MACON & JOAN BROCK
VIRGINIA HEALTH SCIENCES
AT OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

EVMS School of Health Professions

Biomedical Sciences
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program

Student Handbook

2024-2025

Last Revised September, 2024

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WELCOME

Dr. David Taylor-Fishwick (Taylor)

As Program Director and on behalf of the Executive Committee, I welcome you to the Biomedical Sciences Doctor of Philosophy Program. This Program is part of the School of Health Professions that is headed by Dr. C. Donald Combs, Vice President and Dean of EVMS School of Health Professions.

You are provided this handbook as a central resource for the Biomedical Sciences Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program. Included are:

- Information on Program Contacts and Organization
- Curriculum Snapshot
- Program Requirements
- Program Resources
- Program Policies
- Required Activities
- Guide to Progression through the Curriculum
- Appendices

The Biomedical Sciences PhD Program supports student development by providing foundational biomedical science knowledge and intensive mentored research training. Each student will progress through three (3) laboratory-based research rotations before selecting an advisor for their PhD dissertation study. Students will advance through a candidacy exam prior to focus on their dissertation research. Advanced courses deepens and broadens research knowledge. Students will present and defend their published works in written and oral formats to earn their Doctor of Philosophy degree.

We all look forward to supporting your development through the program and maximizing your potential. While we are mentors, educators and researchers, we also look forward to learning from you and growing with you throughout your journey to a Doctor of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences.

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PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

The program is administered by the Program Director (PD), the Executive Committee, and the Program Coordinator. The Executive Committee is composed of the Program Director, Admissions Committee Chair, and Curriculum Committee Chair. The Biomedical Sciences Program Office at EVMS provides administrative support for the program.

Program Director (PD)
David A. Taylor-Fishwick, PhD,
(757) 446-7359
Department of Biomedical & Translational Sciences
Email: taylord@odu.edu

Program Coordinator
Diana Colon, MBA
(757) 446-5076
Biomedical Sciences Program Office
Email: colond@odu.edu
Lewis Hall, Rm. 2074
P.O. Box 1980
Norfolk, Virginia 23501

You will be provided access to the complete program requirements through the EVMS learning management system (LMS).

The Biomedical Sciences Program has developed a Student Resource Center. This is located in the LMS. This site centralizes relevant program-related information and resources for you.

Pronto is a messenger-like communication platform. This will be a primary communication tool to connect students to the program and course faculty in the program.

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Program Overview (Core CURRICULUM, yrs 1 & 2)

The Research Master's Program is designed so that well-qualified, highly motivated full-time students can graduate in TWO (2) years.

COURSE OVERVIEW

YEAR 1

Fall	Spring	Summer
• Molecules to Cells (MtC) • Molecular and Cellular Techniques (MCT) • Cell Communication and Signaling (CCS) • Molecular Genetics (MG) • Oral Communication Form (OCF) • Lab Rotation I	• Cell Energetics and Organ Function (CEOF) • Applied Biostatistics and Bioinformatics (ABB) • OCF • Lab Rotation II • Lab Rotation III	• Research

YEAR 2

Fall	Spring	Summer
• Methods & Logic in Translational Biology (MLTB) • Responsible Conduct in Science (RCS) • OCF • Scientific Writing and Research Design (SW) • Research • BP Elective	• OCF • Research • BP Elective	• Research

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YEAR 1

FALL SEMESTER	Credits
BP700: Molecules to Cells	2
BP701: Molecular and Cellular Techniques	2
BP703: Cell Communication and Signaling	3
BP704: Molecular Genetics	2
BP708: Oral Communication Forum	1
BP819: Lab Rotation I	2
Total	**12 credits**

SPRING SEMESTER	Credits
BP 706: Cell Energetics and Organ Function	3
BP 781: Applied Biostatistics and Bioinformatics	3
BP 708: Oral Communication Forum	1
BP 820: Lab rotations II	2
BP 821 Lab rotation III	2
Total	**12 credits**

SUMMER SEMESTER	Credits
BP898: Research	6
Total	**6 credits**

LABORATORY ROTATIONS

All students will complete THREE (3) eight-week laboratory rotations (BP 819 - BP 821), each in a different laboratory/PI during Fall and Spring of Year 1. Each laboratory rotation will consist of a minimum of 88 hours of laboratory work (11-20 hours per week).

QUALIFYING EXAM

Students will take a qualifying exam at the end of year 1. This will be a cumulative assessment of material covered in the first year.

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YEAR 2

FALL SEMESTER	Credits
BP 771: Methods & Logic in Translational Biology	3
BP 773: Responsible Conduct in Science	1
BP 708: Oral Communication Forum	1
BP 709: Scientific Writing and Research Design	1
BP 898: Research	3
Electives (2-3 credits, as available)	2-3
Total	**9-12 credits**

SPRING SEMESTER	Credits
BP 708: Oral Communication Forum	1
BP 898: Research	3-9
Electives (2-6 credits, as available)	2-6
Total	**9-13 credits**

SUMMER SEMESTER	Credits
BP 898: Research	6
Total	**6 credits**

Advanced Elective Courses include:

- Advanced Courses (minimum of 2 credit specialized course)
- Special Topics (independent study with the advisor or other faculty)
- Biomedical PhD students should enroll **in at least six (6) credits of advanced elective coursework.**
- The student's advisor must meet with their student to discuss which course(s) would best serve the student's educational development.
- The advisor should inform the PD of the plans for advanced courses that they have developed with their student and how they best serve the training needs of their student.
- Course options from other EVMS/ODU/NSU programs are listed in the Student Resource Center.
- NOTE: Not all elective courses are offered every semester/year. Plan in advance.

CANDIDACY EXAM

The candidacy exam is taken Spring of Year 2 and must be complete BEFORE July 1. One retake is allowed in this period. Students who **fail the Candidacy Exam re-take will stop receiving their stipend.**

See Appendix D for a more detailed description and timeline of this exam.

YEARS 3 TO END OF PROGRAM

Fall and Spring Semesters

BP 708: Oral Communication Forum, 1 Credit

BP898: Research, 8 Credits

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The Dissertation Proposal occurs in the fall of year 3. It must be completed BERORE December 15 of year 3.

See Appendix F for a more detailed description and timeline of this exam.

Approaching graduation:

BP899: Dissertation, 9 Credits

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The Dissertation Defense will occur when the guidance committee approves that the student is ready to defend their dissertation and the student has met the minimum authorship requirement of one first authored research paper in a mid their journal being accepted for publication.

See Appendix G for a more detailed description and timeline of this exam.

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PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

EVMS LABORATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Students participating in research are required to complete appropriate laboratory safety training.

Required training includes

- Autoclave Safety
- Chemical Hygiene
- Biosafety
- Animal Research (CITI "working with the IACUC" and mouse modules)

Information on these training courses will be provided during orientation for new students and may also be obtained from the Administrative Office. Additional training may be required depending on the research focus.

STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE

Students enrolled in the program are required to have a health insurance policy with major medical and surgical coverage. Students may be covered by their own policy, or a parent's or spouse's policy, or enroll in an EVMS student health insurance policy.

A waiver should be obtained from the Office of Human Resources if a non-EVMS policy is used.

ACADEMIC AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS

All students are required to fulfill the academic and technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Accommodations are provided to aid in fulfilling those standards, not to waive them. You can view these standards online on the EVMS Biomedical Sciences Technical Standards page.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE COMPLETION

The research PhD program is designed so that highly motivated and productive full-time students can graduate in FIVE (5) years. All requirements for the PhD degree need be completed within SEVEN (7) calendar years from the date of matriculation. Students whose graduate study is interrupted by military service will be granted an extension to cover the period of their military service, not to exceed 5 years.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES DISCLAIMER

All students are required to fulfill the academic and technical standards of their academic program with or without reasonable accommodations. Accommodations are provided to aid in fulfilling those standards, not to waive them.

EVMS is dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to students with a documented disability. Students are required to self-identify with the Office of Student Disability Services to begin the accommodation process. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students are therefore encouraged to begin the accommodation process as early as possible. To request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, you should contact the EVMS Disability Officer: StudentDisability@EVMS.EDU.

For more information about the disability accommodations process, you are invited to visit: http://www.evms.edu/education/additional_resources/disability_guide_for_students/

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is available to Biomedical Sciences Research Master's Program students from the Financial Aid Office at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Students must meet the criteria established by the Office of Financial Aid and be in good standing to receive student loans.

WELLNESS/STUDENT AFFAIRS

EVMS students are supported by an engaged Student Affairs Office. There are many initiatives to support student wellness needs. See the student wellness site.

COURSE SYLLABI

Course Directors will provide students with an official course syllabus (approved by the School of Health Professions Curriculum Committee) by **the first day of the course**. These syllabi will be posted on the course's LMS shell.

Syllabus will include

- **a Late Work policy** for assignments and take-home exams
- **Grading Policies** (e.g., how much each exam, quiz, assignment and participation will count) and the unified **Grading Scale**

If you have questions about the course, FIRST, ask the Course Director for that course.

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PROGRAM POLICIES

THE HONOR CODE

The EVMS Honor Code is based upon the integrity of the individual. This system assumes that the student will embrace their role in the EVMS community with self-respect and duty. Lying, cheating, and/or plagiarism are violations of the Honor Code.

Each piece of work submitted by a student should result from the students own work. Exceptions may be specified by each Course Director for group work. Enforcement of the Honor Code is a responsibility shared by both faculty and students. Instructors may, where deemed appropriate, conduct proctored examinations. For more information, see the online version of the EVMS Code of Conduct.

EVMS SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Students participating in research at EVMS must be familiar with and follow the EVMS Guide on Scientific Misconduct. Copies of the Guide are available from the Administrative Office or online through the Office of Research and Integrity.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

Students participating in research at EVMS should be familiar with the EVMS Policy on Intellectual Property. The Program Director must be informed if there is an intention to register Intellectual Property.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Full time PhD students are student workers supported by stipends and/or fellowships and are not permitted to seek employment outside the program. In exceptional situations, short-term laboratory, research or teaching jobs may be permitted. Jobs requiring significant time away from the research laboratory will not be allowed. Engaging in such employment may result in loss of stipend support. A student considering employment should discuss and obtain the approval of his/her Advisor and the PD

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Unexcused absences are not allowed. Course directors reserve the right to subtract credit points for unexcused absences as specified in the syllabus for each course. Absences may be excused in extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of each Course Director, when the student contacts the Course Director within 24 hours after the missed class.

Documentation of illness or other emergencies may be requested at the discretion of the Course Director.

Anticipated excused absences from an exam will require the student to take the exam before the rest of the class. Eligibility to take a make-up exam or change the date of a scheduled exam will require documentation stating the reason for the absence. At the discretion of the Course Director, a make-up exam may have a different format and version than from the regularly scheduled exam. If the Course Director deems the excuse to be inappropriate, the Course Director or student may bring the issue to the Biomedical Sciences Executive Committee. The Committee will determine the eligibility of the student to be granted a make-up exam.

GRADING POLICIES – GRADING SCALE

The Program follows the grading scale for the School of Health Professions, shown below;

Percentile	Letter Grade	GPA Weight
100-94	A	4.00
93-90	A-	3.67
89-87	B+	3.33
86-84	B	3.00
83-80	B-	2.67
79-77	C+	2.33
76-74	C	2.00
73-70	C-	1.67
69 or less	F	0.00

All SHP programs for which EVMS serves as the school of record will use the grading scale for those courses in which grades affect the Grade Point Average (GPA). Mathematical rules for rounding to the nearest whole number based on two decimal places apply. For example, a final grade of 93.45 would round to a 94 (A). A final grade of 93.44 would round to a 93 (A-).

PASS/FAIL COURSES

A graduate student may earn Pass/Fail credit in courses so designated. At this time, Thesis (BP 799) is a Pass/Fail course.

GRADES NOT AFFECTING GPA

Code	Description
I	Incomplete
P	Pass
W	Official Withdrawal
WF	Unofficial Withdrawal

PROCEDURES FOR ELECTIVE COURSES

PhD students are required to complete **a minimum of six (6) credits** of elective coursework.

The student's advisor must **meet with the student** to discuss which course(s) would best serve the student's educational interests.

The student and advisor must specify the advanced course(s) chosen (at least 6 credits) which the student will take, which will better serve their training. The PD should then be notified.

Alternative advanced courses include **Special Topics** (independent study with the advisor or other faculty); courses from other EVMS programs, and appropriate graduate courses at ODU or NSU. See the Student Resource Page in the LMS for links to available options.

Students should plan in advance. Not all elective courses are offered every semester.

NOTE: Students can also petition to take a course not listed by providing the associated syllabus to the Executive Committee for review.

MINIMUM ACADEMIC STANDARDS

To remain in good academic standing, the student must achieve the following standards:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater on a four-point scale.
2. Pass all required courses with a grade of "C-"or better, and meet other requirements within the time frames specified.
3. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required to be awarded a PhD degree.
4. Pass the candidacy exam and successfully defend their dissertation proposal
5. Meet all program requirements at the appropriate timelines.

Grades in courses accepted for transfer credit are not counted in the computation of grade point average. Grade reports are available online.

Extenuating circumstances: If the student believes there are extenuating circumstances as to why his/her/their performance has not met the minimum requirements of the program, he/she/they may submit a written petition to the PD. The report/petition, which should thoroughly explain the circumstances with appropriate documentation where appropriate, will be reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Considering the recommendations of the Executive Committee, the PD will form a decision and notify the student in writing. If the student's petition is rejected, the student may be subject to probation or dismissal from the program, as appropriate.

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INCOMPLETE GRADES

The grade "I" indicates assigned work yet to be completed in a given course or an approved absence from the final examination. When an instructor assigns a grade of "I," a written agreement is prepared and signed by the instructor and student that specifies the work remaining to be completed and the time frame for doing so. The work should be completed as soon as possible, but no later than the mid-point of the following grading period/term unless special written approval is granted by the Course Director and PD due to extraordinary circumstances. The student must petition the Course Director and the PD for such an extension at least two weeks before the end of the agreed upon deadline. Unless an extension has been approved by the Course Director and the PD, the "I" will convert to either an "F" or to the grade as specified in the written agreement after the mid-point of the semester. An "I" grade may not be changed to a "W" under any circumstances.

WITHDRAWALS

A student can withdraw from a course up until the mid-point of the grading period/term and receive a "W" grade. Withdrawal after the midterm is not permitted without special approval by the PD. However, in the event of an illness or severe hardship beyond the student's control, the student should submit a written petition for permission to withdraw from the course to the Instructor and PD no later than the last day of classes. If permission is granted by the PD, a grade of "W" is recorded. If permission is not granted, then the student cannot withdraw from the class. A student who stops attending classes without withdrawing is assigned a "WF" grade unless the student's performance was failing, in which case a grade of "F" will be assigned.

POLICY TO ADD/DROP COURSES

All changes to student status (e.g., leave of absence; withdrawal, etc.) requires the submission of a Student Status Change Form.

Students receiving Financial Aid are required to discuss with the Office of Financial Aid potential impacts associated with a change to their status.

TRANSFER OF CREDITS

Requests to transfer graduate credits from another accredited US or Canadian institution are considered on an individual basis after students are admitted to the EVMS Biomedical Sciences Graduate Programs. International credits are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

A student may transfer up to 6 graduate credit hours, if all of the following conditions hold:

- Graduate course credits were completed at an accredited US or Canadian institution and reflected on an official transcript;
- Transfers can feasibly occur within the matriculation limit of this program;

- The grade earned is a 'B' or better; and
- Credits for the course were completed at a regionally accredited school or program in Biomedical Sciences.

All transfer requests must be made ***no later than one full term prior to graduation from the program***.

Requests for credit transfer are subject to the approval of the PD. Students wishing to request graduate credits to be transferred into the Biomedical Sciences Graduate programs are required to submit to the Program Administrative Office:

1. a copy of the syllabus for the course and
2. a Transfer Approval Request Form

The PD may consult with teaching faculty as appropriate. Grades that are approved for transfer are included on a student's transcript; however, transferred grades are not included in semester or cumulative GPA calculations.

Students who have completed a Master's degree in Biomedical Sciences Research at EVMS prior to matriculating in this PhD program, should refer to the transfer policy provided in Appendix I.

PROGRAM DEADLINES

Students are expected to meet all program deadlines. These deadlines are provided in this handbook and on the Student Resource Center (LMS). Meeting deadlines for the program fosters the development of professionalism. Failure to meet deadlines for the program results in academic consequences, which are academic warning and academic probation.

ACADEMIC WARNING will apply to students who fail to submit required documents or forms, and/or fail to register for courses more than TWO (2) weeks after the deadline.

ACADEMIC PROBATION will apply to students who fail to submit required documents or forms, and/or fail to register for courses more than FOUR (4) weeks after the deadline.

OF NOTE: Academic Warning and Academic Probation become a permanent part of a student's academic record. Continued failure to meet deadlines that span a further TWO (2) semesters place the student at risk of additional disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from the program.

ACADEMIC WARNING

An academic warning may be issued to a student who fails to meet program requirements, or who misses deadlines for submission of required forms, course evaluations, etc. An academic warning will become part of a student's academic record. The PD will send the student a letter informing them of the requirements they have failed to meet, describing how they may fulfill the requirements, and indicating further actions that may be taken (e.g.,

academic probation) if the requirements are not met.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

1. If the **cumulative GPA falls below 3.0**, if a **student fails to meet program deadlines** (as specified in this Handbook), **does not submit course evaluations in a timely manner** (see below), or **is not making adequate progress** in dissertation research, the student may be placed on academic probation. Probation indicates the student is at risk in the program and serves as a notification that grades must improve and/or milestones must be met in a timely manner if dismissal is to be avoided.
2. No student may remain on probation for more than two consecutive semesters. Failure to attain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 after two semesters of probation will result in dismissal from the program. Students dismissed from the program are not permitted to take additional Biomedical Sciences courses at EVMS.
3. A student must make academic progress during the first semester on probation (e.g., the GPA must increase) or be subject to dismissal from the program.
4. A student who is placed on academic probation twice will be dismissed from the program unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the PD and as advised by the Executive Committee.

The PD will make every reasonable effort to notify students of their academic status. A letter will be mailed to each student placed on probation or dismissed from the program. It is the responsibility of every student whose GPA falls below 3.0 to check with the PD to determine his/her/their academic status. Non-receipt of a letter by a student placed on probation or dismissed from the program will not be considered as grounds for claiming eligibility to enroll for a subsequent semester.

DISMISSAL

No student may remain on probation more than two consecutive semesters. Failure to attain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 after two semesters of probation will result in dismissal from the Program. Students dismissed from the program are not permitted to take additional Biomedical Sciences courses at EVMS.

APPEALING DISMISSAL

Reinstatement is generally not allowed, but special cases may be considered after a written appeal by the dismissed student to the Dean of the School of Health Professions, who will confer with the Executive Committee. Written appeals must explain:
(1) why the student is likely to succeed if reinstated,
(2) how any deficiencies or extenuating circumstances have been resolved, and
(3) present a plan for finishing the program.

APPEALS AND GRIEVANCE

Students in the School of Health Professions have the right to due process involving grievances and appeals. The student should discuss the grievance with the PD. If the grievance is not resolved, a student may file a written appeal to the Dean of the EVMS School of Health Professions within seven days of the student's notification of the PD's decision. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Dean will notify the Registrar accordingly. The Dean or a designee will review all pertinent material and meet with the student. The Dean may convene a Grievance/Appeals Committee composed of PDs, faculty, students, and/or administrators not directly involved in the grievance. All testimony, evidence, and witnesses relevant to the appeal shall be made available to this Committee. The student has the right to appear before the Committee, present testimony and such witnesses or evidence as deemed relevant by the Committee. The student shall not have the right to be represented by counsel at these Committee meetings. The Committee will submit its recommendations to the Dean after the review is completed.

The Dean will notify the student within ten days of his/her/their decision. The decision may include reinstatement, retention, probation, termination, suspension, special academic assignments, or other interventions deemed appropriate to the situation. The judgment of the Dean concerning the grievance shall be final and binding on all parties, with the exception of recommending the termination of a student's participation in an academic program.

In the case of termination from an academic program, the student may file a written appeal to the EVMS Executive Vice President within five days of the student's notification from the Dean of the School of Health Professions. The Executive Vice President will review all pertinent material and notify the student within ten days of receipt of the appeal of his/her/their decision. The decision of the President/Provost is final.

CURRICULUM POLICIES

Continuous full-time registration is expected of all students in the program. A full-time course load is a minimum of 9 credits in the Fall and Spring, and 6 credits each Summer. Students must receive approval from the Program Director in advance for permission to register for less than the full course load, or for more than 14 credits in the Fall or Spring semesters.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

It is highly recommended that the student fulfills all requirements prior to leaving EVMS!

If a student chooses to leave campus prior to completing ALL requirements. The student should

- Discuss with the Program Director

- Understand that they will be responsible for tuition fees
- Defend dissertation within 3 months of leaving campus
- All dissertation requirements must be completed within 3 months of their dissertation. Failure to achieve these deadlines may result in no degree being awarded.

SAFEASSIGN PROGRAM SCANNING OF MAJOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

SafeAssign is available to students and faculty to support the integrity of provided work assignments.

PURPOSES

1. To teach students proper ways to cite and use material from others' work.
2. To teach students the difference between citation, quotation, and plagiarism.
3. To ensure that students' writing assignments do not contain plagiarized material.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will be taught how to use the SafeAssign program to ensure they have not unintentionally plagiarized.
2. SafeAssign reports showing little or no similarity to published work or internet sources identified by the program must be submitted along with the following major writing assignments:
    a. Assignments and exam essay questions as requested by Course Directors
    b. Research proposal for Scientific Writing and Research Design (year 2)
    c. Candidacy Exam (Spring of Year 2)
    d. Dissertation Aims Page and Dissertation Proposal (Fall of Year 3)
    e. Dissertation
3. Short phrases or standard descriptive wording of concepts or lists of items are acceptable, even if they are identical to phrases in published works of others.
4. Phrases or sentences longer than a few words that are very similar to published material, or which have had a small number of words changed, will not be allowed. Students must put ideas into their own words, even if the ideas come from published work (which should be properly cited).
5. Quotations should be discouraged, except in rare instances when a quotation is unique, historical, or expresses a new and important idea.
6. All results or ideas of others should be properly cited. The correct article(s) and/or book chapter(s) in which the results or ideas were published should be cited for each of these.

POLICY ON USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We recognize there are challenges to appropriately incorporating generative artificial intelligence (AI) into the program. These policies, along with unified EVMS policies, are under

development. Students are responsible for their own work and learning should not be ceded to chatbots. Students may be called upon to support their answers to assignments in any course. Any work that has used AI in its development must be cited as such.

See also the EVMS guidelines for Generative Artificial Intelligence

POLICY FOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES STUDENTS THAT EXPERIENCE CONFLICT LEADING UP TO SEPARATION FROM A LABORATORY

It is hoped that the placement of a student within an advisor's laboratory has been successful; however, it is recognized that circumstances can evolve. Changes include, but are not limited to, Research Advisor Leaves EVMS, Funding Issues, Changing Area of Interest, Incompatibility, Students not in Good Standing. A structured process is in place if a student and/or advisor feels they need help to resolve a change/conflict which may lead up to a need to move laboratories.

1. **Research Advisor Leaves EVMS**: Should the research advisor take a significant leave from EVMS, the Program Director will review the student's progress and endeavor to identify a suitable replacement research advisor(s). The final decision is at the discretion of the Program Director and will be based on funding availability, the needs of the student and time to program completion.

2. **Funding Issues**: The primary responsibility for providing financial support for a student is with the Advisor and their Department (Chair). Should the research advisor, supported by their Department Chair, be unable to financially support the student, the research advisor must notify the Program Director as soon as possible. The Program Director will review with the Department Chais alternate funding options. A change in advisor may be required. The final decision is at the discretion of the Program Director and will be based on funding availability, the needs of the student and time to program completion.

3. **Changing Area of Interest:** Students research that is significantly advancing away from their advisors' area of expertise should meet with their research advisor to discuss options to best support the student. Should a change of research advisor be deemed necessary, the student, current advisor and new potential advisor should discuss with the Program Director. A supported move will be dependent of progression through the course, funding availability, and the students standing in the Program.

4. **Incompatibility:** A conflict or problem that cannot be resolved between an advisor and a student should be reported to the PD by either party. The PD will meet with the student and advisor to try to understand the problem. If the problem is not resolved, the student and advisor will be required to meet with the student's Guidance Committee and the PD or other EVMS officials, as appropriate. If, after attempts to resolve the conflict or issue, either the student or the advisor wishes to terminate the mentoring relationship, a written request must be submitted to and approved by the PD. The request should give reason(s) why the mentoring relationship should end. Mere issues of academic performance may not be sufficient. If the student wishes to leave a laboratory, the advisor and the PD must receive written notice of termination of the mentoring relationship. The student will leave the lab

at a date mutually agreed upon by the student and the advisor. After giving the PD written notice this will occur within 90 days. The student will continue to perform research in the mentor's laboratory until the agreed termination date. If a separation is supported, the PD will make every effort to relocate the student with a new advisor, this may include re-starting the program. Progression of the student in the Program is dependent on identifying a suitable advisor with funding to support the student.

5. **Students not in Good Standing**: Should the research advisor determine that a student is unable to meet the academic or technical requirements of the Program they must notify the Program Director. A remediation plan will be developed between the Advisor, PD and student, possibly including Student Affairs and/or Human Resources. Under no circumstances may a research advisor dismiss a PhD student from a laboratory without Program Director and Human Resources approval. If the PD determines the interests of the student are best served by changing Advisor, they will make every effort to relocate the student with a new advisor, this may the student to re-start the program. Progression of the student in the Program is dependent on identifying a suitable advisor with funding to support the student.

   For a student that changes advisors, reformation of their Guidance Committee is not anticipated but may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

   For students that are unable to find alternative Advisors to provide stipend support, progression in the program is not guaranteed. Alternative paths for the student will be discussed with the Program Director.

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REQUIRED ACTIVITIES FOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH PHD STUDENTS

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) must be completed annually by each student, second year and above. The purpose of the IDP is to aid the student in developing their career plan and explore their goals as they develop and grow as scientists in the program. Annual submission of the IDP provides the student and advisor the opportunity to revisit the student's goals and make changes to the student's path as needed. The form will be submitted by the student to the student's advisor. The student and advisor will then meet to review the student's career goals and the progress they are making towards them. The final plan will be approved by the advisor and must be submitted to the Biomedical Sciences Program Office BEFORE December 15 annually.

DOCUMENTED SEMINAR ATTENDANCE

Students are actively encouraged to broaden a wide scientific knowledge base and are required to attend at least FIVE (5) basic science seminars given by faculty-level scientists (Ph.D. or M.D.). Students are required to document attendance by completion of a form that will be submitted to the program office monthly. The forms will be filed in the student's academic record. You can access the seminar attendance form via the LMS resource center at this link.

Students who do not submit forms within 2 weeks of the end of the academic year will be placed on academic warning, and if the evaluations are not submitted 4 weeks after the end of the academic year, they will be placed on academic probation.

ATTENDANCE AT RESEARCH DAY, GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

To support professional exposure and development, students are required to participate in and/or attend Research Day (mid-October) and Graduate Student Research Conference (Spring) each year they are in the program. Attendance will be documented. Students should attend the entirety of both events. See the Attendance Form in the LMS Resource Center.

Students who do not attend will be put on academic warning. Extenuating circumstances must be approved by the PD. Students may be required to provide supporting documentation for an approved absence.

ANNUAL ORAL PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH

PhD students, second year and above, should present their research to an appropriate audience outside their own laboratory research group annually. Possible options include Research Day, regional and national meetings/conferences, departmental seminars, local/regional interest groups. NOTE, presentations to the Guidance Committee or within OCF (BP 708) do not meet this requirement. Presentations given should be documented on the appropriate form and submitted to the Program Office within two weeks of giving the presentation.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Feedback is an essential component of improving the Program and Course content. The opinions of our students are highly valued and influential in directing changes to the program and program courses. Students are required to submit the appropriate course evaluations for all courses taken.

Students who do not submit course evaluations within 5 days of the end of a semester will be placed on academic warning, and if the evaluations are not submitted 4 weeks after the end of a semester, they will be placed on academic probation. These actions will become part of the student's permanent academic record. Continued failure to submit course evaluations by the deadline for an additional 2 semesters may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

PROGRESSION THROUGH THE CURRICULUM

Throughout ALL years associated with the PhD Program, students must complete the relevant Required Activities for Biomedical Sciences PhD Students as indicated on page 27.

YEAR 1: BASIC BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AND RESEARCH SKILLS

THE FOCUS OF YEAR ONE is to impart foundational knowledge, develop general research skills, expose students to develop an understanding of scientific journals, effective scientific communication, provide exposure to research experiences and start developing critical thinking.

Students will be assigned a faculty mentor for the first TEN (10) weeks. Additionally, students will have access to a group of faculty counsellors and student peers following matriculation. Faculty counsellors are available to advise and support students in their integration to EVMS and the Biomedical Sciences Program.

During the first year, the student must satisfactorily complete all required courses, including **three** laboratory rotations. Laboratory rotations are opportunities to explore different research areas and research environments. Students are highly encouraged to build their portfolio and exposure. They should complete rotations in different laboratories and PIs.

Laboratory research rotations are for a period of 8 weeks and require at **least** 88 hours of lab time (**11-20 hours/week**). The rotations must be completed by the end of the first year.

Up to 12 credits of graduate courses taken at other institutions can be transferred into the curriculum for each student at the discretion of the PD.
End of the first year :

- Student will take the Qualifying Exam (late June/early July)
- Start laboratory Research

HOURS IN THE RESEARCH LABORATORY

Research is a full-time job and dedication by students is expected to maximize their return. Students are required to be in their research laboratories full-time and should work a minimum of **40 hours per week,** minus required class attendance hours. To make optimal progress in their research, **most students will find it necessary to work longer hours, including evening and/or weekends.** Before the start of Year 2: Prepare for mentored research.

Before June 1st:	Identify an Advisor.
Before June 15th:	Identify Guidance Committee Chair and members.
Before July 1st:	Submit completed Guidance Committee form to the program office.

YEAR 2: SPECIALIZATION

THE FOCUS OF YEAR TWO is to build practical experience onto the foundations established in year one. Students are provided the opportunity to apply their knowledge to a specialized research project and to take a theoretical project through stages associated with project development. Students are provided opportunities to present data and interact in a discussive format with diverse faculty.

During year 2, the student will satisfactorily complete the remaining required courses, as well as the **elective courses** as needed. The student will prepare for their future research area of interest which will gain focus in preparing for and sitting the Candidacy Exam (BEFORE JULY 1, year 2) and subsequent pre-doctoral fellowship application.

BEFORE February 1 (Spring year 2): The student will meet with their Guidance Committee.

The student will work with their Guidance Committee to determine their research area of focus and prepare for their Candidacy Exam.

BEFORE July 1 (Summer Year 2): The Candidacy Exam must be completed.

CANDIDACY EXAM (SPRING YEAR 2)

During the Spring of Year 2, PhD students will prepare for their Candidacy Exam (see Appendix E).

Eligibility for Candidacy Exam: the student must have completed Year 2 coursework and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. A student with a GPA below 3.0, or one who is on Academic Probation, will not be eligible to take the Candidacy Exam.

The Candidacy Exam must be successfully completed BEFORE July 1, including any portions that must be retaken. If the Candidacy Exam is NOT successfully passed before July 1, the PhD student will stop receiving a stipend and be dismissed from the PhD Program. Alternative paths for the students will be discussed with the PD.

YEAR 3: RESEARCH AREA DEVELOPMENT AND DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

THE FOCUS OF YEAR THREE, is to develop a research area of interest. This will build on the skills developed during the first two years. The one-on-one mentoring provided by their advisor will support an intense development of research critical thinking, knowledge and associated technical skills. Students will build confidence in their presentation skills through numerous opportunities to practice. The development of a Dissertation Proposal will foster critical writing skill and build on prior structured coursework on Scientific Writing.

Submission of a pre-doctoral fellowship application with allow for exposure to external peer review. Students must complete all required coursework and may continue to take additional coursework with approval of their Dissertation Advisors.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

BEFORE August 15 of Year 3. A Specific Aims page must be approved by the student's Committee The format for the dissertation proposal is that used for NIH F31 grant applications. Alternative formats for students applying for targeted external pre-doctoral fellowships may be accepted at the discretion of the Guidance Committee.

BEFORE December 15 of Year 3 The Dissertation Proposal must be examined, defended and APPROVED. Detailed instructions and the timeline for this requirement are in Appendix F.

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YEAR 4 TO COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM:

THE FOCUS OF YEARS FOUR and ABOVE are to hone development towards independent research progression. The student is expected to approach an expert understanding in their research and effectively convey the impact of their studies in both oral and written formats. Consideration is provided for future career pathway options. These years lead up to the students' dissertation preparation and defense that precede an award of the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences.

At a minimum, ONE first author journal article in a mid-tier journal (relative to the area of research) must be accepted for publication before the student may receive the PhD degree.

Before completing the Program, students must register for 6-9 credits of "Dissertation" (BP899) in their final semester. Entry of a student into their final semester is decided upon by the Guidance Committee. The form "PERMISSION TO TAKE THE PhD EXAMINATION" must be signed by the Guidance Committee members and submitted to the Program Office.

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APPENDIX A: STUDENT CHECKLIST FOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES PhD DEGREE PROGRAM

YEAR 1 – FALL SEMESTER

- ☐ READ the Biomedical Sciences PhD Program Handbook. Program Forms are found on the Learning Management system (LMS).
- ☐ Set up laboratory rotations in advance. Rotations should be primarily chosen based on the student's interests and the ability of the laboratory to support the student's stipend after Year 1.
- ☐ Submit Fall Course Evaluations.

YEAR 1 - SPRING SEMESTER

- ☐ Complete all required courses and three Laboratory Rotations
- ☐ Meet with Initial Guidance Committee for lab rotations and choice of Advisor
- ☐ Submit Spring Course Evaluations and Seminar Attendance Forms.

YEAR 1 - SUMMER SEMESTER

- ☐ BEFORE June 1: Select a Laboratory for Dissertation Research and inform Program Office.
- ☐ Complete qualifying exam.
- ☐ **BEFORE June 15**: Establish Guidance Committee and get approval for advanced courses.
- ☐ **BEFORE July 1**: Submit Guidance Committee form to the Program Office.

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YEAR 2 - FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER

- ☐ Complete Advanced Coursework
- ☐ Meet with Guidance Committee in the Fall Semester; Submit "RECORD OF GUIDANCE/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEETING" form and minutes of meeting to Program Office within 2 weeks of the meeting.
- ☐ **BEFORE December 15**: Submit First Individual Development Plan to Program Office.
- ☐ Submit Fall Course Evaluations.
- ☐ **BEFORE April 15**: Initial Candidacy Exam must be taken. If Exam must be retaken, this requirement must be completed in its entirety by July 1.
- ☐ **BEFORE May 1**: If passed the first time, the final, revised Candidacy Exam document must be submitted to Program Office with signed form indicating the requirement is successfully completed.
- ☐ **BEFORE May 31**: Submit Spring Course Evaluations and Seminar Attendance Forms.
- ☐ **BEFORE July 1:** If exam is taken twice, the final, revised Candidacy Exam document must be submitted to Program Office with signed form indicating the requirement is successfully completed.

YEAR 3

- ☐ **BEFORE August 15**: Dissertation Proposal Specific Aims page must be written, defended, and `approved by the Guidance Committee, with the signed form submitted to the Program Office.
- ☐ **BEFORE November 10**: Dissertation Proposal should be submitted to the Guidance Committee no later than this date to ensure time to review prior to defense.
- ☐ **BEFORE December 1**: Dissertation Proposal should be defended by this date.

- ☐ **December 15**: Dissertation Proposal should be completed, defended, and approved. The signed form, and an electronic copy of the proposal, should be submitted to the Program Office.
- ☐ **December 15:** Submit 2nd Individual Development Plan to Program Office.
- ☐ **December 31:** Submit Fall Course Evaluations.
- ☐ **May 31**: Submit Spring Course Evaluations and Seminar Attendance Forms.

YEAR 4 TO END OF PROGRAM

- ☐ Register for, and take, Oral Communication Forum (Fall and Spring only) and Research credits (all semesters) each semester until final semester.
- ☐ BEFORE December 15: Submit Individual Development Plan to Program Office annually.
- ☐ Submit Fall Course Evaluations annually.
- ☐ Submit Spring Course Evaluations and Seminar Attendance Forms annually.
- ☐ Hold Guidance Committee meetings annually

COMPLETE RESEARCH

- ☐ Submit manuscript(s) for publication. One first author journal article in a mid-tier journal must be accepted for publication before the student may receive the PhD degree.
- ☐ Submit "PERMISSION TO TAKE THE PhD EXAMINATION OR REQUIREMENT" form to Program Director.
- ☐ For format of Dissertation, see the "Guide for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations" available from the Program office.
- ☐ Final copy of dissertation submitted to the Dissertation Committee at least 3 weeks prior to the defense. The date, time, and place of the defense, as well as the title of the dissertation must also be given to the Program Office at this time.
- ☐ Submit an electronic copy of the Dissertation to the Program Office 2 weeks before the defense to check formatting. Submit SafeAssign report; Make corrections; both documents must be approved by Program Director.

- ☐ Present seminar and defend dissertation; submit “
- ☐ RESULT OF PhD EXAMINATION OR REQUIREMENT” Revise dissertation and obtain approval/signature of committee members
- ☐ Submit the Dissertation Acceptance and Processing form to the Program Administrator. The original and 1 or more copies must be delivered to the bindery by the student. Return the receipt. Return one copy of the bound dissertation to the Program Office for submission to the EVMS Library and provide one copy to the Advisor.
- ☐ Exit Interview with Program Director (required) before leaving campus.
- ☐ Graduation Ceremony (optional)

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APPENDIX B: GUIDANCE COMMITTEES

FIRST YEAR ADVISOR

Students will be assigned a Faculty Mentor for the first TEN (10) weeks.

The PD, and/or faculty counselors, will be available to provide advisory support for first year students.

INITIAL GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

The Initial Guidance Committee consists of the PD, Faculty Mentor and faculty counselors identified by the PD. The Initial Guidance Committee members are available to counsel first-year students about required and elective coursework and choosing an advisor for their research.

The roles of the Initial Guidance Committee include:

1. *Determine the student's objectives in the program and career goals.*
   The student's objectives in the program and goals upon graduation are related. It is essential to know these goals to schedule appropriate coursework and to give guidance concerning research and training opportunities at EVMS.

2. *Provide guidance to satisfy the student's goals while meeting all the program requirements.*
   In the spring semester of year 1, the Initial Guidance Committee will meet with the student to review the student's goals.

3. *Counsel the student in the early phases of research (as needed).*
   The program encourages students to begin exploring their research interests at the earliest opportunity to facilitate selection of a research mentor and dissertation project. The student should utilize the Initial Guidance Committee for counsel on research activities prior to choosing an advisor.

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PhD Dissertation Committee Overview

The purpose of the PhD Dissertation Committee is to help the student develop research goals and direction, while assessing progress toward the completion of original research appropriate for completion of a PhD dissertation consistent with the guidelines of the Program.

Overall, the major goals of the PhD Dissertation Committee are to:

1. Critically assess the student's progress in both a specific research project and development as a scientist.
2. Provide advice and assistance to the student to overcome hurdles to progression
3. Assure that the student's research project remains focused and within reasonable scope
4. Guide the student toward completion of the project in a timely fashion, resulting in at least one first author primary research publication.

Developing a PhD Dissertation Committee

The student should work closely with their dissertation advisor (PI) to establish the composition of their Dissertation Committee. The committee will have a minimum of four (4) members and must include:

- The Dissertation Advisor (PI), but this person may not serve as Chair.
- The Committee Chair usually will be at the academic rank of Associate Professor or higher and must be a member of Biomedical Sciences graduate faculty. The Chair should not be a close collaborator with student's advisor.
- The committee members must include at least two other members of Biomedical Sciences graduate program faculty.
- Individuals with current academic appointments at Associate Professor and above from recognized academic institutes may be added to the committee if they offer a particular expertise.

Once the committee members are selected, they must be approved by the Biomedical Sciences PD by submitting the Initial Guidance Committee Meeting Form *(in LMS resource center).*

All committee members should have expertise enabling them to provide critical and helpful advice in an area of the dissertation research. Committee members must also be willing to read and evaluate the dissertation in a timely manner.

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The committee should serve the needs of the student. As projects proceed in new directions,

perspective changes, or the student feels the committee is not meeting their needs, the composition of the committee can be changed without embarrassment to the student in consultation with their PhD dissertation advisor and the PD.

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APPENDIX C: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Organize all committee meetings before the deadlines. It is recommended that students demonstrate professionalism and respect by organizing meetings several weeks in advance and not assuming an immediate availability of the faculty committee members. Please be respectful to faculty members' many commitments. Students should provide written material at least three (3) weeks prior to any expectation of feedback.
Initial committee meeting must be BEFORE December 30 (year 2) but ideally should be within one month of formation of the guidance committee. Subsequent guidance committee meetings must occur at a minimum annually. Student meetings with the committee Chair must occur every 6 months. More frequent meetings are encouraged, as necessary. The program will stop processing enrollment and stipend support fo students that fail to meet the minimum requirements.

For each meeting, the student is responsible for preparing:

- a written summary outlining the dissertation project
- progress on this project
- objectives for completion of the dissertation, which should include a timetable.

The summary should make clear what would be necessary to constitute an acceptable PhD dissertation, in the student's view. A copy of this summary is to be given to each member of the dissertation committee and to the graduate program office. Students should present and critically discuss experiments (successful or unsuccessful) at each meeting. Students should be current on the literature in relevant areas and should be prepared to discuss broader issues of relevance and importance as well as experimental data.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The student shall:

1. Be responsible for working with their Guidance Meet all required deadlines and milestones while in the Biomedical Sciences PhD Program.

2. Committee to schedule committee meetings in a timely manner. Provide appropriate notice for the guidance committee.

3. Arrive at committee meetings well prepared.

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4. Record minutes of their meetings, to be approved by the advisor. These minutes shall be detailed and describe the discussion and decisions made by the committee, and must be signed

5. by both the student and the advisor. The Record of Guidance **Committee Meeting** form and minutes must be submitted to the program office within two (2) weeks of the meeting.

6. Coordinate with the Committee Chair to provide the Guidance Committee with copies of the appropriate meeting forms. **Forms are available in the Biomedical Sciences Resource Center.**

7. Procure PD approval to make changes to their Guidance Committee by submitting the Request for Change in Guidance Committee form

8. Pass Qualifying Exam

9. Pass Candidacy Exam (see Appendix E).

10. Complete Dissertation Proposal Appendix F.

11. Submit annual (second year and above) Individual Development Plan (IDP) to the Program Office.

12. Submit Seminar Attendance Forms to the Program Office as required.

13. Complete and submit Course Evaluations by required deadlines.

14. Give an Oral Research Presentation outside of the student's laboratory group each year.

15. Submit, advisor-approved, vacation/sick leave forms as necessary to the Program Office

16. Prepare and defend their dissertation research

17. Complete all requirements for graduation

APPENDIX D: RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE ADVISOR (PI), GUIDANCE COMMITTEE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The following sections (I- III) outline the relative responsibilities assigned to the advisor (PI) for the student, Committee member, and Committee Chair. *This is provided for the information of the student.*

Responsibilities of the Advisor (PI)

The PhD advisor (PI) should provide a verbal or written preliminary evaluation to the student of the adequacy of the written summary prepared for each committee meeting. The advisor should provide both the student and committee with their evaluation of the student's progress and prospects. The PI is expected to be the primary reviewer of the student's written dissertation and to help the student in preparation of their oral defense.

Responsibilities of the Guidance Committee

The Committee should provide candid advice to both the student and advisor with the goal of facilitating progress towards the best possible PhD dissertation, scientific development of the student, and a timely progression toward their dissertation defense. The committee should explicitly decide whether the summary of the PhD dissertation project describes goals adequate for award of a PhD degree and communicate this decision with any modifications or reservations to the student and advisor.

The committee should consider at each meeting:

- project strengths and weaknesses.
- the realism of the proposed timetable.
- the student's familiarity with the relevant literature.
- student's experimental strengths and weaknesses.
- the adequacy of advice provided to the student by the dissertation advisor and others.

The committee should provide advice in as positive a manner as possible to provide support to the student in what is a very time-sensitive undertaking.

The committee has the responsibility, particularly for dissertation projects that may be overly ambitious, to set deadlines for obtaining significant results that would justify the students approach and/or explore contingency projects. Between meetings, the committee members should be willing to meet with the student for informal advice and discussions.

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The committee members, excluding the dissertation advisor, have the responsibility at each meeting to meet separately with the dissertation advisor and with the student. This can occur at the beginning and/or end of the meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to hold confidential discussions on any subject(s) relevant for the student's progress and welfare.

Responsibilities of the Committee Chair

The Committee Chair should prepare a brief written report on each meeting for submission to the graduate Biomedical Sciences program office. This report will include among other things, a statement on the timetable and the adequacy of the student's statement of proposed work necessary for an acceptable PhD dissertation. The Chair should meet separately with the student and advisor after each meeting to discuss this report and other aspects of the meeting. While advice should be provided in as positive a manner as possible, the Chair has the responsibility of identifying potential and actual problems ensuring that candid advice on the project and/or the student's progress and prospects is conveyed to the student and the program. The Committee Chair should meet individually with the student at least every six (6) months.

The Chair has the responsibility to ensure that any concerns about the student's interests or welfare are conveyed to the Biomedical Sciences PD and/or Executive Committee. The Chair should be acquainted with services provided by the medical school and the graduate program to enhance student welfare and should facilitate student use of these services when appropriate.

Activities, Hints and Timeline for the Guidance Committee

Each PhD student is responsible for establishing their guidance committee BEFORE June 15 (Summer of Year 1) and reported to the Program Office BEFORE July 1.

Committee members must complete meeting forms in a timely manner.

INITIAL MEETING (Fall Semester Year2)

A brief project description should be presented orally to the Guidance Committee for comment, modification and approval in the Fall semester of Year 2.

FOLLOW-UP MEETING

Review the student's progress, brief project description. Counsel and respond to problems or questions from the student

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Candidacy Examination (Spring/Summer Year 2)

The Candidacy Examination is a gateway to the student continuing in the program and entering dissertation research. The committee is charged with ensuring independent development of the proposal by the student, provide limited input and examine the knowledge of the student. The Candidacy Exam is used to determine the student's ability to formulate and defend an original proposal on their own. The exam has a written and oral portion. The written portion of the Exam is a structured proposal based on the student's research area.

Instructions and timeline for the Candidacy Examination are in Appendix E.

Timeline Summary

- **BEFORE February 1 of Year 2**. Committee approves the focus of the proposal
- **BEFORE March 15 Year 2** Committee is in receipt of the full proposal.
- **BEFORE APRIL 15 Year 2** Candidacy Examination (first attempt) administered.

  The oral component presentation of proposal (30 - 45 mins, as a guide) followed by Committee questions. The Your questions should be formulated to challenge the student to defend their ideas and analyze weaknesses in the proposal. You should also test the student's knowledge and thinking in subject areas covered in the student's core and advanced coursework.

  Decide outcome of the Candidacy Exam at the meeting. If more than one Committee member votes failed, the examination has been failed. The Committee can opt Pass (minor modifications) or Fail (major modifications) one or both of the components (Written or Oral).

- **BEFORE MAY 1** A student that is successful at the first attempt must complete requested revisions (within 14 days), and report result of the Candidacy Exam to the Program Office.
- **Within 30 days of first Candidacy** Exam Retake of either written or oral component alone must be completed

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- **BEFORE JULY 1** Candidacy Exam (second attempt) Student must complete repeat examination in both written and oral components.
    - A second failure on either portion of the examination will result in cessation of stipend support for the student and dismissal from the PhD Program.

Dissertation Proposal (Fall Year 3)

The expectation is that the student will submit their finalized Dissertation Proposal for a pre-doctoral fellowship award. The committee is charged in guiding the student to this goal. The Guidance Committee will provide constructive review. Detailed instructions of format and timeline are in Appendix F.

Timeline Summary

- **BEFORE August 1 of Year 3** receive the students Specific Aims
- **BEFORE August 15 of Year 3** review/approve students Specific Aims page
- **BEFORE November 10 Year 3** receive student's proposal.
- **BEFORE December 1 of Year 3** conduct defense of students

Dissertation Proposal.

- **BEFORE December 15 of Year 3** review revisions to Dissertation Proposal and sign, as appropriate, required forms "RESULT OF PhD EXAMINATION OR REQUIREMENT"

Dissertation Research Phase.

Meet with the student annually. Be available (as needed) outside of meetings.
Explore progress of the student research and individual development. Suggested questions are:

Describe your major research accomplishments since the last committee meeting?"

Discuss the major challenges you face in your project, and how do you plan to overcome them?

Assist in solutions to challenges and determine the originality (students own work is a requirement) of the research.

Assess satisfactory progress on the research project. Unsatisfactory research progress (majority decision) will result in Academic Probation for the student with THREE (3) months minimum before reevaluation. Sustained unsatisfactory progress must be reported to the PD and may result in a suspension of stipend and program dismissal.

Dissertation Writing and Presentation Phase.

The Advisor to the student has primary responsibility for reviewing the dissertation proposal and helping the student prepare for their oral defense. The Committee should receive the dissertation after initial review by the Advisor to the student. The written dissertation should be the students own work.

The committee will guide, review and critique the student in the writing and oral presentation of the Dissertation.

The Committee should expect prior notification from the student to determine their availability to review the dissertation. Additionally, members can expect to be in receipt of the dissertation a **minimum of THREE (3) weeks** before the defense. Each Dissertation should be appropriately formatted and validated for originality using SafeAssign Program (or similar).

A student must have a minimum of one first authored research manuscript (mid-tier or above) accepted for publication prior to a Dissertation Defense.

Dissertation Defense

The defense explores with the candidate their original research strategy, substantive contribution to the research area, impact and command of methodology. The committee should consider the dissertation to be in near-final form prior to approval for scheduling the oral defense. The student will arrange the dissertation defense.

Consists of two oral components: an oral presentation to an open audience and a closed defense to the Guidance Committee.

Committee meet for in-depth examination of the student on hypothesis, results, background, methodology and conclusions. These discussions are driven by presentation and content of the written dissertation.

Committee members excuse the student and discuss and grade their performance. Should more than one committee member to fail the student, the result will be a failure. The student is informed of the decision.

The result will be reported to the Program Director using the form "RESULT OF PhD EXAMINATION OR REQUIREMENT" within 10 days. In case of failure, the committee should recommend if student should have a re-examination after 3 months of be dismissed from the program.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL.

Within three months of a successful oral defense written Dissertations must be approved and submitted for binding.

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APPENDIX E: CANDIDACY EXAM

All PhD students are required to pass this examination according to the schedule and guidelines outlined. Failure to pass the Candidacy Exam will result in a cessation of stipend support and Program dismissal.

The Candidacy Exam occurs in the **Spring of YEAR 2**.

Purpose

The purpose of the Candidacy Exam is to demonstrate that a student can assimilate the skills learned by this point in the program (scientific knowledge, experimental design, and laboratory techniques) towards a competitive proposal. The format allows each student a pathway to develop a pre-doctoral fellowship submission. Student should defend their proposal, which will focus on detailed background to their research area and an outline of proposed experimental path.

Overview of timelines:

BEFORE FEBRUARY 1	Guidance Committee topic approval
BEFORE MARCH 15	Submit written Proposal to Guidance Committee (3 weeks before exam date)
BEFORE APRIL 1	Set Guidance Committee meeting
BEFORE APRIL 15	Defend Candidacy Exam
BEFORE MAY 1	All revisions for a passed exam completed

IF ONE COMPONENT OF THE EXAM IS NOT PASSED

BEFORE MAY 15	Complete retake of the required exam portion

IF BOTH COMPONENTS OF THE EXAM ARE NOT PASSED

BEFORE JUNE 15	Defend Candidacy Exam (re-take)
BEFORE JULY 1	All revisions for a passed exam (re-take) completed

Note: These are hard deadlines. Failure to meet the deadlines or to pass any component of the exam on re-take will result in a cessation of stipend support and Program dismissal.

Detail of Schedule

BEFORE February 1: Student must have approval of their topic by the Guidance Committee.

The student will discuss ideas with their committee members to develop their proposal (Candidacy Exam).

This discussion may occur via several formats (email/zoom etc.). It is recommended that this discussion begin at the first Guidance Committee meeting held in the Fall of Year 2.

Approval must be granted **BEFORE February 1.**

The student and Guidance Committee will also set the date for the Candidacy Exam. This must be BEFORE April 15 (see below**).** The student is responsible for arranging/organizing meetings at the date/time agreed.

BEFORE March 15: Submit written grant proposal for the Candidacy Exam to the Guidance Committee members.

The proposal will be written in a current NIH F31 format (or alternative pre-doctoral

fellowship format).

The document must be formatted to meet current pre-doctoral fellowship requirements. This document must be original and submitted to SafeAssign prior to submitting to the Committee.

BEFORE April 15: Candidacy Exam Proposal must be defended, and examination taken by this date. The student will:
Provide an oral presentation on the proposal (time guidance 30 - 45 minutes)

Answer questions presented by the committee and defended the ideas proposed.

Be prepared to answer detailed enquiries related to their proposal and/or course work taken to date.

Ensure the exam occurs prior to the deadline (BEFORE April 15). The student may coordinate with the PD to substitute ONE committee member with a temporary faculty replacement. The substitute committee member must be a member of the BMS Program

and have appropriate expertise. The student's advisor MUST be present for the examination.

Respect the decision of the Committee at the conclusion of the Candidacy Exam. Potential outcomes are:

- Pass both written and oral components
  - Result of exam and final version of written proposal (with minor revisions addressed) to be submitted to the Program Office within

14 days (BEFORE May 1)
- Fail ONE of written (major revisions) or oral components
  - Retake/resubmit BEFORE May 15

- Fail BOTH written and Oral components
  - Retake the Candidacy Exam BEFORE June 15

Acknowledge that failure to take the examination BEFORE April 15 will be considered a failure of both written and oral components of the examination. In this case, the student will be allowed to take the examination ONE TIME ONLY**. The student must pass the examination BEFORE May 15, or the stipend support will cease.**

BEFORE May 15: Re-take the portion of the Exam the student has failed in first attempt. This will be either the written portions (major revisions) OR the oral portion of the Candidacy Exam.

If the student fails the written portion, they will be required to revise the document. To PASS, the revised written document must be approved by all committee members and require only minor revisions within 30 days of the first Exam (**BEFORE May 15**). All minor revision must be addressed, and the final written version submitted to the Program Office **BEFORE June 1.** If the student fails the oral portion of the exam, the student will re-take the oral examination.

This oral examination retake must be passed within 30 days of the first Exam (**BEFORE May 15**).

BEFORE June 15: Deadline to re-take the Candidacy Exam if the student failed BOTH parts of the Candidacy Exam. The Committee will report outcome at the end of the Candidacy Exam retake.

BEFORE July 1: All minor revisions to the written proposal retake must be addressed and the final written version submitted to the Program Office.

It is an **expectation** that the student will submit an application for a pre-doctoral fellowship for an external pre-doctoral fellowship award.

These are hard deadlines. Students should treat each as such. However, in circumstances of significant extenuating events that are document-supported, the PD may grant an extension to deadlines.

Students who **fail the Candidacy Exam re-take will immediately stop receiving their stipend** ☹. Alternative paths for a student who is dismissed from the PhD Program will be discussed with the PD.

APPENDIX F: DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The Dissertation Proposal should be written and defended in the **Fall Semester of Year 3**

The Dissertation Proposal helps create a structured guide and timeline for the proposed student's dissertation research. Writing the proposal develops and/or strengthens the student's writing skills. Equally, this formalized process provides experience in envisioning, conceptualizing, and planning their research project.

The format of the Dissertation Proposal is designed to facilitate an application, by the student, for pre-doctoral fellowships.

It is an expectation that the student will submit their finalized dissertation proposal to an external pre-doctoral fellowship award.
Should a student fail to meet the prescribed deadlines then the rules of academic warning/probation will apply.

Timelines

BEFORE August 1: Provide the committee members with completed Specific Aims page.

- The Specific Aims page should be no greater than ONE PAGE and include:
- Project Rationale
- Objective/hypothesis
- Aims with expected results
- Outline of major approaches
- Impact of the project
- This Specific Aims Page must be submitted to SafeAssign prior to presenting the aims to the Guidance Committee

BEFORE August 15: Defend Specific Aims page to the student's Guidance Committee.

The student should orally present an outline of the information in the Specific Aims.

Guidance Committee members may indicate their approval of the Specific Aims page to the Program Office (checking "Dissertation Proposal Specific Aims" box and sign form the "RESULT OF PhD EXAMINATION OR REQUIREMENT"). Or the committee may request revisions. Revisions must be completed and returned for

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review by the committee within 20 days.

BEFORE November 10 (and 3 weeks before Dissertation Proposal Defense): The student will provide to their committee a finalized copy of their full Dissertation Proposal.

With focus on experimental plan (less on extensive background), the student should develop their full proposal based on the current NIH F31 (pre-doctoral fellowship) format or alternative pre-doctoral fellowship format (must be pre-approved)

The Research Plan should include, for each Specific Aim:

- a project rationale,
- experiments to be performed,
- brief overview of methods,
- expected results,
- potential pitfalls, & alternate approaches
- impact
- etc.

The length of the Dissertation Proposal should not exceed the page limits for the current NIH F31 (or approved alternative) grant application.

BEFORE December 1: The student will present and orally defend their Dissertation Proposal to their Guidance Committee. The student will have TEN (10) days to address any revisions requested by their committee.

BEFORE December 15: The Dissertations Proposal should be approved.

RESULT OF PhD EXAMINATION OR REQUIREMENT" must be signed and submitted to the Program Office.

An electronic copy of the final, approved proposal should be submitted to the Program Office with the signed form.

Should the Dissertation Proposal and signed forms not be submitted to the Program Office by this deadline, the student may be loose stipend support. Mitigation for significant extenuating and document-supported circumstances may be considered by the PD.

It is an **expectation** of the student to inform their Guidance Committee of deviations from the Specific Aims/Dissertation proposal as the dissertation research project develops.

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APPENDIX G: DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND FINAL STEPS TO GRADUATION

For students within one year of graduation:

Student-lead publication(s) are required for graduation. While multiple publications are highly encouraged, the **minimum** requirement is **one *first-author journal manuscript accepted* for publication** in a mid-tier (or higher) peer-reviewed journal relative to their chosen discipline. Appropriate article(s) for the minimum requirement should be full research reports and not review articles or reports of technical advances. Highly unusual extenuating circumstances, such as insurmountable technical problems outside the student's and advisor's control, will be reviewed by the student's Committee and the Executive Committee of the Program.

The student should take the following steps to ensure completion of all degree requirements:

If the Guidance Committee expects the student to receive the PhD within 6 months, the Committee members must sign the form "PERMISSION TO TAKE THE PhD EXAMINATION." It is not necessary to state a defense date (just estimate the month). It takes most students 3-4 months to write their dissertations when the research is almost complete.

After the "PERMISSION TO TAKE THE PhD EXAMINATION" form is approved, the student should register for 9 credits of Dissertation (BP899) for the next semester (6 credits if during the Summer), and participation in Oral Communication Forum will be optional. If the committee does not think the student will finish in the above timeframe, the student should register for Research credits and take Oral Communication Forum. Students will be able to forgo registering for Oral Communication Forum for one semester.

Should the student not submit their dissertation to their Guidance Committee 30 days prior to the end of the semester in which they had planned to defend, they will be required to register for an additional semester of BP 899: Dissertation Research.

Write the dissertation. It must be complete and **approved by the advisor before** distribution to the committee. Use the format specified in the most recent Guide to Preparation of Theses and Dissertations, available from the Program Office. The dissertation must be given to committee members **at MINIMUM of *THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE DEFENSE*** to allow sufficient time for them to read it. Prior notification of committee members that the dissertation can be expected is strongly encouraged. At the same time, the dissertation should be given to the Program Administrator to check formatting. The dissertation must also be submitted to SafeAssign before the defense and the PDF report sent to the Program Director and Administrator (see SafeAssign Program Scanning of Major Writing Assignments policy).

THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE DEFENSE, notify the Program office of the: **title, date, time and location of the defense**.

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The student will provide time, date and place of the dissertation defense to the Program

Office at least three weeks in advance. The Program Administrator will notify the program faculty, students and administrators at EVMS of the date of the defense at least two weeks in advance. The location should be chosen by the student and the Advisor and should have sufficient room for at least twenty people to attend.

Defend and Revise the Dissertation as instructed by the Committee. After revisions are accepted by the committee, provide the Program Administrator an electronic or paper (not on bond paper) copy of the dissertation. Allow TWO (2) weeks for review of formatting (this may be done prior to the defense to expedite the formatting review). Revise, as instructed, to get final approval from the Program Office.

Program forms that need to be completed can be found on the Student Resource Center

Print out, on 25% cotton bond paper, the original and at least one copy (for the EVMS library and the advisor; a student copy is optional). Paper is available from the Program Office. Committee members must sign the title page in ink; copies of this page may be used in the other copies of the dissertation. A copyright statement in the document is sufficient to copyright the document.

Submit all copies for binding at an approved Binders. Details are available from the Program Office. A copy of the receipt for binding must be given to the Program administration. The dissertation must be submitted and approved within 6 months of a successful defense.

When all the above requirements have been met, the Program Director will inform the registrar that the student has completed all requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences (congratulations!). The PhD degree will be awarded by EVMS at the time requirements are completed. Participation in the graduation ceremony is encouraged but is not required and does not award the degree. A diploma will be ordered by the registrar's office.

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APPENDIX H: DISSERTATION FORMATTING AND SUBMISSION

FORMAT OF DISSERTATION

The Dissertation will follow the format in the current guide to Theses and Dissertations, which may be obtained from the Program Office.

STEPS TO FINALIZING DISSERTATION

The Dissertation and the SafeAssign software report will be submitted to the Program Office after the committee has approved the document. The Program Administrator will review the Dissertation for formatting, and the student will be given a list of items that need to be corrected to conform to the formatting standards. Once corrections are made, the document will be approved for printing.
The student will submit the original of their Dissertation, plus 1-3 copies, all on 25% cotton bond paper:

a. 1 copy for EVMS Library
b. 1 copy for advisor
c. 1-2 copies to student (Optional)

The student will take the copies to the bindery. The student normally pays the cost of binding; but the cost may be covered by the advisor. The student should bring the payment receipt to the Program Administrator.
The student's degree will be awarded on the date all requirements are completed.
The PhD Dissertation must also be submitted to the Program Coordinator as a **PDF file of the final approved and correctly formatted version**. The PDF file version will be archived with the Program. The document is legally copyrighted without registration.

APPENDIX I: TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY FOR STUDENTS ENTERING THE PHD PROGRAM WHO HAVE COMPLETED A MASTER'S DEGREE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH AT EVMS

POLICY

This policy applies to former EVMS Research Biomedical Sciences Master's students who graduated prior to the beginning of the current cycle of the academic year.

Eligible students may receive a waiver of a core course within the first three semesters of the PhD program. Procedures and expectations for former EVMS Biomedical Sciences Research Master's graduates to secure this waiver are outlined.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES AND REVIEW CYCLE The Program Director for the Biomedical Sciences Program and the Biomedical Sciences Executive Committee will review this document annually, with input from the Curriculum Committee, as needed.

DEFINITION(S)

Waiver status – successful completion of academic requirements within a core course from the EVMS Research Masters' Program are utilized to satisfy the same requirement in the PhD Program. This applies to the first three semesters of the PhD program.

Core courses – academic courses that are required as part of the Biomedical Sciences PhD and Biomedical Sciences Research Masters core curriculum.

Eligibility This policy applies only to Biomedical Sciences Research Masters' students who completed their degree at EVMS and were accepted in the Biomedical Sciences PhD Program. Students who meet ALL of the following criteria are eligible to request a waiver for pre-specified academic requirements applicable to core academic courses during the first three semesters of the PhD program. Laboratory rotations are not required for students that, at matriculation into the PhD program, are formally accepted in research laboratories to complete their dissertation. These are therefore not included in the waiver policy. Elective courses are not part of the core academic curriculum and are therefore not included in this waiver policy.

Criteria for eligibility are:

- Completion of the EVMS Biomedical Sciences Research Master's Program in the year directly prior to matriculation into the EVMS PhD Program

- Successful completion of core academic course requirements by earning a grade of "A-" or better at the end of the course
- The course has not undergone significant changes of its objectives, content, and/or duration between completion of the Biomedical Sciences Research Master's degree and PhD enrollment.
- NOTE: Exceptions to the waiver policy are
  - Longitudinal courses, e.g. Oral Communication Forum
  - Elective courses
  - Laboratory rotations, for the students that, at matriculation, are not accepted into a designated research lab for their dissertation.

Process to request waiver:

Students must meet with the Director of the Biomedical Sciences Program prior to the start of the first academic year to obtain information and directions on the waiver process, discuss eligibility for waiver, understand remaining requirements for core courses if waiver approved, and to sign a statement of expectations.

Student Expectations:

Students who are granted waivers are expected to engage in multiple modalities of learning in order to further develop their professional identity, knowledge, and skills. Students who are granted waiver status must meet the following expectations:

- Formally enroll in all non-waived courses
- Fulfill the requirement of at least 9 credits/semester by actively engaging in the learning environment through approved courses. Recommended activities include but are not limited to the following:
  - teaching assistantships
  - tutoring
  - research/scholarly work
  - alternate elective coursework
- Acknowledge their understanding of this regulation with their signature.

Grading:

Students who are granted a waiver for a course(s) will have the grade obtained during the Biomedical Sciences Research Masters' program entered into their official transcript. This grade will not be included in the semester GPA calculation, nor in the cumulative GPA.If students are granted a waiver, their grade for that course will indicate that the work was completed during their Biomedical Sciences Research Master's program.

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APPENDIX J: EVMS BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES PHD STUDENT COMPENSATION POLICY

Scholarship: The Biomedical Sciences Program is committed to providing stipend support to every PhD student in good academic standing until the student graduates.

- Stipend support: exceptions are noted below
- Full tuition waiver.
- Paid PhD-student fees.

Stipend amount for a student typically remains static, at the matriculating level, throughout the program. The starting stipend amounts are revised periodically. An elevation of up to Twelve (12) % is achievable upon award of a student extramural pre-doctoral fellowship and with the approval of the PI an PD.

Incoming students: These students are generally paid by the Program at the current EVMS stipend level. Effective July 1 (summer following Year 1) students are typically paid by their advisor/PI (grant funding and/ or Incentive funds, Departmental funds). Students are paid through payroll being classes as student workers or Graduate Research Assistants (GRA).

Exceptions:

Independent Fellowships. We encourage students to obtain external funding through PhD fellowships. With approval of the PI and PD a student stipend may increase by Twelve 12% on award of a fellowship.

Termination of Stipend. The intent of the program is to provide a stipend to all PhD students in good standing until graduation. However, the stipend is not guaranteed. If a PhD student is not progressing in their research at an adequate pace as determined by

Stipend support may be discontinued 30 days after the dissertation oral defense. Stipend will be paid, during this 30-day period, if the student is onsite and is primarily working on dissertation revisions, publications, and/or experiments. Should the student leave for employment within 30 days of the defense, the stipend may be terminated on the student's last day.

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APPENDIX K: ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM FACULTY

Executive Committee

To assist the PD and ensure adequate input by participating faculty members at EVMS, the Program's Executive Committee sets program policy. The committee consists of the PD, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, and Chair of the Admissions Committee. The PD calls meetings as needed, records and distributes minutes and an agenda for each meeting, and will serve as Chair. The Executive Committee will approve and be responsible for program faculty issues and policies.

Biomedical Sciences Faculty

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Please schedule appointments with faculty, unless it is during scheduled office hours.

Note, as EVMS transitions to ODU, emails will move from @EVMS.EDU to @ODU.EDU