature

Printed Name

Date

Seminar Evaluation Form

Seminar given by:

Date:

Please rank the following items on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is poorest and 5 is best.

1. **Scientific significance.** To what extent did the presenter adequately communicate the significance of the research reported? Scientific significance may be expressed in terms of actual or potential applications to technology *and/or* contributions to understanding fundamental principles or phenomena in nature. _____
2. **Introduction.** To what extent was sufficient background/introductory material presented? Were you able to understand the material presented? Did the introductory material logically lead to a central hypothesis or statement of the research problem to be addressed? Was the basis and rationale for the experimental approach clear? _____
3. **Knowledge of subject.** To what extent did the speaker exhibit a good grasp of the material presented? Was the expertise of the presenter undermined by misstatements, factual errors, or omission of important details? What level of questions was the speaker able to field from the audience? _____
4. **Clarity of presentation.** To what extent did the presenter pass on his or her knowledge of the subject to the audience? Were the experiments and the data derived from them clearly described? Was superfluous information kept to a minimum? With what level of confidence could you give a brief summary of the talk to a peer unable to attend the talk? _____
5. **Quality of visual aids.** To what extent did the speaker make effective use of visual aids? Were all aspects of each slide clearly visible (images, annotation, text, etc.)? Was the text used necessary and succinct? Was the large majority of information available on each slide used, or were there large amounts of superfluous data? Were images clear and sharp or were they highly pixelated and/or distorted? Were the slides consistent (same size and type of fonts used throughout, side-by-side graphs/images sized appropriately, etc.)? Did the speaker undermine his or her credibility by using distracting “cute” clipart, animations, and/or sound effects? Was the talk distracted by *foreseeable* technological glitches? _____
6. **Quality of presentation.** Was the presentation logically organized? Were the experiments and the data obtained from them presented in a logical manner? Were conclusions logical and supported by the data? Was a rational summary and conclusion presented at the end of the seminar? Did the speaker exhibit good public speaking form (i.e., clearly audible voice, well-articulated words and phrasing, eye contact, poise and confidence, absence of awkward “uhms” and “ahs”, effective and *safe* use of laser pointer). _____
7. **Summary score.** Provide an overall rating for the presentation. A good way to think about this is in terms of a seminar given as part of a job interview. If you were an employer and the speaker was a job applicant, rank your likelihood of hiring him or her on the basis of this presentation. (In scientific careers, this is not at all out of the realm of possibility). _____

Additional constructive comments for the speaker on his/her presentation:

Written Thesis/Dissertation Evaluation Form

Thesis/Dissertation Submitted by:

Date:

Thesis/Dissertation Evaluated by:

Please rank the following items on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is poorest and 5 is best.

Scientific Content

- _____ 1. **Knowledge of subject/background/significance.** To what extent does the writer exhibit knowledge of the field pertaining to and forming the foundation of the research plan? Is the expertise of the writer undermined by misstatements, factual errors, or omission of important details? To what extent does the writer adequately communicate the significance of the research to be undertaken? Scientific significance may be expressed in terms of actual or potential applications to technology *and/or* contributions to understanding fundamental principles or phenomena in nature.
- _____ 2. **Research Plan Coherence.** To what extent does the research plan have clear goals and objectives? Does the introductory material logically lead to the research problem to be addressed? Are the basis and rationale for the experimental approach clear?
- _____ 3. **Technical Expertise.** To what extent are the methods appropriate to the research questions/problems being addressed? Does the writer exhibit a sufficient grasp of the methodology to be used and what/how it would contribute to the research plan?

Writing Quality

- _____ 4. **Clarity of Writing.** Is the research plan well organized? Are sections, paragraphs, and sentences clearly written and free of ambiguity? Does the document conform to the page limits prescribed by the Graduate Handbook? To what extent does the writer use proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, etc.?
- _____ 5. **Quality of Figures.** Are the figures and schemes used by the writer legible, clearly described, and appropriately called out in the text? To what extent do the figures/schemes used by the author help to effectively communicate the key points of the research plan?
- _____ 6. **Citations and use of source material.** Does the writer appropriately and correctly cite the sources used to support the research plan? Does the writer misattribute or fail to attribute the published work of others relevant to the research plan?

Summary score

- _____ 7. Provide an overall rating of the Written Thesis/Dissertation.

Comments for improvement:

Final Defense Seminar Evaluation Form

Presentation given by:

Date:

Please rank the following items on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is poorest and 5 is best.

1. **Scientific significance.** To what extent did the presenter adequately communicate the significance of the research reported? Scientific significance may be expressed in terms of actual or potential applications to technology *and/or* contributions to understanding fundamental principles or phenomena in nature. _____
2. **Introduction.** To what extent was sufficient background/introductory material presented? Were you able to understand the material presented? Did the introductory material logically lead to a central hypothesis or statement of the research problem to be addressed? Was the basis and rationale for the experimental approach clear? _____
3. **Knowledge of subject.** To what extent did the speaker exhibit a good grasp of the material presented? Was the expertise of the presenter undermined by misstatements, factual errors, or omission of important details? What level of questions was the speaker able to field from the audience? _____
4. **Clarity of presentation.** To what extent did the presenter pass on his or her knowledge of the subject to the audience? Were the experiments and the data derived from them clearly described? Was superfluous information kept to a minimum? With what level of confidence could you give a brief summary of the talk to a peer unable to attend the talk? _____
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6. **Quality of presentation.** Was the presentation logically organized? Were the experiments and the data obtained from them presented in a logical manner? Were conclusions logical and supported by the data? Was a rational summary and conclusion presented at the end of the seminar? Did the speaker exhibit good public speaking form (i.e., clearly audible voice, well-articulated words and phrasing, eye contact, poise and confidence, absence of awkward “uhms” and “ahs”, effective and *safe* use of laser pointer). _____
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Additional constructive comments for the speaker on his/her presentation: