Supplement

Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS)
Graduate Program

Handbook of Policies and Procedures
Supplement for the Infection, Inflammation, & Immunity Discipline
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Infection, Inflammation & Immunity (III) Discipline
Student Guidelines and Procedures - III Discipline-Specific Supplement

The following is an III Discipline-specific supplement to the IBMS Handbook of Policies and Procedures; the Handbook should be consulted for in-depth explanations of most programmatic policies and procedures.

Although there are some “discipline-specific” expectations, the III Discipline continues to promote integration and collaboration with other IBMS disciplines, and to support the mission and expectations of the IBMS Graduate Program, and in no way contradicts the policies of the Program.

- **Discipline Membership and Organization**

The Infection, Inflammation & Immunity Discipline is composed of IBMS Graduate Faculty members who share academic and research interests in immunology, infectious disease, and certain immunopathologies associated with autoimmunity, allergy, and cancer. These faculty members have officially declared an affiliation with the III Discipline, but may also have affiliations with other IBMS disciplines. Furthermore, although there is no direct administrative connection between the III Discipline of the IBMS Graduate Program and any specific UT Health SA department, strong administrative relationships exist with the Department of Microbiology, Immunology, & Molecular Genetics.

The internal organization and function of the IBMS disciplines are described in Supplements II and III of the IBMS Handbook of Policies and Procedures. Briefly, the III Discipline has a Discipline Executive Committee (DEC); the III Discipline Director (DD) is chair of the DEC and is appointed by the IBMS COGS and serves as the administrative head of the discipline and its representative on the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS). The DD serves as Student Advisor for all students who enter the III Discipline. Further information regarding the rights and responsibilities of the III Discipline faculty members, as well as the internal organization of the III Discipline, can be found in the parent Handbook of the IBMS program.

**Discipline Academic Coordinator** – The III Discipline Director is aided in the implementation of discipline policies and procedures by an Discipline Coordinator. The Coordinator will monitor and maintain the day-to-day operations of the III Discipline, and will carry out necessary actions of the DD and the DEC. The discipline Coordinator will serve as a member of the IBMS Council of Discipline Coordinators.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE III DISCIPLINE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- Provide III Discipline students with advice and counsel to ensure the most effective and efficient strategies for advancing steadily through the IBMS Graduate Program and satisfying program requirements.

- Create the III Discipline-specific portion of the student’s curriculum and Plan of Study.

- Monitor all aspects of III student academic progress and standing in the IBMS Graduate Program.

- Establish research committee meeting schedules and reporting mechanisms that guarantee timely evaluation of each III student’s research progress (minimum of one committee meeting per semester).

- Provide processes, consistent with policies and expectations of the IBMS COGS, for seeking approval for III student research committee memberships, research proposals and dissertation defenses.

- Mediate disputes between III students and their Dissertation Mentors/research advisory committees.
• Student Progression and Sequential Procedures of the III Discipline

It is the responsibility of each III student to adhere to the timeline dictated by the plan of study of the III Discipline and to submit all documentation required to verify appropriate academic progress in the IBMS Graduate Program. A delay in the progression described below could result in a student receiving a grade of unsatisfactory (“U”) for research/academic progress, and possibly recommendations for dismissal from the program. The executive committee of the III Discipline may consider a temporary delay due to extenuating circumstances.

The following describes the expectations and requirements of all students enrolled in the III Discipline Plan of Study. These requirements are based on the general guidelines stated in the IBMS Handbook of Policies and Procedures. Although these minimal expectations are provided as a guide to students and faculty, it is understood that one of the strengths of the IBMS Graduate Program is its flexibility and adaptability with regard to the needs of individual students.

A. Compact and Milestone Agreements Between Graduate Students and Their Dissertation Mentors

By the end of the Year 1 Spring semester and annually thereafter, a formal meeting and discussion between a student and his/her Dissertation Mentor is expected in order to ensure the integrity of the set of guiding principles and milestones that are intended to promote and support a positive mentoring relationship. Official forms for submitting Student-Mentor Compacts and Milestones Agreements can be obtained on the IMPACT website. Examples are shown in the IBMS Handbook of Policies and Procedures.

Student-Mentor Compact. For Ph.D. students, this meeting will be documented by the signing and official filing of the Student-Mentor Compact (official form submitted via the IMPACT website). Although the Compact is not a legally binding contract, with their signatures, both the student and the mentor confirm that all topics listed in the Compact have been discussed and that they are committed to uphold the principles agreed upon. The signed form is to be reviewed by the III DEC and then filed in the office of the III Discipline Academic Coordinator.

Milestones Agreement. In addition to the Student-Mentor Compact, and also to be completed by the end of the student’s Year 1 Spring semester, a student is expected to review/discuss with the Dissertation Mentor the official III Milestones Agreement (official form posted submitted via the IMPACT website; the signed form also to be filed in the office of the III Discipline Coordinator). This document is provided for the purpose of confirming that a student and the student’s Dissertation Mentor have been clearly informed that certain programmatic milestones are expected prior to receiving the Ph.D. degree and that there is an expected timeline to complete these milestones. That is, a student is expected to reach particular milestones within a specified time period in order to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress through the Program. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress may result in a student losing funding, being placed on academic probation, or dismissal from the program.

B. III Discipline Plan of Study and Timeline

Full-time student status requires class enrollment of 12.0 SCH per semester. Prior to graduation, every student must have enrolled in a minimum of 72.0 total SCH. It is expected that students will graduate with no more than 130 SCH.

The III Discipline has developed, in consultation with the IBMS Curriculum Committee, a Plan of Study and timeline for its Ph.D. students. The Plan has been reviewed and approved by the COGS and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs of the GSBS. In addition, a modified Plan of Study is provided to dual-degree students (i.e., MD PhD; DDS PhD).

Suggested Timeline for Ph.D. Students:

Year 1 Fall semester: All students will complete the common core courses of the IBMS Graduate Program (IBMS 5000 Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences; TSCI 5070 Responsible Conduct Of Patient-Oriented Clinical
By the end of the Fall semester of Year 1, each student will 1) select a permanent dissertation mentor; and 2) select a particular IBMS discipline and its Plan of Study.

**Year 1 Spring semester:** Beginning in the Year 1 Spring semester, it is crucial that students maintain close communication with the III Discipline Coordinator in order to remain aware of required coursework and other discipline-specific expectations. The typical III Discipline Plan of Study will include a mixture of IBMS required courses (e.g., CSBL 5095 Experimental Design and Analysis, IBMS 6090-III Seminar and IBMS 6097-III Research, and IBMS 7010-III Journal Club/Student Presentations) and other discipline-specific courses.

At the end of a student’s Year 1 Spring semester, in consultation with the student’s Dissertation Mentor, a Temporary Supervising Committee (TSC) should be identified whose two additional members are to assist the student in developing ideas for a dissertation research project. During the time prior to the formation of the student’s official Dissertation Committee, the TSC should meet as required to assess the student’s research progress and serve as the core of the student’s Qualifying Examination Committee.

**Year 2:** The Year 2 III Discipline Plan of Study includes a mixture of recurring IBMS courses and III-specific courses, with the Qualifying Examination (IBMS 7001-III) taking place in the Spring semester, followed immediately by Admission to Candidacy.

The purpose of the Qualifying Exam (QE) is to determine if students are prepared (i.e., are “qualified”) to successfully progress through the remaining years of their training. The QE is an S/U graded course in the IBMS curriculum (IBMS 7001-III), is required of all III-discipline Ph.D. students, and is to be completed during the Spring semester of a student’s second year in the IBMS program. Although all IBMS disciplines carry out their QEs with the same principles and goals, some details regarding the logistics of the process may differ slightly from discipline-to-discipline. Timing may vary slightly for MD/PhD or DDS/PhD students.

**Qualifying Examination Checklist:** The QE process is to be overseen by a 5-member QE faculty committee composed of members of the III Graduate Faculty. The Temporary Supervising Committee (previous section), minus the Dissertation Mentor, may serve as the 2-member core of the exam committee; a third member will be chosen by the student; the fourth and fifth members will be identified by a “random lottery” procedure to ensure diversity, objectivity and inclusiveness of faculty brought into the process. The following is a checklist of steps to be included in the QE process:

- Student obtains approval from III DEC for membership of QE committee and selection of QE committee chair using III Form 107 (assumes that chair and student have agreed to this arrangement)
- Student writes exam question in collaboration with chair of QE committee, with revisions until it is satisfactory to the exam committee chair.
  - The question must indicate the significance of the problem to be solved, and must contain a justified and testable hypothesis with a general description of appropriate strategies for testing the hypothesis. The QE committee chair must insure that III Discipline guidelines are followed. The question must: 1) NOT contain an explicit listing of specific aims; 2) NOT be derived directly from the student’s dissertation research project or from specific aims of the grants of student’s Supervising Professor; 3) NOT answered by any other investigator; and 4) be limited to one single-spaced page (not including 4-6 key references).
- Once written, QE chair distributes question to full QE committee for approval (revised to their satisfaction).
- Once question is approved by QE committee, exam chair sends question to Discipline Coordinator to distribute and seek approval by Discipline Executive Committee (revised to their satisfaction).
Once the Discipline Coordinator notifies QE committee chair that question is DEC-approved, QE committee chair notifies student to begin writing research proposal (student is given a max of 3 weeks to write proposal).

Prior to writing, QE chair should give student advice with regard to mechanics and written format of proposal. However, there should be no further discussion with the student about the scientific content of the proposal. The student should be reminded that no one should be consulted, thus guaranteeing that work is done exclusively by the student.

The proposal should be no more than 10 pages in length (single-spaced, not including title page, abstract, or references). A standard grant proposal format should be followed that includes the following sections: Title page; Abstract; Specific Aims; Background; Experimental Design and Strategies; References. Each aim in the design sections should begin with the rationale for choosing the methods and strategies used, and should include methods of analysis and validation of data.

Once a student submits a completed proposal to the QE chair, the chair should distribute it to the QE committee (encouraging them to return responses within a week).

Responses from QE committee members can be one of two: 1) The proposal satisfactorily describes experimentation that is likely to successfully address the hypothesis and aims of the proposed study. In this case, the oral defense should generally be scheduled within 1-2 weeks by the exam chair*; or 2) The proposal has been found to be "fatally flawed" in some way and is therefore likely to be indefensible. If this is the case, the student should get advice from the QE committee chair regarding the flaw, and is given 2 weeks max to revise it. No further revisions are allowed, and the oral defense must then be scheduled.

* The student’s Supervising Professor must also be invited to the oral exam.

Once a defense date is set and a room is reserved, QE chair should 1) notify the Discipline Coordinator so that discipline faculty can be invited to oral defense; and 2) send a copy of the proposal to Discipline Director and to the student’s Supervising Professor.

Mechanics of the QE oral defense of the research proposal:

- **Introductory presentation by student.** Prior to beginning questioning, the student is allowed 10 uninterrupted minutes (with slides) to present the main points of the proposal, including a brief review of specific aims.

- **QE generally lasts approximately 2 hours,** giving each member of the QE committee an opportunity to question the student about the content of the research proposal; questions may be asked that concern areas outside the immediate scope of the proposal, but should be related to the research area considered in the proposal. At the end of the questioning by the QE committee, other members of the graduate faculty in attendance may ask questions of the student.

- **At the end of the questioning period,** the student is dismissed from the room. It is customary at this time to solicit comments from non-committee graduate faculty members in attendance about the performance of the student; importantly, the student’s Supervising Professor should comment on the performance of the student during the QE in comparison to performance related to the student’s research/academic activities. All non-committee members are dismissed from the room prior to QE committee assessment of student performance.

- **Evaluation of student performance** will be reported using the official IBMS QE Reporting Form. The report forms will be submitted to the Discipline Director for filing and action. If QE oral defense performance is deemed unsatisfactory, and a second defense is allowed, the defense should be schedule within 60 days of the original defense date.
Occasionally, although the student adequately defends the proposal, the exam committee may identify a significant weakness in the student’s general knowledge. It is appropriate for the committee to recommend to the Discipline Director a means to rectify the weakness.

**Admission to Candidacy.** During the Year 2 Spring semester, and only after passing the Qualifying Examination, a student must seek, via the III DEC, approval by the IBMS COGS for Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. The approval process is accomplished using the electronic form found on the IMPACT website. Approval by COGS for Admission to Candidacy is based on 3 requirements:

1. Successful completion of the Qualifying Examination (evidenced by approval indicated by members of a student’s QE committee and a posting of “S” for the IBMS 7001-5III course).
2. A positive endorsement of the student's potential for performing successful independent research (indicated by the online approval of the Dissertation Mentor).
3. Verification of satisfactory academic standing, including the maintaining of a 3.0 grade point average in course work. Students cannot advance to candidacy while on academic probation.

When all criteria are met, IBMS COGS will recommend to the Dean of the GSBS that a student be admitted to candidacy. Admission to Candidacy requires final approval by the Dean.

**Years 3-5:** The III Discipline Plan of Study includes a mixture of recurring IBMS courses and III-specific courses. Approval of a student’s Dissertation Supervising Committee membership (see below for specifics) and the student’s first meeting with the approved committee must take place prior to the end of the Fall semester in order to maintain a Satisfactory (S) grade in IBMS 6097-5III (Research/Academic Progress). Typically, at the first meeting the student should discuss the content of the dissertation research proposal so that it can be submitted to the IBMS Graduate Program and the GSBS Dean prior to the end of the Fall semester. At the discretion of the III DEC, a short delay into the Spring semester may be granted for submission of the dissertation research proposal. In this case, an Incomplete (I) grade will be posted in IBMS 6097 (Research/Academic Progress) that can be changed to Satisfactory (S) once the requirements are fulfilled.

The research proposal should be approximately 5 pages in length, and should follow a structure that includes 3 sections: 1) Background information that indicates the significance of the proposed project and the main hypothesis to be tested; 2) Strategies/methods of investigation and analysis to be employed; 3) References of key publications that support the hypothesis and strategies described in the proposal. Preliminary results are not required but can be included to demonstrate feasibility of the project. Following presentation of the research proposal to the Dissertation Supervising Committee, the student will modify the content until it is acceptable to the Committee.

Once the committee membership and research proposal are approved, it is required that student will meet at least once per semester with the student’s Dissertation Supervising Committee; failure to do so will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for Research/Academic Progress (IBMS 6097-5III). In addition, enrollment in the two required semesters of Dissertation credit (IBMS 7099-5III) may commence.

**Final hours.** Once a student has reached a stage in his/her research program, when the dissertation defense and graduation are imminent (usually in the fifth year of study), a student may enroll in Final Hours. An official form must be submitted requesting enrollment in Final Hours. This allows a student the one-time opportunity to register for 3 credits hours of Dissertation while still maintaining full-time student status, thus reducing tuition costs. Students enrolled in final hours are expected to maintain active participation is discipline and laboratory activities. Final Hours may not be taken more than once. If a student does not
C. Dissertation Research and the Student’s Dissertation Supervising Committee

Formation and Membership of the Dissertation Supervising Committee

Following successful completion of the Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy, and generally early in the Year 3 Fall semester, an III student is expected to request approval from the III Discipline Executive Committee (DEC) for the membership of a Dissertation Supervising Committee (DSC). Then, prior to the last day of the Year 3 Fall semester in the IBMS program, a student is expected to submit a request for official approval for the DSC membership from the IBMS COGS and the GSBS Dean. This request is obtained via the IMPACT website and occurs concurrently with submission of the Dissertation Research Proposal. Except for the Dissertation Mentor, the faculty membership of any previous advisory committees need not be retained (e.g., Temporary Supervising Committee). Once formed, the Supervising Committee is expected to assess the student’s research progress at least once per semester.

DSC membership

The membership of a student’s Dissertation Supervising Committee should provide the expertise necessary to ensure appropriate scientific and academic guidance to the student. Membership must be approved by the III DEC and by the Dean of the GSBS.

The minimum composition of student dissertation committees should reflect the following:

1. The student’s Dissertation Mentor, now to be referred to as the Supervising Professor.
2. Two members from the IBMS Graduate Faculty with primary affiliations in any IBMS discipline, but typically in the III Discipline.
3. One member from the IBMS Graduate Faculty with a primary affiliation in a discipline other than the III Discipline.
4. One member from an institution of higher education or research institute approved by the student’s discipline and holding no faculty appointment at the UTHSCSA.

Additional members from the institution may be added if a particular expertise is required. Changes in the membership of the DSC are allowed at any time but are subject to the approval by the discipline’s executive committee and the GSBS Dean.

Preparation and Approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal

Approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal should be obtained before the end of the Year 3 Fall semester. Having a well-written proposal may facilitate the submission of fellowship applications (F-grants) that might result in acquiring supplemental funds for supporting the student’s research. The research proposal should be approximately 5 pages in length, and should follow a structure that includes 3 sections: 1) Background information that indicates the significance of the proposed project and the main hypothesis to be tested; 2) Strategies/methods of investigation and analysis to be employed; 3) References of key publications that support the hypothesis and strategies described in the proposal. Preliminary results are not required but can be included to demonstrate feasibility of the project. Following presentation of the research proposal to the Dissertation Supervising Committee, the student will modify the content until it is acceptable to the Committee. Once approved by the DSC, the research proposal is to be submitted via the IMPACT website (with all DSC signatures except the outside committee member). Students should also seek electronic approvals for the membership of the student’s Dissertation Supervising Committee (including the official naming of the Supervising Professor); thus, an electronic version of the Dissertation Proposal should be submitted concurrently.
Failure to receive GSBS approval for both the Dissertation Supervising Committee and the Dissertation Research Proposal by the last day of the Year 3 Fall semester will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for IBMS 6097-5III (Research/Academic Progress). Requests for extensions of this deadline must be fully justified and submitted to the III Discipline Director prior to the end of the Fall semester.

Once the Graduate Dean approves a student's dissertation committee composition and dissertation proposal, amendments to either will require re-approval if such changes involve the deletion or addition of a committee member, or a substantial revision to the candidate's dissertation research project (such as an addition/replacement of a specific aim). Re-approval is not necessary if alterations in the research plan do not substantially change the general context of the dissertation proposal.

Enrolling for Dissertation Credit (IBMS 7099-5III). Once a student’s dissertation proposal and Dissertation Supervising Committee membership are approved by the GSBS, enrollment in the Dissertation Course is allowed. A minimum of 2 semesters of IBMS 7099-5III is required by the Graduate School for graduation.

Meetings of the Dissertation Supervising Committee

Students are required to meet with their Dissertation Supervising Committees (except for the outside member) at least once per semester. Additional meetings may be required as determined by a student’s discipline executive committee and/or the student’s Supervising Professor. Written reports of all meetings with the Dissertation Supervising Committee must be submitted to the office of the Discipline Director and kept on file. Copies of all reports must be submitted via the IMPACT website to the IBMS Graduate Program office. It is the responsibility of the student to send summaries of the meeting outcomes to the outside committee member.

Failure to meet with the Dissertation Supervising Committee during a particular semester will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for IBMS 6097-5III Research/Academic Progress.

Writing the Dissertation and Registering for Final Hours

When the Dissertation Supervising Committee is satisfied that the research accomplished by a student is of sufficient quality and quantity to constitute a significant contribution to the field (i.e., the area of the student's studies), formal permission is to be granted to the student to write his/her dissertation.

Prior to drafting the dissertation, usually during the semester prior to defense-of-dissertation, writing guidelines are made available from the Associate Dean of Students by way of a required dissertation workshop. Without evidence of attending this workshop, the dissertation will not be accepted by the Graduate School.

Consult the GSBS website for the Graduation Timeline and the list of required deadlines for the following series of events. http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/current_students/graduation-information

When writing the dissertation, a student should submit drafts to the Supervising Professor until they are both satisfied that it is a well-written document containing all of the experimental and background information promised to the Dissertation Supervising Committee. Once the Supervising Professor approves a final draft of the dissertation, complete copies are to be submitted to each member of the Dissertation Supervising Committee, including the external member. Prior to requesting permission to officially defend the dissertation, the members of the Dissertation Supervising Committee should be given a reasonable period of time, usually 2-3 weeks, in which to evaluate the document. In the event that two or more members of the Supervising Committee feel that the dissertation is not suitable for defense, a student must make appropriate changes, prior to the final defense, until the committee is
satisfied. **Extensive revisions may require rescheduling the defense.** When the Dissertation Supervising Committee judges the dissertation to be suitable for defense, a student must then submit a Request for **Final Oral Examination** via the IMPACT website, with all of the appropriate signatures, indicating approval of the dissertation and the examination date to the Office of the GSBS Dean. Copies of this form, plus dissertation abstract and vita, must be received by the Dean’s Office at least two weeks before the dissertation defense date. COGS is the arbiter of disputes that cannot be resolved between a student and Supervising Committee.

The credentials of a student who completes the defense and all degree requirements will be presented by the COGS chair to the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) for final review. The GFC meets on the second Friday of each month. Therefore, degree requirements must be met so that the COGS recommendation can be considered no later than the May meeting of the GFC so that the degree can be conferred in May, thus allowing the student to “walk the stage” at the May graduation ceremony.

**Final Hours.** Normally, all Ph.D. students must be enrolled as full-time students (i.e., 12 credit hours in the both Fall and Spring semesters). During a student’s last semester, while finishing and defending his/her dissertation, a student may register for three credit hours (i.e., Final Hours). That is, once a student has reached a stage in his/her research program, when the dissertation defense and graduation are imminent (usually in the fifth year of study), a student may enroll in Final Hours. Enrolling in Final Hours is not required for graduation, but allows a student the one-time opportunity to register for 3 credits hours while still maintaining full-time student status, thus reducing tuition costs. It is expected, however, that although a student would not officially enroll in the usual required courses while taking Final Hours, the student **will continue to attend the usual journal clubs and seminars.** Furthermore, **Final Hours may not be taken more than once;** thus, if a student does not defend and graduate in that semester, he/she must resume enrolling in the 12.0 minimum credit hours required of a full-time student.

**Defense of Dissertation**

**Public Seminar** - The student will present a public seminar that summarizes his/her dissertation research accomplishments. A public announcement of the Dissertation Defense will be distributed by the Office of the GSBS Dean so that all interested persons may attend the public seminar. At the seminar, the candidate will field questions from members of the audience who are not on the Dissertation Supervising Committee.

**Closed-door Defense** - Following the public seminar, the candidate will meet with the Dissertation Supervising Committee in a closed-door session for an intensive and detailed oral examination of the dissertation research. The committee members will vote on the candidate's success or failure to adequately defend the dissertation research; the committee members record their votes via the IMPACT website. More than one vote for failure indicates failure of the examination. If the student fails the Dissertation Defense, the Dissertation Supervising Committee should submit a recommendation regarding corrective action; COGS will consider the recommendation and determine what action should be taken. If the student passes the Final Oral Examination, the outcome of the Dissertation Supervising Committee's deliberations are sent to COGS via the IMPACT website, if acceptable, the recommendation to grant the Ph.D. is forwarded to the Graduate Faculty Council for its consideration.

**Approval of Written Dissertation** - The DSC members must also indicate their approval of the final written version of the dissertation by placing their signatures on the "Approval Page" of the dissertation. **Should extensive revisions of the dissertation be requested** by the DSC, the Supervising Professor may withhold his/her signature on form recommending degree conferral until all of the necessary changes are made to the dissertation. Under these circumstances, each member of the DSC should be given the option to review revisions in the dissertation prior to the certification of the final document by the
Supervising Professor. Once requested revisions are made and the Approval Page is signed by members of the committee, the student should submit the signed GSBS Form 43, via the Discipline Director, to the IBMS COGS. Even if a student passes the Dissertation Defense, the final version of the dissertation must be approved by the Dissertation Supervising Committee before COGS will consider a recommendation that the degree be awarded.

If the Dissertation Supervising Committee, without dissent, approves a student’s written dissertation and its defense, the III Discipline Director may forward that recommendation to IBMS COGS without a formal vote of the discipline’s executive committee. However, if one or more members of the DSC votes to deny approval of a student’s dissertation or defense, the Supervising Professor must recommend that the III Discipline Director call a meeting of the III Discipline’s executive committee to discuss the outcome and resolve issues regarding that outcome.

Finally, the student should submit the COGS chair-signed GSBS Form 43, the dissertation and the "Approval Page" to the Office of the Graduate Dean for signature by the Dean. The Dean’s signature and the approval of the dissertation by the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences are required before the degree can be awarded.

Registering In Absentia (INTD 1000)

Students must be registered for the semester in which they defend their dissertations. However, a special registration arrangement may be made for students who defend their dissertation after the last Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) meeting of the semester.

A student who successfully defends the dissertation, but misses the final meeting of the GFC (second Friday of each month), may register for one credit hour for the next semester. The student may then drop the one credit hour and register In Absentia for the coming semester. This must be accomplished before the first class day of the new semester. Registration In Absentia should be designated as zero credit hours and the student will be charged a $25 fee.

D. Evaluating Student Academic Progress

The Infection, Inflammation, & Immunity Discipline will review the academic progress of its students at least twice per year, usually at the end of the fall and spring semesters. However, if at any time a Graduate Faculty member perceives that a student is not making sufficient progress in the program, the matter can be brought to the attention of the Discipline Director so that the situation may be addressed promptly.

When a student’s progress is being reviewed and it is anticipated that the review may result in an action that will negatively affect the status of the student in the program (e.g., dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program), the student who is the subject of that review will 1) be informed that such a review will be taking place; and 2) be asked to provide any relevant information or material that the student feels the Discipline’s executive committee should consider during its deliberations. Furthermore, the Discipline Director will invite the Supervising Professor to the meeting in order to obtain additional information about the student’s academic progress. The student will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation as soon as is possible.

The following six sections describe expectations that reflect satisfactory academic progress:

- **Grade Point Average**

  All III students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA. Any student whose GPA drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. Remediation may be required. The form of remediation, determined in consultation with the appropriate Course Director(s), will be communicated in writing to the student by the III Discipline Director. The III DEC will recommend the manner and time frame for rectifying the
academic deficit. If the deficit is not rectified as required by the III DEC, a report will be submitted to the Chair of the IBMS COGS with a recommendation that the student be considered for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program based on a lack of academic progress.

Any student who receives an “F” in any course will be placed on academic probation and must retake the course. Moreover, receiving an “F” grade may be grounds for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program.

• “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" Coursework

For certain courses, student performance is reported as Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S) or Honors (H). If a student does not show an appropriate level of participation and proficiency in these courses and receives a “U”, the III DEC will place the student on academic probation. Moreover, if a student receives two “U”s in successive semesters, the III DEC must consider this as grounds for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program. If dismissal appears warranted, the student will be notified and a recommendation for such an action will be submitted to the Chair of the IBMS COGS.

• Qualifying Examination Outcomes

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree must pass IBMS 7001-5III (see above). Qualifying Exam Committee members will evaluate student performance based on 1) the preparation and oral defense of a research proposal designed to answer an experimental question, as well as 2) the adequacy of the student’s general knowledge associated with aspects of the proposal. A grade of Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S) or Honors (H) will be given for performance in the QE. The chair of the QE Committee will report the deliberations of the committee to the III Discipline Director.

• Research/Academic Progress

Each semester, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S) or Honors (H) is given for research/academic performance (IBMS 6097-5III). The grade is determined by two factors. First, each semester the student’s Supervising Professor will submit an “H” or “S” or “U” to the Discipline Director. This determination is made in consultation with the student’s Dissertation Supervising Committee via reports of committee meetings submitted each semester and based upon the student’s overall performance in the laboratory including experimental progress, academic development, effort and, when appropriate, progress in writing the dissertation. Second, satisfactory research/academic progress reflects a student’s adherence to the expectations of the IBMS Graduate Program, the III Discipline, and the Student-Mentor Compact and Milestones Agreement. This includes satisfying programmatic requirements, filing required forms and documentation, and progressing through the program according to the expected timeline.

• Research Committee Meetings

Each student must meet with his/her Dissertation Supervising Committee at least once each semester to present and discuss progress in research activities. Additional meetings may be required as determined by the student III Discipline Executive Committee and/or the student’s Supervising Professor. At research committee meetings, a student should provide each member of the committee with a written progress report that includes a statement of the aims of the research project/dissertation proposal, the progress that was made since the previous committee meeting toward satisfying the aims and an outline of future plans (this information can be provided in a printed Pdf conversion of the slides used during the student’s presentation). During the meeting, the student should summarize the project background, relevant published work that has an impact on the research and the results that he/she has obtained with emphasis on the experimental findings made since the last meeting. Data in the form of figures and tables summarizing recent progress is generally
appropriate. Members of the Dissertation Supervising Committee will record their evaluations of
development. To ensure accountability, these evaluations are documented using appropriate forms.

| Failure to meet with the Dissertation Supervising Committee during a particular semester will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for IBMS 6097-III Research/Academic Progress. |

If a student can present acceptable justification to the III Discipline Director for a delayed committee
meeting, a grade of Incomplete (I) may be posted until the meeting can be held. If the student does
not rectify the situation by holding a Committee meeting within 30 days following the last day of the
semester, the research grade shall be changed from Incomplete to Unsatisfactory (U), and the student will be placed on academic probation. A student who receives two “U”s in Research/Academic Progress may be considered for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program.

- Expected Time-to-Completion of Degree Requirements

Ph.D. students are usually expected to complete their degree requirements, including the dissertation
defense, in approximately five years of full-time study. If a student has not defended the dissertation
before completing six years of full-time studies, he/she is subject to consideration of dismissal from
the IBMS Graduate Program for lack of research/academic progress. A student may request that the
discipline extend the limit of six years for degree completion, but such a waiver will be granted only
for exceptional circumstances.

| UT System requirements: All Ph.D. students must enroll in a minimum of 72 credit hours in order to graduate. It should also be noted that the UT System requires that Ph.D. students reach graduation prior to achieving 130 credit hours (the “130 hour rule”). After 130 credits hours, students may be required to pay out-of-state tuition. |

E. Withdrawal or Leave of Absence (LOA) from the IBMS Graduate Program

An Infection, Inflammation, & Immunity student who wishes to withdraw from the IBMS Graduate
Program should confer with the III Discipline Director in order to establish the circumstances resulting in
the decision to withdraw, and if the student should consider a complete break with the Program, or if a
Leave of Absence is more appropriate. The student must then submit a written request to the Chair of
COGS, with copy to the III Discipline Director. The Chair of COGS will forward the request to the Dean of
the GSBS. The step-by-step procedure for requesting LOA is as follows:

1. The student needs to submit a letter requesting a LOA to the Chair of the IBMS COGS. The letter
   needs to include the reason for a student’s request (explanations do not have to go into great detail),
   the effective date the LOA is to begin, and the expected time of the student’s return. A LOA is
   allowed for up to one year, at which time the student will be allowed to return to the program. A
   copy of this letter should be sent to the director of the student’s discipline.

2. A meeting between the student and the chair of the IBMS COGS is recommended.

3. The chair of the IBMS COGS will confirm that all relevant people have been informed that the request
   has been made (i.e., discipline director and dissertation mentor).

4. The student’s request and COGS chair’s recommendation will be sent to the Graduate School Dean.

5. Once this process is completed, the student must pick up a clearance form from the Registrar’s Office
   and complete that form including all required signatures.

6. The student will receive a letter from the GSBS Dean (copied to the IBMS COGS chair) indicating
   approval of the request for LOA.
F. Change of Degree Objective – Ph.D. to M.S.

- **Voluntary change of degree objective**

  An *III discipline* graduate student in **satisfactory academic standing** may request a change in degree objective to the Master of Science. The request should be made to the III discipline director following consultation with the student’s dissertation mentor, and may be the result of changing personal, family, medical, academic or career needs. Recommendations for change in degree objective will then be submitted to the IBMS COGS chair, indicating confirmation that the student’s dissertation mentor has been consulted and is in favor of granting the request. Typically, requests will be forwarded from the COGS chair to the GSBS Dean for final approval and processing.

- **Mandatory change of degree objective**

  An III student who has academic difficulties resulting in **unsatisfactory academic standing/progress**, may request a change in degree objective to the Master of Science. This recommendation may be submitted by the student’s discipline executive committee to COGS *in lieu* of a recommendation for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program for 1) failing grades amounting to a grade point average of less than 3.0 (must include a remediation plan for purposes of increasing the GPA to 3.0); 2) failing the Qualifying Examination; or 3) receiving 2 grades of Unsatisfactory (U) in IBMS 6097 (Research/Academic progress). The request should be made following consultation with the student’s dissertation mentor and with the student’s discipline director. The recommendation to allow the change in degree objective should be **submitted in writing by the student’s discipline director to the chair of the IBMS COGS**, indicating the exact reason for the request, that the student has been made aware of the circumstances leading to this recommendation, and confirming that the student’s dissertation mentor has been consulted and is in favor of granting the request. The recommendation will be presented to the IBMS COGS, and a vote to approve or disapprove will determine if the requested change in degree objective is to be granted, or if a recommendation to dismiss is to be considered.

- **Procedure**

  IBMS students who change their degree objective from IBMS Ph.D. to IBMS M.S. are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

  1. Beginning when the request for change of degree objective is granted, the student must adhere to the **timeline for completing the M.S. degree requirements and research expectations provided by the III discipline executive committee**.

  2. Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to continue for more than 2 additional years to degree conferral. In order to maintain full-time student status on the M.S. track, a student must enroll in **no fewer than 8.0 SCH per semester**; a total of no fewer than **30 SCH is required for conferral of an M.S. degree**.

  3. In general, M.S. students will be expected to complete all coursework established by the *III discipline* for the Ph.D. Plan of Study; exemptions and exceptions may be granted if approved by the III DEC.

  4. A student’s research supervising committee, now to be referred to as the Thesis Supervising Committee, will establish the research accomplishments required prior to defense of thesis.

  5. No Qualifying Examination is required for the M.S. degree.

  6. A student must seek approval for Advancement to Candidacy for the M.S. degree. A student may not advance to candidacy while on academic probation.

  7. A student should have no expectation of financial support/stipend on the M.S. degree track.

  8. **One semester** of IBMS 6098 (Thesis) is required prior to graduation.
G. Change of Dissertation Mentor

If at any time during an IBMS student’s course of study, a student wishes to change from an approved Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor to another Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor, the following process must be followed:

1. Any member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty is eligible to train IBMS graduate students; any change of mentor must be to the laboratory of a member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty.

2. Prior to making an official request, an III student should send written notification of the intent to change mentor to the student’s original Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor (with copy to the III Discipline Director). A face-to-face meeting between the student and the student’s mentor is encouraged.

3. Prior to making the official request, the student should notify, in writing, the chair of the IBMS COGS that the request for a change of mentor is about to be submitted. This notification is to include the reason for making the request. An informal interview with the student may be requested by the COGS chair.

4. The COGS chair will confirm that the student is in satisfactory academic standing.

5. The COGS chair will ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the impending student request. This will include: The student’s original mentor; the student’s proposed new mentor; the student’s Discipline Director; the student’s future Discipline Director (if a change in discipline will also be requested); and the GSBS Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

6. In the event that a student wishes to leave the laboratory of a faculty member, but has not yet identified a new Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor, the student may request the opportunity to perform 1-2 short laboratory rotations (no more than 4 weeks each) in the laboratories of prospective future mentors.

7. Once a new mentor has been identified, a request for change of mentor must be completed via the IMPACT website.

8. Consideration of the request:
   - The proposed new mentor must 1) be willing to have the student enter his/her laboratory as a full-time Ph.D. trainee; and 2) be financially able to support the research activities of the student.
   - If all parties involved are not in agreement, the COGS chair will bring the request to the full membership of COGS for their deliberation and advice.
   - Final approval for the change of mentor will be given by the chair of the IBMS COGS and the GSBS Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

9. Financial considerations:
   - Upon approval of the request to change mentors, all financial responsibility for the student will rest with the new Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor (e.g., stipend, tuition and fees). The administrative transfer of financial responsibility will be accomplished as soon as possible.
   - If the student requires laboratory rotations prior to requesting a particular faculty member, the Office of the Dean of the GSBS will be called upon to provide bridge funding until the new mentor is approved.

H. Outside employment

Graduate students receiving stipends are discouraged from seeking outside employment.

I. Student Vacation Policy

Because of the unique relationship between a graduate student’s status as a full-time student and as a half-time employee of the University of Texas, Graduate Research Assistants do not accrue official
**vacation or sick leave.** The policy of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is that each student will be allowed to take only official GSBS holidays. However, students of the IBMS Graduate Program may be given permission by their Dissertation Mentors/Supervising Professors to take time off for up to 7 additional days during the year. Additional time off, including extended sick leave, personal leave, or time for international travel to visit family must be approved by a student’s discipline leadership and may be allowed on a case-by-case basis, and an understanding that there will be no lapse in satisfying academic requirements.

I. **Student Travel**

The costs incurred by students for travel to and expenses of scientific meetings are usually assumed by the Supervising Professor. However, numerous departmental and GSBS travel awards are available on a competitive basis. The costs which will be reimbursed are limited to those allowed by the University Rules and Regulations. A Request for Travel Authorization should be completed prior to paying any meeting registration fees.
Appendix I. Milestones Agreement
Sample Milestones Agreement (official form available on IMPACT)
Integrated Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program
Infection, Inflammation, & Immunity Discipline

This document is provided for the purpose of confirming that a student and the student’s Supervising Professor have been clearly informed that certain programmatic milestones are expected prior to receiving the Ph.D. degree, and that there is an expected timeline to complete these milestones. That is, a student is expected to reach particular milestones within a specified time period in order to demonstrate satisfactory progress through the program. It is also expected that each IBMS discipline will make any revisions in this document to accommodate the needs of its program and to its discipline-specific curriculum. A student who demonstrates unsatisfactory academic progress may lose funding, be placed on academic probation, or be dismissed from the program.

Academic Advising

Upon entering the ____________________________ discipline of the IBMS Graduate Program, the Discipline Director, or the Director’s appointee, will serve as Graduate Advisor for all students in the Discipline. Once a student is granted approval for entering the laboratory of an approved member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty, advising responsibilities will be shared between the Supervising Professor and the Graduate Advisor.

In order to ensure that students remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress through the program, advisors are responsible for the following:

- Presenting a clear timetable to the student for completing course requirements, examinations, and other requirements.
- Ensuring that meetings between the student and Dissertation Supervising Committee occur each semester, and reporting of student progress to the ____________________________ Discipline Executive Committee, and included in the program’s annual doctoral progress report.
- Ensuring required coursework is completed; provide suggestions regarding elective course selections.
- Providing the student with assistance in assembling research and qualifying exam committees.
- Providing the student, when necessary, with clarification regarding the requirements for successful completion of dissertation research, the written dissertation, and defense of dissertation.
- Periodically reviewing the student’s Plan of Study to determine if the student is making progress consistent with the expectations of the program; and work with the Discipline Director, the Supervising Professor, and student to determine if modifications are necessary.
- Providing the student with opportunities and information to optimize the student’s future career success.
Milestones checklist for all Ph.D. Students in the III Discipline

Complete laboratory rotations and select Discipline and Supervising Professor. Year 1
Complete required IBMS and discipline core coursework. Years 1-2
Discuss and complete Student-Mentor Compact and Milestones Agreement with Dissertation Mentor before the end of the Spring semester of Year 1. Year 1, Spring semester (review annually)
Select and seek approval for Temporary Supervising Committee (if applicable) Year 2, Fall semester
Report research progress; evaluation reported to DEC. Year 2, Fall semester (and each semester thereafter)
Complete required coursework including writing course. Year 2, Spring semester
Complete Qualifying Examination successfully. Year 2, Spring semester
Advance to candidacy by submitting required paperwork (immediately following QE). Year 2, Spring semester
Complete advanced elective coursework. Years 2-3
Select and seek approval for Dissertation Supervising Committee by DEC. Year 3, Fall semester
Submit Dissertation Research Proposal with required paperwork for approval by Dissertation Supervising Committee, DEC, and Graduate Dean. Year 3, Fall semester
Enroll for required 2 semesters of dissertation credit (IBMS 7099). Year 4-5
Participate in dissertation preparation workshop prior to defense semester. Year 5, Fall Semester
Complete dissertation research; dissertation should be written and successfully defended, and approved by Dissertation Committee (timing is approximate). Year 5, Spring Semester
Dissertation accepted by Graduate School. Year 5, Spring Semester
File all paperwork required for degree conferral and graduation. Year 5, Spring Semester
Submit exit survey to Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Year 5, Spring Semester

We have read this form and have had the opportunity to discuss the information contained within it. We understand the academic milestones that the student is expected to reach in order to successfully complete the requirements of the IBMS doctoral program, as well as the expected timeline for completing these milestones.

________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Signature

Date

________________________________________________________________________

Supervising Professor’s Signature

Date

________________________________________________________________________

Discipline Director’s Signature

Date
Pre-doctoral training entails both formal education in advanced scientific knowledge and theory, and research training under the supervision of one or more investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. A positive mentoring relationship between a pre-doctoral student and a Supervising Professor is a vital component of student preparation for a successful biomedical career.

Students who pursue a biomedical graduate degree are expected to take appropriate responsibility for their own scientific and professional development. However, Graduate Faculty who mentor students are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities such as providing academic guidance and scientific training, instruction in the responsible conduct of research and research ethics, and financial support.

This compact offers a set of guiding principles intended to promote and support the development of a positive mentoring relationship between a pre-doctoral student and his/her Supervising Professor. For Ph.D. students, this compact will also include the completed Discipline-specific individualized Milestone Agreement Form. The purpose of completing these documents is to guarantee that both students and their Supervising Professors clearly understand the exact milestones and accomplishments required to be granted the Ph.D. As mandated by the U.T. System, the individualized Milestone Agreement Form should be provided in an electronic format consistent with protections provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Prior to the end of the Spring semester of Year 1, students should have 1) discussed with their Supervising Professors each of the topics listed on pages 2 – 4 of this document and 2) submitted the attached form to the Director of their Disciplines. This individualized compact should describe specific commitments and detailed processes that are understood by both the student and the Supervising Professor with regard to reaching the Discipline-specific milestones and accomplishing the goals of the students’ Plans of Study.

With their signatures, both the Supervising Professors and the students confirm that all topics listed have been discussed and they are committed to uphold the principles agreed upon in this individualized compact. Once approved by the student’s discipline executive committee, the compact will be placed in the student’s file held in the Discipline’s administrative office, and made available to the IBMS Program Director upon request.

It is understood that this is a living document, and that responsibilities and expectations of various students and mentors may differ. Portions of this compact may be revised to reflect additional expectation agreed upon. Also, various aspects of a student’s pursuit of degree can change over time and therefore this compact should be reviewed regularly (e.g., once a year) and modified as needed. Similarly, the Milestone Agreement Form is to be reviewed regularly.
DEFINING STUDENT AND MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS
(student and mentor should fill this out together)

Frequency and Methods of Communication between Supervising Professor and Student (How often will student and mentor meet? How should updates or changes in expectations and issues be communicated?)

Research/Training-Related and Professional Development of the Student (What is the student’s project? Is there a specific person who will oversee training other than the PI and to what degree will the student assist with other projects in the lab? What constitutes professional development?)

Common Laboratory Responsibilities (Which tasks and duties are shared among all lab members, including the student?)

Notebooks and Data (What is the policy of the laboratory related to the storage of data and laboratory notebooks?)

Work Hours/Attendance in the Laboratory (How many hours per week is the student expected to work in the laboratory?)

Authorship Policies (What is the policy that constitutes authorship in the lab? How is the order of authors determined in a manuscript or abstract?)

Manuscripts expected for Graduation (Are there specific expectations for the number of manuscripts (published, submitted and/or in preparation), and the student’s authorship position (e.g., first author on these manuscripts, required for the student to graduate?)

Intellectual Policy Issues: Disclosure, Patent Rights and Publishing Research Discoveries (What is the policy for patents that come out of the student’s work?)

Selection of a Thesis/Dissertation Committee (What is the process for determining the subject of the dissertation and the membership of the dissertation committee?)

Attendance of Professional and Scientific Meetings (Under which conditions can a student travel to a Regional, National, or International scientific meeting? For example, only if the student or student’s work is presenting? Who covers the cost and what will be covered?)

Career and Professional Development / Job Search and Placement / Individualized Career Development Plan (What is the career choice of the student and what arrangements can be made to allow the student to participate in courses, workshops, etc. for their particular interests without compromising their research training?)

Time off for Illness or University Holidays (In light of GSBS policy that, except for official University holidays, graduate students should not expect time off, what is the laboratory policy for vacations, holidays, and personal days?)

Conflict Resolution and Student Complaint Policies (refer to Student Catalogues; GSBS website)

Additional Topics
SIGNATURES:

We have discussed all the above topics and made the mutually agreed upon additions, specifications and changes.

We acknowledge our joint intention to re-evaluate the compact, the agreed upon milestones and the degree completion date at least once a year throughout the student’s period of academic standing.

________________________________________

Student’s Name

________________________________________

Signature of Student               Date

________________________________________

Supervising Professor’s Name

________________________________________

Signature of Supervising Professor               Date

This compact has been adapted from the UT System Health Institutions Compact Between Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors and the AAMC’s Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors (December 2008).
Appendix III. Qualifying Examination (IBMS 7001-5III)

Objective: The purpose of the Qualifying Examination (QE) is to determine if a student has met programmatic expectations with regard to: i) Acquiring a level of scientific reasoning and a knowledge base in his/her field of study appropriate for a graduate student at the current stage of training; ii) Demonstrating skills of problem-solving and development of experimental strategies designed to test hypotheses associated with a specific scientific problem; and iii) Demonstrating the ability to defend experimental strategies proposed for solving scientific problems. Successful completion of the QE is required for Admission to Candidacy and continuation in the IBMS Ph.D. program.

Expectations: The Qualifying Exam (QE) is an S/U graded course in the IBMS curriculum (IBMS 7001-5III), is required of all III discipline IBMS Ph.D. students, and must be completed during the Spring semester of a Ph.D. student’s second year in the IBMS program. This timeline may vary slightly for dual-degree students. Failure to complete the QE during the specified semester may result in an Unsatisfactory (U) being posted on the student’s transcript and could delay the student’s admission to candidacy. Deviation from the expected timeline is possible only if justified and approved by a student’s Discipline leadership in consultation with the student’s Dissertation Mentor. Therefore, a student who does not complete the QE in the appropriate semester may receive a grade of Incomplete (I) until the exam is completed. Each IBMS discipline may determine the detailed logistics required for the administration of the QE process for its students so as to achieve the goals of the discipline while satisfying the expectations of the IBMS graduate program.

Minimal expectations in the design and administration of the QE include the following: 1) Prior to initiation of the QE, the expectations and process of the exam will be provided to the students. 2) Members of the III discipline Graduate Faculty will be identified and approved by the III Discipline leadership who will serve as the QE Committee and who will administer and report outcomes of the examination. 3) A relevant unsolved problem in the biomedical sciences will be identified that is approved by the Discipline QE Committee and will serve as the basis for the examination. The QE question must be based on an idea conceived and developed by the student, and must not duplicate any aims in his/her mentor’s active or pending grants. A written declaration from the student should be submitted to the examination committee in order to clarify the relationship between the proposed research and that of the student’s Dissertation Mentor’s research. 4) An hypothesis-driven research proposal will be written by the student that describes experimental strategies for solving the QE problem. 5) An oral defense-of-proposal will examine the student’s problem-solving process, and the soundness of the student’s experimental design. Student Dissertation Mentors may attend oral defenses, but are considered to be guests and not members of the examining committee; and should only ask questions when invited by the QE committee chair.

Grading: Following the oral defense of the proposal, the QE faculty committee will discuss the outcome and determine if Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory is to be recommended to the student’s Discipline Director. This grade, posted for the IBMS 7001-5III course, should represent the consensus of the examination committee. In addition, the COGS-approved QE reporting form should be submitted by the chair of the QE committee to the Discipline leadership indicating any recommendations that may be required to enhance the academic progress of the student. The Discipline Director is responsible for ensuring that the report is filed with the Assistant Director of the IBMS Graduate Program. Successful completion of the QE is required for Admission to Candidacy and continuation in the IBMS Ph.D. program.

- In the event that a student passes the QE, a grade of Satisfactory (S) or a grade of Honors (H) will be posted for IBMS 7001 by the student’s discipline director on the Registrar’s grade site.
- If a student fails the QE, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) may be posted for IBMS 7001-5III. Alternatively, a grade of Incomplete (I) may be posted, and a maximum of one remediation examination will be allowed that must be completed within 60 days of the original exam. If a student successfully passes the second attempt, the grade of “I” will be changed to Satisfactory (S).
- If a student does not successfully remediate, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) will be posted for IBMS 7001-5III.
Appendix IV. Dissertation Research Proposal
Infection, Inflammation, & Immunity Discipline

Objective: The purpose of writing the Dissertation Research Proposal is to describe, in a scholarly document, the significance and strategies for performing the dissertation research. The proposal must be approved by the student’s Supervising Professor, Dissertation Supervising Committee, the IBMS COGS, and finally the Dean of the GSBS.

Expectations: Writing a Dissertation Research Proposal is required of all III discipline IBMS Ph.D. students, and is expected to be completed during the Fall semester of a Ph.D. student’s third year in the IBMS program. Failure to complete the QE during the specified semester may result in an Unsatisfactory (U) being posted on the student’s transcript. The format of the proposal is similar in overall structure to that required by most grant agencies:

Title Page - title; name of student; graduate program and discipline, and Supervising Professor

Abstract (approx. 400 words) – summary of objectives, protocol, and significance of the proposal.

Research Plan - (variable length, but generally 5 single-spaced pages):

1. Specific Aims (approximately ¼ -1 page) - The overall hypothesis and objective of the proposal should be clearly stated. Provide 2-4 testable hypotheses (e.g., Specific Aims).

2. Background and Preliminary Data (approximately 1-1½ page) - The work of others that led to the overall hypothesis should be described, citing the most relevant references. A clear rationale should be provided for the importance of solving the research problem, along with its potential impact on current perceptions in the field. Including a small amount of preliminary data (one or two key experiments) is recommended in order to support the hypothesis and the feasibility of the project.

3. Experimental Design (remaining pages) - Each Specific Aim that is outlined in the first section (above), should have a parallel section in the Experimental Design section. Describe experimental strategies designed to accomplish each aim, and methods of analysis and validation to be employed (i.e., statistical methods). Regarding experimental methods, sufficient detail should be provided to allow the reader the opportunity to critically evaluate the experimental approach chosen. However, lengthy descriptions of methods common to the field need not be included.

4. References - Citations should be numbered consecutively as they are cited in the text, and full references should be arranged in numerical order. Use accepted formats; format consistently throughout the text. Use only standard accepted abbreviations for the names of journals.