



*2019-20*  
*Graduate Student*  
*Handbook*

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# Preface

Welcome to the Neuroscience Graduate Program at the University of Cincinnati!

This handbook provides guidelines and policies specific to the Neuroscience Graduate Program, including required curriculum, doctoral candidacy, dissertation defense and other important information. Additional information can be found on the program website at <http://med.uc.edu/neurosciences>.

We have made every effort to ensure compliance with the University of Cincinnati Graduate School's rules and policies.

We are glad that you chose the University of Cincinnati as the place to begin your academic career. Please review this information carefully and, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes,



Mark Baccei, Ph.D.  
Director, Neuroscience Graduate Program



Renu Sah, PhD  
Associate Director, Neuroscience Graduate Program

## **Program Administration**

Graduate Program Director  
Mark Baccej, Ph.D.

Graduate Program Associate Director  
Renu Sah, PhD

Graduate Program Manager  
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## **Graduate Program Committees**

Admissions and Recruitment Committee  
Renu Sah, Ph.D., Chair

Curriculum Committee  
Michael Jankowski, Ph.D., Chair

Faculty Credentialing Committee  
Nancy Ratner, Ph.D., Chair

Seminar Committee  
Steve Kleene, Ph.D., Chair

Steering Committee  
Jim Herman, Ph.D., Chair

Website Committee  
Steve Davidson, Ph.D., Chair

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## **APPLICATION AND ADMISSION TO THE NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Prospective students are expected to have a baccalaureate or master's degree that includes coursework in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics with an overall GPA of at least 3.0 (out of 4.0 total) or the international equivalent.

The Admissions Committee evaluates the candidate's grades, personal statement, letters of recommendation, prior research experience, and personal interviews as part of the ranking process for entry to the Program.

US citizenship or permanent residency status is not required. However, English proficiency is a requirement for doctoral candidacy. The minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet-based test (iBT) total score from international applicants to be considered for admission is 80, whereas the minimum overall score for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is 6.5. International students who have completed Bachelor's or Master's degrees in the U.S. are not required to take the TOEFL or IELTS exams.

Note: As of 2018, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is no longer required as part of the application.

### **Affirmative Action Statement**

The University of Cincinnati Neuroscience Graduate Program encourages and considers applications from all eligible applicants. Admission decisions are not made on the basis of race, age, sex, color, religion, disadvantaged backgrounds, sexual orientation or disability except in those disciplines in which the disability would place the student, other students, faculty or staff in physical danger (Affirmative Action Guidelines).

### **Admission Process**

The Neuroscience Graduate Program admits students once per year. All applicants must apply through the UC Graduate School's portal (<http://grad.uc.edu>). The application deadline is December 7<sup>th</sup> and admissions are finalized by spring. We encourage newly matriculating students to arrive on campus by July 1. Therefore, a student beginning the program on July 1, 2019 would have applied no later than December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The following supporting documentation is required:

- a. Updated curriculum vitae (CV)
- b. Personal statement describing the applicant's research experience and interests within the neuroscience field.
- c. Transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate coursework. Applicants may upload unofficial transcripts during the application process; upon admission into the Program, they must arrange for official transcripts to be sent directly to the Graduate School. Any significant discrepancies between the unofficial and official transcripts will be grounds for rescinding an offer of admission and/or dismissal from the program.
- d. Three letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant's interest in neuroscience, personal academic achievement, scientific accomplishments, research potential, intellectual curiosity, creativity and an ability to work in a team environment.
- e. International applicants whose first language is not English must submit TOEFL iBT, IELTS, or Pearson test of English scores. These scores must be sent directly to the Graduate School. Please allow at least one week for processing time after the Graduate School receives the scores.

Note: International applicants holding degrees from colleges and universities where the primary language of instruction is English may be exempt from the English language testing requirement. Review the [Graduate School's English Proficiency Requirement page](#) for further details.

The application fee (\$65 for USA residents and \$70 for international applicants) is due at the time of application and is payable online.

The Admissions Committee reviews all applications and decides which applicants to invite for interviews. These applicants visit the UC campus, tour research facilities, meet current graduate students, and have interviews with Program faculty, at least two of whom are Admissions Committee members. Most in-person interviews are held in January and February. When a formal visit is not possible, interviews can be arranged via Skype (or equivalent) at the program directors' discretion.

After the interviews are completed, the Admissions Committee reconvenes and decides to make admission offers. Generally, these offers are sent out between February and March, with an acceptance deadline of April 15.



International students should consult their nearest US Embassy or Consulate for student visa processing. Additional details are available through UC's International Services Office (<http://www.uc.edu/international/services.html>).

## **MATRICULATION OF NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM STUDENTS**

### **Arrival**

Incoming students should plan on starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, if possible. The earlier date facilitates a summer rotation, which is encouraged since it allows full time research as classes have not yet started. An earlier arrival also makes it easier for students to:

- Make housing arrangements;
- Make parking arrangements;
- Initiate stipend payments;
- Obtain an ID badge and keys; and
- Register for fall semester classes, which begin in late August. Students should check the Registrar's website (<http://www.uc.edu/registrar.html>) for registration procedures, deadlines, and other important information.

In the event that an incoming student's schedule or other commitments prevents a July 1 start date, the student is allowed to arrive on campus at any time prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

### **Credit Transfer**

Credit for courses taken at other institutions may be transferable, but limits are set on the amount of work completed at other institutions that can be included as fulfilling graduate degree requirements. Refer to the Graduate School website for further information (<http://grad.uc.edu>).

The Curriculum Committee decides whether to grant advanced standing, or the transfer of credits for graduate courses already taken at other universities or at UC. Additional course requirements and other exceptions designed to tailor the program of study to each student's needs and interests may be recommended by the Curriculum committee. The Program Director may bring any course recommendations before the full faculty for advice and final resolution. Students also have the right to appeal any course requirement decisions to the full faculty.

## Financial Support

All students in good academic standing in the Neuroscience Graduate Program receive a University Graduate Assistantship stipend (referred to as a UGA) and full tuition scholarship (a Graduate Assistant Scholarship, referred to as a GAS) plus student fees and individual health insurance.

Students receive a starting 12-month stipend of \$29,000, which increases to \$31,000 after students successfully pass their qualifying exams. Generally, stipends are paid in 26 installments (i.e. twice a month, approximately every two weeks), but this may vary depending on the stipend funding source.

Students who obtain an individual grant from the NIH, or a competitive award from another external funding agency, will receive an additional \$2,000 per year supplement to their existing stipend for the duration of the external award.

Students receiving UGAs or GASs must carry a full-time course load (12 credits or more) each fall and spring semester, exclusive of audit credits. Students in good standing will be eligible for tuition scholarships and graduate assistantships for up to nine years of training. Generally, 1st- and 2nd-year students register for 12 credit hours per semester.

The Neuroscience Graduate Program does not require students to serve as teaching assistants; however, those interested in serving as teaching assistants may be afforded the opportunity. Contact the Program administration for further information.

Under ordinary circumstances, assistantships and tuition scholarships are not awarded to students who have reached the University-mandated cap of 174 or more graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati.

All graduate students who are not already Ohio residents but who are U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens (i.e., holders of a green card) must apply for Ohio residency after residing in the state for one year. Students choosing to reside in certain Northern Kentucky or Southeast Indiana counties after their first year may be subject to a fee according to University guidelines, which is *not* paid by the Program. As of May 2016, the current Kentucky/Indiana State Metropolitan Rate is \$25.00 per credit hour each semester up to a maximum of a \$300 surcharge (12 to 18 hours per semester). More information can be obtained at:

[https://www.uc.edu/registrar/residency\\_reciprocity\\_metro/metro\\_rate\\_kentucky.html#kentucky\\_county](https://www.uc.edu/registrar/residency_reciprocity_metro/metro_rate_kentucky.html#kentucky_county)

[http://www.uc.edu/registrar/residency\\_reciprocity\\_metro/metro\\_rate\\_indiana.html](http://www.uc.edu/registrar/residency_reciprocity_metro/metro_rate_indiana.html)

Students supported by fellowships or stipends may not seek employment outside the program. In exceptional situations, short-term laboratory, research or tutoring jobs may be permitted, but other jobs requiring significant time away from the research laboratory are not permitted. Any student considering outside employment should first discuss it with his/her advisor and the Program Director.

Students will abide by policies set out by the UC College of Medicine and Cincinnati Children's Hospital (when deemed appropriate) regarding interactions with outside industries. Industries may refer to any corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, firm, franchise, association, organization, holding company, joint stock company, receivership, trust, enterprise, or other legal entity, whether for profit and not-for-profit, engaged in the manufacture, distribution or sale of diagnostic or therapeutic drugs, devices, supplies or services for clinical care, research or education. Further details are available:

[http://med2.uc.edu/libraries/faculty\\_affairs/guidelines\\_for\\_industry\\_relationships\\_revised\\_51408\\_2.sflb.ashx](http://med2.uc.edu/libraries/faculty_affairs/guidelines_for_industry_relationships_revised_51408_2.sflb.ashx)

## **Degree Program Overview**

The particular course of study pursued for the doctoral degree will be arranged in meetings with the research advisor, the student's Dissertation Committee (after the advancement to candidacy) and the Program Directors. In all cases, the aim of the doctoral program will be to help the student develop the following:

- A broad foundation of knowledge in neuroscience, emphasizing an understanding of the neurobiology of disease and the experimental skills that allow for the exploration of underlying mechanisms
- Excellent critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Outstanding written and oral communication abilities
- Ability to work collaboratively in a team environment
- Strong leadership qualities
- Tools to be successful in diverse scientific careers

### **Ph.D. students:**

During the first two years, students complete a series of required courses. These courses are designed to provide students with a strong foundation in neuroscience principles. The curriculum is summarized in Table 1.

During the first year, students will complete at least two, and preferably three, lab rotations with the primary goal of selecting a research advisor, but with the important secondary goal of learning more about different research areas. The duration of each research rotation is flexible and can be determined by the student in consultation with the rotation mentor and program directors.

Students must select a research advisor and begin dissertation research work in the advisor's laboratory no later than July 1<sup>st</sup> (i.e. the beginning of Year 2 in the program). Students should think carefully about choosing a research advisor; this person, more than any other person, course, or event, influences how much they will learn and what kinds of research they will perform. Students are encouraged to consult the Program Directors and/or other program faculty who can provide useful advice on making this choice.

During the second year, students will continue laboratory research with their chosen mentor and also complete required and elective courses. During the spring semester of the second year, students will initiate the Doctoral Candidacy Examination, which will demonstrate their preparedness to pursue a Ph.D. degree.

After passing the qualifying exam and being admitted to doctoral candidacy, students devote most of their time to research and will register for NS9099 (Research) each fall and spring semester. The culmination of the graduate career is the preparation and defense of a doctoral dissertation.

To fulfil graduation requirements, all students must prepare and submit a minimum of one first-author publication based on their neuroscience research. The publication status must be accepted or in press before the defense of the dissertation.

The average time to defense for Neuroscience Graduate Program students is five years. All students must complete all program requirements, including completion and defense of the dissertation, within nine years unless they have an approved extension. Refer to the UC Graduate School Handbook for additional details.

## TABLE 1. Neuroscience Graduate Program Required Curriculum – Ph.D. students

(Program core courses are in *italics*)

First and second year students register for 12 credits.

### First Year

#### Summer:

Introduction to Research (lab rotations) (NS 8050) 12 credits

#### Fall:

*Fundamentals of Neuroscience I* (NS 7078) 4 credits

Principles of Molecular and Cellular Biology (GNTD 7001) 4 credits

Survey of Research (NS 8040) 1 credit

Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010) 1 credit

Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001)\* 1 credit

Introduction to Research (lab rotations) (NS 8050) 1 credit

#### Spring:

*Fundamentals of Neuroscience II* (NS 7079) 5 credits

*Ethics in Research* (GNTD 7030) 1 credit

Statistics and Experimental Design  
for the Biomedical Sciences\* (MCP 8050C) 3 credits

Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010) 1 credit

Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001)\*\* 1 credit

Introduction to Research (lab rotations) (NS 8050) 1 credit

### Second Year

#### Fall:

Professional Development in Biomedical Research (MCP 8001) 2 credits

Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010) 1 credit

Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001) \*\* 1 credit

Elective \*\*\* (varies)

Introduction to Research (NS 8050) (varies)

#### Spring:

*Academic Survival Skills* (NS 7077) 3 credits

Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010) 1 credit

Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001) \*\* 1 credit

Introduction to Research (NS 8050) 7 credits

**Summer:** students do not register for summer classes after Year 1

\*Students may enroll in either *Introduction to Biostatistics (BE 7022)* in the fall or *Statistics and Experimental Design for the Biomedical Sciences* in the spring.

\*\*Students are required to attend Neuroscience Seminar each semester until the semester in which they will defend their dissertations. Third-year and higher students enroll in NS 9001 (Neuroscience Seminar) for 1 credit, and NS 9099 (Dissertation Research) each fall and spring semester.

\*\*\*The elective must be a graduate level course that is selected in consultation with the research mentor/program directors and can be taken during any semester.

**All Ph.D. students are expected to take the Candidacy Exam at the end of the 2nd year.**

All students must complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of didactic course work. Additional courses to complete the program may be required by the Candidacy Exam Committee or Dissertation Committee. Students who are interested in taking classes outside of the College of Medicine must obtain the Program Director's permission before registration.

**M.D. / Ph.D. students:**

Some students may enter the Neuroscience Graduate Program after completing their first two years of medical school (i.e. M1 and M2) in the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP). Before entering their first year of graduate school (i.e. G1), MSTP students will have completed three research rotations and selected a dissertation mentor.

The schedule of graduate coursework for MSTP students in the NGP is summarized in Table 2.

## TABLE 2. NGP Required Curriculum – M.D. / Ph.D. students

(Program core courses are in *italics*)

### G1 (Year 1 of Ph.D. program):

#### Fall:

<i>Fundamentals of Neuroscience I</i> (NS 7078)	4 credits
Professional Development in Biomedical Research (MCP 8001)	2 credits
Survey of Research (NS 8040)	1 credit
Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010)	1 credit
Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001) **	1 credit
Introduction to Research (lab rotations) (NS 8050)	3 credits

#### Spring:

<i>Fundamentals of Neuroscience II</i> (NS 7079)	3-5 credits#
<i>Ethics in Research</i> (GNTD 7030)	1 credit
Statistics and Experimental Design for the Biomedical Sciences* (MCP 8050C)	3 credits
Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010)	1 credit
Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001)	1 credit
Introduction to Research (lab rotations) (NS 8050)	1-3 credits

### G2 (Year 2 of Ph.D. program):

#### Fall:

Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010)	1 credit
Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001)	1 credit
Elective ***	(varies)
Introduction to Research (NS 8050)	(varies)

**Note: M.D./Ph.D. students are expected to complete the Candidacy Exam before the end of the fall semester of G2 (per MSTP guidelines)**

#### Spring:

<i>Academic Survival Skills</i> (NS 7077)	3 credits
Neuroscience Journal Club (NS 9010)	1 credit
Neuroscience Seminar (NS 9001)	1 credit
Dissertation Research (NS 9099)	7 credits

\*Students may enroll in either *Introduction to Biostatistics (BE 7022)* in the fall or *Statistics and Experimental Design for the Biomedical Sciences* in the spring.

\*\*Students are required to attend Neuroscience Seminar each semester until the semester in which they will defend their dissertations. Third-year and higher students enroll in NS 9001 (Neuroscience Seminar) for 1 credit, and NS 9099 (Dissertation Research) each fall and spring semester.

\*\*\*The elective must be a graduate level course that is selected in consultation with the research mentor/program directors and can be taken during any semester.

#MSTP students who have taken gross human neuroanatomy can opt out of the 2 credit hour portion of the FNII course with approval from the course directors and program directors.

## Core Course Descriptions

**NS7078, Fundamentals of Neuroscience I.** This is the first half of a two-semester course that will serve as an introduction to and foundation in neuroscience for graduate students in the UC Neuroscience Graduate Program and interested students from other UC graduate programs. Fundamentals of Neuroscience I will provide an overview of our current understanding of molecular and cellular neuroscience. The mission of the course is to provide graduate students with a solid understanding of the fundamentals of neuroscience in preparation for advanced coursework in neuroscience topics and for research in neuroscience. Students will also develop skills in the scientific process and in self-teaching through inquiry/discussion sessions, group projects, oral presentations and critical review of primary literature and research techniques. Fall semester only.

**NS7079, Fundamentals of Neuroscience II.** Fundamentals of Neuroscience II is intended to integrate and extend topics covered in Fundamentals of Neuroscience I, and provides an overview of our current understanding of neuroanatomy, neuroendocrine signaling, sensory and motor systems, reward and addiction, and behavioral and cognitive neuroscience. Spring semester only.

**NS7077, Academic Survival Skills.** This course stresses academic writing and other survival skills for graduate students. Topics include general exam and thesis committees, how academia and universities are organized, how the NIH is structured, study sections, search committees, how to find post-doctoral and faculty positions, how to prepare CVs, biosketches, and letters of recommendation.

**GNTD 7003, Ethics in Research.** This course introduces students to ethical theories generally and the ethical and regulatory issues that they are likely to encounter as researchers. Student will learn to identify issues, analyze ethical issues in research and to develop coherent justifications for their ethical and responsible conduct of research.

## Required Course Descriptions

**NS8040, Survey of Neuroscience Research.** Weekly research seminars by faculty to introduce incoming graduate students to research opportunities in neuroscience at the University of Cincinnati. This series of seminars will assist students in identification of laboratories in which they desire to do laboratory rotations and/or dissertation research.

**GNTD7001, Principles of Molecular and Cellular Biology.** Primarily a lecture-based course that represents the first course in the core curriculum series that is



designed for all first-year graduate students in the College of Medicine. Topics include DNA replication, recombination, and repair; Cell cycle regulation; Transcriptional regulation; Translational regulation; Protein structure, function and trafficking; Metabolism; and Signal transduction pathways.

**BE7022, Introduction to Biostatistics.** Students will learn basic statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, etc. Topics include probability, parametric statistics such as t-tests and one-way analysis of variance, and nonparametric statistics including both Wilcoxon tests and Kaplan-Meier estimation of survival. Bayes theorem, discrete (e.g. Binomial) and continuous probability distributions; e.g. normal distributions and one variable regression and product moment correlation and rank correlation are covered. (*Equivalent to MCP 8050C, Statistics and Experimental Design for the Biomedical Sciences.*)

**MCP8050C, Statistics and Experimental Design for the Biomedical Sciences.** This course is designed to provide students with a solid foundation and intuitive understanding of statistics for the biomedical sciences. Statistics and Experimental Design for the Biomedical Sciences emphasizes experimental design, parametric and nonparametric statistics used in making between-group inferences, linear and nonlinear regression used in modeling physiological phenomena, effective data presentation, and graphic integrity. This course comprises both lectures and workshops. (*Equivalent to BE7022, Introduction to Biostatistics.*)

**NS9010, Neuroscience Journal Club.** This course will emphasize critical analysis of current issues in neuroscience research, including review of the primary literature. Presentations will be made by the students and faculty with a strong emphasis on group discussion.

**NS9001, Neuroscience Seminar.** Formal presentations of current research in neuroscience will be given by speakers from the University (including graduate students beginning in their third year) and by invited speakers from other institutions.

**NS8050, Introduction to Laboratory Research (Research Rotation).** Laboratory research for graduate students who have not yet advanced to candidacy.

**NS9099, Dissertation Research.** Laboratory research for graduate students who have already advanced to candidacy.

**Elective Courses:** Students should choose their graduate elective courses in consultation with their mentor and/or Dissertation Committee. Available courses for a given semester can be found at <http://www.uc.edu/academics.html>

## Grading Practices

The Office of the Registrar (Records Services) will provide an official report of academic achievement to each student at the end of each semester. Reports are rendered in the form of grades, which should be interpreted as follows:

- A Excellent work; i.e., work of outstanding character
- B Work of good quality, commendable but not outstanding
- C Work of acceptable but not distinguished quality
- F Unsatisfactory work for graduate credit course
- U Unsatisfactory work for non-credit graduate course
- P Pass – The student completed the minimum requirements to pass the course.  
Note: a graduate student may take any course on a Pass/Fail basis with the approval of both the Program Directors and the instructor. However, no instructor is obligated to accept a student on a Pass/Fail basis.
- S Satisfactory
- I Incomplete – This grade is awarded only if the student does not complete one or more course requirements, such as an examination or project. The student must, in consultation with the course instructor, complete the missing work within one calendar year after the I grade was issued. After one calendar year, the I grade automatically converts to an I/F. Once the I/F is on the transcript it can only be removed if the course instructor determines that a change of grade is appropriate and then forwards an official, paper change of grade form to the Associate University Dean of the Graduate School with a rationale for the change. The change is subject to the approval of the Associate University Dean of the Graduate School.
- I/F Failure
- W Official withdrawal -- Indicates that the student or instructor processed a drop or official withdrawal from a course for which he/she was registered. Students who drop courses through the first three weeks of the semester will have the courses deleted from their schedules and they will not appear on the permanent academic record. Thereafter, students dropping courses must obtain the professors' signatures and grades (W or F) on add/drop forms. No drops will be accepted after the eighth week of classes for the semester.

UW Unofficial Withdrawal (partial Academic Attendance) -- Given to those students who did not officially complete the withdrawal process; the lack of academic attendance is the basis for a failing grade. The "UW" carries zero (0.00) quality points. It is calculated into the GPA like the "F" grade.

T Audit -- The audit option is intended for the student who desires, or is advised, to do work in a course in which a grade is deemed unnecessary by the student in consultation with the student's advisor or program. Admissions and conditions for participation in audit courses are at the discretion of the instructor.

1. Students may audit a course to correct a deficiency or for remedial registration in the major area. They may also audit electives outside the major area.
2. Students should audit no more than one course per semester.
3. Students who (at a minimum) attend course sessions regularly will receive a T grade.
4. Audit hours do not count toward the 174 credit hour limit (as a condition of eligibility for financial assistance), nor are they included in the determination of full-time status. Such hours may be charged to a tuition scholarship only if at least 12 graduate credits are taken that same semester and if the total is less than 19 credits.

NG No grade reported -- This grade indicates no basis for evaluation existed or was required as the grades were due for that semester. Circumstances warranting a grade of NG include dissertation work, internships, or other circumstances preventing an instructor from awarding a grade (such as a possible case of academic misconduct which is still under review at the end of the semester). The NG grade is normally removed before graduation. Programs or colleges, however, may allow a student to graduate with the NG grade when such action is deemed appropriate.

### **Evidence of Satisfactory Progress**

Satisfactory progress in the program is defined as:

1. Completing at least two (but preferably three) lab rotations and then successfully choosing an advisor and laboratory by the end of the first year;
2. maintaining minimum academic standards, as defined below;
3. Participating in the Neuroscience Journal Club during the first and second years;
4. Attending the Neuroscience Seminar during all years;
5. Initiating the qualifying exam in the spring semester of the second year. The pre-proposal (see Candidacy Examination Guidelines) must be submitted to the

qualifying exam committee before September 1 of the students' third year, but earlier submission is encouraged;

6. Passing the qualifying examination;
7. Forming a Dissertation Committee within three months of passing the qualifying exam;
8. Completing a total of 90 graduate credit hours for the doctoral degree within nine years of matriculation into the NGP;
9. Having at least one first-author publication accepted or in press; and
9. Submitting and satisfactorily defending the doctoral dissertation.

During the first two years in the program, student progress is evaluated by the research advisor, Program Director and Program Associate Director.

### **Minimum Academic Standards**

1. All students must attain a grade of B- or better in all neuroscience core courses, as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Any grade below a B- must be remediated at the earliest opportunity. Failure to fulfill these requirements is grounds for dismissal from the program.
2. Students are required to maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0.
3. Students whose native language is not English must pass the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) before taking the Candidacy Exam. Oral English skills are rated in four areas: 1. Pronunciation 2. Grammar 3. Fluency 4. Overall intelligibility. The OEPT is conducted four times during the academic year (September, December, March and May) to accommodate new arrivals and students who have prepared to retake the test. Each student can only be tested twice during an academic year. Those who do not pass are recommended to complete an English as a Second Language (ESL) course that is suited to their needs.
4. Students must initiate the candidacy exam and submit a pre-proposal by Sept. 1 of the third year, as described above, unless granted an extension by the Program Directors in consultation with the assigned faculty Reader.
5. All students will prepare at least one first-author, primary research journal article and submit it for publication. The article's status must be accepted or in press before the defense of the doctoral dissertation.
6. Students who do not receive University Graduate Assistantships, but are still working on their dissertations, must register for at least one graduate credit hour

in the academic year in which they plan to graduate. Failure to do so will jeopardize the student's eligibility for graduation.

### **Academic Probation**

1. Any student who fails to maintain a cumulative 3.0 average for any given semester will be placed on academic probation for the following semester.
2. Regardless of grade point average, students obtaining an F in any course are automatically placed on academic probation during the semester following receipt of the grade of F.
3. Any student who is placed on academic probation three times will be dismissed from the doctoral program unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the Steering Committee of the Neuroscience Graduate Program.

### **Student Meetings with Program Directors**

All NGP students will participate in meetings with his/her research advisor(s), the Program Director, and the Associate Program Director. During this meeting, the directors will review the student's progress, receive input from the research advisor(s), ensure the student has identified a clear path forward to graduation, and discuss the student's Individual Development Plan (see below). This meeting will normally take place twice per year for first-year students, and at least annually for students beginning in their second year.

### **Individual Development Plan**

All Neuroscience Graduate Program students will develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) no later than the end of the fall semester of the first year. The IDP is a dynamic document that identifies each student's professional development needs and career objectives, as well as a plan for how to fulfill and achieve them. Furthermore, IDPs serve as a valuable communication tool between students and their research advisors.

For IDP meetings, all students complete an IDP document listing goals, objectives and achievements. The IDPs are updated at least annually, generally at the end of each spring semester. The student and his/her research advisor(s) will both sign the IDP, indicating review, and provide a copy to the Program Manager.

## Doctoral Candidacy (Qualifying) Examination

### Qualifying Committee

The qualifying committee consists of five voting members: the Reader, the student's mentor, and three UC or CCHMC faculty members, two of whom must be NGP faculty members. Additional, external committee members are allowed as non-voting consultants. It is the student's duty to assemble the qualifying committee before submitting their pre-proposal and to communicate the committee roster to the Reader. The Reader will be one of two NGP faculty members assigned by the NGP.

### Role of the Reader

The Reader will lead and chair the pre-qualifying and qualifying exams, will ensure adherence to the rules and guidelines as stated in the NGP handbook, will serve as a liaison between student and committee, and will communicate the committee's decisions to the student verbally and via email. The Reader will also communicate the committee's decisions to the program directors via email. The Reader, thus, provides oversight to maintain consistency and fairness in the entire process between different committees.

### Role of the Mentor

Prior to submission of the student's pre-proposal, the mentor must ensure that the student's proposal was conceived by the student and does not involve any studies which have already been described in the mentor's current or pending grants. The mentor is allowed to answer questions about techniques or methods but **is not allowed to discuss or help with the development, design, or writing of either the pre-proposal or proposal. The mentor is also prohibited from helping the student answer questions during the exams.** The mentor is a voting member, and is allowed to ask a limited amount of questions. The majority of the questions should come from other committee members.

### Timeline

- Students should initiate their qualifying exam in the spring semester of their second year. The pre-proposal must be submitted to the qualifying exam committee before September 1 of the student's third year, but earlier submissions are encouraged.
- The pre-qualifying exam meeting should take place no earlier than one week after the pre-proposal is sent to the committee. If the pre-proposal is not approved, students have 1-2 weeks, as determined by the committee, to provide a revised document. The committee will discuss the revised pre-proposal by email, and the Reader will provide a summary of comments and concerns within a week. Only one revision of the pre-proposal is allowed, after which the student will move on to the full proposal.

- After the pre-proposal has been either approved or revised once, students will receive an email that contains instructions and comments from the committee to guide the student in preparing the full proposal. The student will have four weeks from the date of the email to complete the full proposal and send it, by email, to all committee members.
- The qualifying exam should take place 10-14 days after the committee has received the full proposal and should be scheduled by the student. If a conditional pass is given, the student must submit the revised document within two weeks. If the committee decides a reexamination is needed, the reexamination should be scheduled as soon as possible (typically within two weeks) after the committee has informed the student of their decision. If a second revision is needed, the student must submit it no later than one week after notification, and the committee's final decision will be communicated to the student within one week of the receipt of the revised document. If the student fails the qualifying exam, a new qualifying exam can be scheduled no earlier than three months, but not later than six months, after failing the first exam.

### Pre-Proposal Guidelines

The proposed research plan should be designed for a two-year period. It should be conceived by the student and cannot overlap with one of the mentor's grants. It also cannot be a project that the student is working on at the time of submitting the pre-proposal. **However, the project can be related to (or represent a continuation of) his/her dissertation work or other ongoing research in the mentor's lab. Students are encouraged to write proposals that they can submit as F31 or F30 NRSA fellowship proposals after passing their qualifying exam.** The proposed research should be based on preliminary data from the student's lab or from published papers. These data should support and justify the hypothesis, but preliminary data to support feasibility of certain methods or techniques are not needed. In addition, students can choose to propose using experimental approaches or tools that are not currently available in their dissertation labs. The student can ask mentors, other faculty, or postdocs for advice on specific techniques or methods **but cannot ask them for conceptual help with the proposal aims and design.** Peers and lab members, but not the mentor or other faculty members, are allowed to proofread the document for clarity of writing. *Formatting guidelines:* up to 2 pages, font Arial 11, 0.5 inch margins, single-spaced. Figures or diagrams to illustrate hypotheses and research design are encouraged. References do not count towards the page limit.

### Pre-Qualifying Exam Guidelines

Students are required to schedule a meeting with their committee for the pre-qualifying exam. At least one week before the meeting, students will send their pre-proposal to the committee. The goal of the pre-qualifying exam meeting is for the committee to

assess whether the proposed research could be developed into a full proposal that would pass the qualifying exam. If these criteria are not met, the committee should ask questions and make comments that will point out potential flaws without explicitly proposing alternative strategies/hypotheses. At the beginning of the exam, the student will be sent out of the room to give the committee the opportunity to discuss the pre-proposal and the student's progress so far. The student will then give a ~20 min presentation of his/her pre-proposal, which should include background, rationale, hypothesis, aims, and planned research design (including methods, experimental groups, and statistics), as well as alternative strategies. **Committee members are allowed to ask questions during and after the presentation. These questions should be used to clarify approaches/hypotheses and methods, point to potential flaws or problems, and hint towards alternative/better approaches. However, the committee is not allowed to make specific suggestions for alternative aims or methods to help the student.** After the presentation, the student will be asked to leave the room, and the committee will discuss the pre-qualifying exam and decide, per majority vote, on one of two possible results:

1. Approve the student to continue to the full proposal.
2. Request a revised pre-proposal.

The results of these discussions will be communicated to the student in person directly after the meeting. The reader will provide a written summary of the discussion. This will be approved (or modified) by all committee members, and then sent to the student and program directors, including specific instructions and the timeline for moving forward. If a revised pre-proposal is to be submitted, the timeline when it needs to be submitted to the committee (usually 1 or 2 weeks) will be communicated by the committee along with their specific comments.

**The student is allowed one revision of his/her pre-proposal, after which he/she must proceed to the full proposal/qualifying exam.** The revision will only be discussed via email by the committee, and the results of this discussion will be communicated to the student by email. This email will clearly state whether the committee thinks that the pre-proposal fulfills all criteria necessary for a successful full proposal, or if the committee recommends minor or major changes to the research plan that should be incorporated into the full proposal.

### **Full Proposal Guidelines**

The student has four weeks from the date of the Reader's email communicating the instructions to submit a full proposal. The date by which the proposal must be submitted will be indicated in the email, and is a strict deadline. In case of emergencies where this deadline cannot be met, a formal request for an extension has to be submitted in writing (email) to the committee and program directors. The committee will decide on whether or not to approve the extension. If the extension is not approved, and no proposal has been submitted before the stated deadline, the student



fails the exam and must start over again. The student should schedule the qualifying exam meeting for 10-14 days after the full proposal is due. **Peers and lab members, but not the mentor or other faculty members, are allowed to proofread the document for clarity of writing only.** *Formatting guidelines:* One specific aims page plus six pages for the proposal (excluding references); font Arial 11, single-spaced, 0.5 inch margins; "NIH" style: significance, innovation, approach.

## Qualifying Exam Guidelines

At the time of the exam, the student will be sent out of the room, and the committee will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, and what to expect from the presentation in order for the student to pass. The student will give a 20-25 min presentation of the proposal (as described for the pre-qualifying exam). Committee members are allowed to interrupt at any time. They should ask questions directly related to the proposal, but also more general questions testing the student's comprehension of the topic and general neuroscience knowledge.

After concluding the presentation and answering questions, the student will be sent out of the room. The committee will discuss the exam and will decide, per majority vote, on one of three possible results:

1. Pass.
2. Conditional Pass with the option for reexamination: This requires written revisions to the proposal (due two weeks after receiving the qualifying exam summary from the Reader) that will be sent to the committee. The Reader will provide a written summary of all comments and concerns raised during the meeting. The revised proposal should include a concise, point-by-point response to all comments listed in the Reader's summary (no page limit). In addition, all changes in the revised proposal should be highlighted (e.g., using different colors, brackets etc.). Please note that students receiving a Conditional Pass are allowed to seek guidance from anyone (including the mentor or other members of the committee) when revising the document. The committee can either approve the revised proposal as submitted or request another round of written revisions that may, or may not, be accompanied by an oral re-examination (at the committee's discretion). Students with a Conditional Pass can only submit two rounds of written revisions to satisfy the committee. If revision criteria are not met after the second revision, the student will fail.

3. Fail

At the conclusion of the meeting, a form indicating the student's name, the date, and the decision will be signed by all committee members and sent to the Program Manager and Directors.

The student can re-take the qualifying exam once, beginning from scratch with a new pre-proposal. If the student fails the second time, he/she will be dismissed from the program.

## **Dissertation Research and Dissertation Committee**

Upon passing the qualifying exam, students will form a Dissertation Committee within 60 days. The following semester, the student will begin registering for dissertation research credits (NS9099). The Dissertation Committee consists of five or more members, at least three of whom are members of the Neuroscience Graduate Program faculty (including the mentor). The Dissertation Committee Chair is chosen by the committee members (subject to approval by the Program Director) and cannot be the student's dissertation advisor.

If a student has a committee member who is not a member of the University of Cincinnati faculty, he/she must complete an Application to Add an External Committee Member in accordance with the Graduate School's procedures. The student must provide a rationale for the external committee member (such as special expertise on the dissertation topic). The application must be approved by the Dissertation Committee chair and the Program Director before it is submitted to the Director of the Graduate School.

The Dissertation Committee's initial meeting must be within three months of the qualifying exam passing date. The Dissertation Committee monitors the student's dissertation research progress on a continuing basis and provides valuable advice on technical questions, research directions, or alternative approaches.

The Dissertation Committee meets at least once every six months. Within one week after the meeting, the chair will submit a summary of the meeting to the advisor and committee members for approval. Upon approval, the summary is sent to the Program Director and Program Manager. These summaries should include:

- a description of progress since the last committee meeting;
- plans and goals for the next few months (which should be incorporated into the student's IDP); and
- a projected target date for completion of the dissertation.

## **Dissertation Submittal**

The student will begin writing the dissertation based on research progress and advice from the Dissertation Committee. The standard dissertation format is as follows.

Chapter 1: Introduction - presents the research problem, the background which critically evaluates existing knowledge and specifically identifies gaps that the

research has attempted to fill. This section generally concludes with a statement of the hypothesis.

Chapters 2-4: Data Chapters – presents the main research methodology, experimental results and interpretations. Each chapter is generally organized as follows:

*Introduction* – brief description of the scientific background relevant to the studies described in the chapter.

*Materials and Methods* - complete description of materials and methods employed in carrying out the research.

*Results* - presentation of the data/findings from the research incorporating necessary tables, illustrations, photographs and diagrams.

*Discussion* - discussion of results, conclusions drawn, relevance to existing knowledge, difficulties of interpretation of particular data.

Chapter 5: Overall Conclusions and Discussion – places the collective findings in the context of the wider neuroscience field and discusses the overall impact of the research; outlines potential future research directions that may emerge from the work; considers limitations of the chosen approaches and alternative strategies that might have been pursued.

Bibliography - listing of all cited literature references, including all authors, titles, dates, volume and inclusive pages.

Appendix - additional materials, including tables or figures, if desired.

Alternatively, with the approval of the research advisor and a majority of the Dissertation Committee, the student may include material s/he has previously published in the dissertation without substantial rewriting. In this instance, the dissertation consists of reproductions of work published (or in press) as well as any additional literature review, methods, results, and/or discussion deemed necessary by the student's advisor and committee. Any reproductions of published materials must be formatted in accordance with University guidelines for doctoral dissertations. Note that written permission must also be obtained from the publisher to include the published work in the dissertation.

## **Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation defense consists of two phases: a private defense for the Dissertation Committee followed by a public defense at a later date. The program

recommends a two-week interval between the private and public phases of the defense. However, the student can request a modification to this two-week interval from the Program Director. While the public defense can be scheduled prior to completing the private defense, the student must receive either a Conditional Pass or Pass on the private defense from the Dissertation Committee before the public defense can occur. The student should notify the Program Manager of their intent to defend approximately four weeks in advance to allow time to reserve appropriate rooms for the event.

The student must submit the final dissertation to the Dissertation Committee for review at least ten business days before the scheduled private defense, unless granted an extension by both the Committee and Program Directors.

At least 4/5 of the Dissertation Committee members must participate (in person or by phone/video call) in the private defense to have a quorum. The format of the private defense is as follows:

(1) The committee starts the meeting by sending the student out of the room and confirming that the dissertation document is of sufficient quality to proceed with the defense.

(2) The student delivers an oral summary of their dissertation research to the Dissertation Committee. In advance of the meeting, the student and committee should agree upon whether the student will give a full version of the public presentation to come, or whether a shorter version of the seminar can be delivered which includes less introduction and more emphasis on experimental design and data analysis/interpretation (given the expertise of the Dissertation Committee and their familiarity with the research). However, if the student and committee decide on the shorter presentation, the student is nonetheless encouraged to show the committee the slides that will be included in the public seminar in order to receive additional feedback on the public presentation.

(3) The Committee proceeds with questions/comments about the presentation and dissertation document.

(4) The student is again asked to step out in order for the Committee to vote on the outcome of the private defense as follows:

- Pass
- Conditional Pass
- Fail

At least 4/5 of the voting members of the Dissertation Committee must approve the dissertation in order for the student to proceed to the second phase of the defense (i.e., the public seminar).

Regardless of the interval between the private and public phases of the defense, the student is responsible for filing an official announcement of the public defense with the Graduate School at least two weeks before the seminar. Please note that this must be done by the student via the [online graduation application system](#) and is independent of other forms of advertisement (emails, posters, etc.) that may be handled by the Program Manager.

In some instances, revisions to the document that are requested by the committee can be addressed in the period between the private defense and the public seminar. Additional time for revisions are allowed at the committee's discretion (i.e., the public defense can occur before all revisions are made, with the Committee chair's approval). However, **all revisions must be completed, and the finalized document uploaded to the Graduate School, before the stated deadline for Electronic Submission of Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) in a given semester** (check the Graduate School website for [critical dates and deadlines](#)).

Similar to the private defense, 4/5 of the Dissertation Committee members must participate (in person or by phone/video call) in the public phase of the defense in order to have a quorum. The public seminar is open to all members of the academic community and the general public. After the seminar, any member of the audience (including Dissertation Committee members) is free to ask questions and make comments.

If the committee is satisfied with the dissertation and public seminar, the committee members will then sign the approval form. The student must ensure the original, signed form is uploaded as part of the final dissertation submitted to the Graduate School. As a result, all phases of the dissertation defense (including all revisions to the document) must be completed prior to the ETD deadline for that semester. More details can be found at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/etd.html>.

## **Requirements for Graduation with the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree**

1. The doctoral degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine (9) consecutive years of initial enrollment. This period includes a maximum of five (5) years before achieving candidacy and a maximum of four (4) years beyond candidacy. If additional time is needed, the student must apply for a formal extension from the Graduate School (contact the Program Manager and Program Directors for details). A period of seven (7) months must elapse between admission to doctoral candidacy and receipt of the degree.
2. Students must have satisfactorily completed all course work and have accumulated at least 90 graduate credit hours, including 30 credit hours of didactic courses, taken at the University of Cincinnati.
3. Students must have enrolled for at least one graduate credit hour each fall and spring semester. However, students need only register for one credit hour in the year in which they graduate.
4. Students must have maintained minimum academic standards, as defined previously, and have no grades of NG or I noted on their transcripts.
5. Students must have at least one first-author, peer-reviewed journal article published (or in press) that is based on their original dissertation research. Please note that review articles do not satisfy the graduation requirement.
6. Students must have prepared, successfully defended, and uploaded their dissertations in accordance with Graduate School procedures.
7. Students must have no outstanding financial obligations to the University.
8. Students must complete confidential exit surveys on the doctoral experience conducted by the Graduate School and the graduate program. The results, without personally identifiable information, will be shared with the program.

## **Requirements for graduation with the Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees (M.D./Ph.D.)**

1. The student must satisfy all course requirements (see Table 2 above).
2. The Dissertation Committee composition is the same as for Ph.D. candidates in the NGP, with the substitution of one M.D. and one member of the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP).

3. Because of their advanced standing upon entering the program, M.D./Ph.D. students should complete their candidacy exam before the end of the fall semester in the second year of their Ph.D. training (i.e. G2).
4. All other requirements are the same as for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

### **Policy Regarding Neuroscience Master's Degree**

The Neuroscience Graduate Program does not offer a Master of Science Degree.

### **SPECIAL RULES AND PROVISIONS**

#### **Academic Honesty**

Scientific inquiry is a community endeavor founded on honesty, trust and cooperation. We expect all students participating in the Neuroscience Graduate Program to uphold the highest standards of behavior. All students are bound by the standards outlined in the University of Cincinnati's Student Code of Conduct which can be found at <http://grad.uc.edu>, in the Graduate School Student Handbook. In addition, instruction in appropriate scientific behavior is provided by the Dissertation Committee and the Ethics in Research course.

Allegations of academic misconduct are investigated via a standard process, described on the following pages. Acts of academic misconduct are considered extremely serious and, generally, any student found to have engaged in an act of academic misconduct will be dismissed from the Neuroscience Graduate Program.

Academic misconduct or dishonesty is defined in the University of Cincinnati's [Student Code of Conduct](#) and includes, but is not limited to:

CHEATING: Any dishonesty or deception in fulfilling an academic requirement, such as:

1. Use and/or possession of unauthorized material or technology during an examination (any written or oral work submitted for evaluation and/or grade), such as tape cassettes, notes, tests, calculators, mobile devices (smart phones, cell phones, etc.) or computer programs.
2. Obtaining assistance with or answers to examination questions from another person with or without that person's knowledge.

3. Furnishing assistance with or answers to examination questions to another person.
4. Possessing, using, distributing, or selling unauthorized copies of an examination or computer program.
5. Representing as one's own an examination taken by another person.
6. Taking an examination in place of another person.
7. Obtaining unauthorized access to the computer files of another person or agency, and/or altering or destroying those files.

**FABRICATION:** The falsification of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

**PLAGIARISM:**

1. Submitting another's published or unpublished work, in whole, in part, or in paraphrase, as one's own without fully and properly crediting the author with footnotes, citations or bibliographical reference.
2. Submitting as one's own, original work, material obtained from another individual or agency without reference to the person or agency as the source of the material.
3. Submitting as one's own, original work, material that has been produced through unacknowledged collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.

**AIDING or ABETTING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Knowingly helping, procuring, or encouraging another person to engage in academic misconduct.

In addition, the Student Code of Conduct covers acts of non-academic misconduct that include a variety of inappropriate conduct, including theft, unauthorized possession of weapons, threatening others, and harassment. Acts of non-academic misconduct are subject to a wide range of penalties, but serious violations may lead to suspension or dismissal from the Program.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is forbidden by law. It is also completely contrary to the rules of our program and to the trust and cooperation that are central to scientific endeavors. Anyone who feels that they may have been subjected to sexual



harassment is strongly encouraged to speak to the University Title IX office, Program Director or Associate Director and/or to take action through the University Grievance procedure. The Program takes these complaints very seriously and will take every necessary step to solve the problem. The Program will do everything possible to ensure discretion and that the act of lodging a complaint in no way compromises a student's career.

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The University of Cincinnati does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity and expression in its programs and activities.

The university does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on these bases and takes steps to ensure that students, employees, and third parties are not subject to a hostile environment in University programs or activities.

The university responds promptly and effectively to allegations of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It promptly conducts investigations and takes appropriate action, including disciplinary action, against individuals found to have violated its policies, as well as provides appropriate remedies to complainants and the campus community. The university takes immediate action to end a hostile environment if one has been created, prevent its recurrence, and remedy the effects of any hostile environment on affected members of the campus community.

### **Right to Review Records**

Students, once enrolled, have the right to review their educational records, except for those excluded by law, such as records maintained by a physician or psychiatrist, or parents' financial statement. Educational records are maintained in such offices as Student Records, the different College Deans' Offices, program offices, Student Financial Aid, Career Development and Placement, and Educational Advising.

In order to gain a review of such records, along with any appropriate explanation or interpretation, the student should first address the proper university, collegiate, or Program office. Students who encounter any difficulty in obtaining a review may appeal to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Committee. University of Cincinnati policy is that the kinds of student records referred to in this statement will be reviewable by any qualified student at any reasonable time. Copies of any portion of the record will be provided at cost, except transcripts of students' permanent academic records for which the University's transcript policy will apply.

It is the policy of this institution that all student records, other than "Directory Information," are to be treated with confidentiality so that the only access afforded University faculty or staff is on a "need-to-know" basis. The University defines "Directory Information" as: The student's name, address, telephone number, college, class, major field of study, dates of attendance, registration status, and degrees and awards received. The office responsible for the maintenance of any particular student record will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

## **Grievance Procedures**

In cases where a grievance cannot be resolved by the Neuroscience Graduate Program to the satisfaction of all parties, the University of Cincinnati provides an opportunity for the resolution of disputes involving graduate students in a fair and collegial manner. The Graduate Student Grievance Procedures establish a formal academic process for graduate students to request review and redress of certain grievances arising out of their academic relationships with their programs, their colleges, or the university. The grievance begins with a mediation process and may proceed, if necessary, through the more formal fact-finding and decision or appeal processes. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the university Ombudsman's Office for possible resolution before initiating the formal grievance process. Students, faculty and staff should note that Grievance Procedures are not a legal procedure. It is, however, an effective means to resolve conflicts. The Graduate School endorses this procedure and expects all programs and students involved to follow the procedure according to the established guidelines. No outside parties, such as lawyers, priests, family, etc., are allowed to participate in or impose on the procedure. The Graduate Student Grievance Procedure cannot supplant final sanctions stemming from the University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct process. There is a time limit to filing a grievance. It must be filed within 90 working days of the alleged improper mistreatment.

The procedures are applicable to the following types of grievances:

- grievances alleging improper dismissal or suspension from a graduate program;
- grievances alleging the improper withholding or termination of financial support of any kind;
- grievances alleging any other improper treatment of a graduate student by a faculty member or university agency except:
  1. allegations of discriminatory treatment arising from the student complainant's age, race, gender, sexual preference, disability, national origin, or religion;\*
  2. allegations of improper evaluation of the quality and quantity of academic work;
  3. allegations of unfair recommendation for employment or further graduate study.

\*Note: Allegations of discrimination and sexual harassment will be handled according to the university discrimination procedure as outlined by University of Cincinnati's Notice of Non-Discrimination.

Further details regarding the Graduate Student Grievance Procedures can be found at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/policies/grievances.html>

### **Medical Leave of Absence Policy**

If a student suffers from a major medical illness that interferes with normal academic progress in the program, the student must:

1. immediately inform the Program Directors and his/her Advisor of this illness.
2. provide a letter from his/her physician affirming the student's inability to maintain normal academic progress in the program. The leave of absence must be taken for at least one semester (but usually for one academic year) immediately upon notification of the illness.
3. provide a letter from his/her physician before re-entering the program affirming the student's ability to resume normal progress in the graduate program.

The costs associated with maintaining student health insurance during the medical leave of absence may be covered by the Neuroscience Graduate Program at the discretion of the Program Directors. However, the student's stipend will not be paid during the leave of absence. Stipend payments resume once the student has resumed normal progress in the graduate program.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

The NGP follows all University snow policies and procedures. All classes and exams are canceled when the university has closed. On days when the University delays opening, classes and exams will resume at the hour the University reopens if this is at or before 3 pm.

Graduate student presence in research laboratories during Winter Weather Emergencies will need to be decided on a case-by-case basis. Students should consult with their advisor in advance about any expectations or attendance requirements that are applicable regarding their research during such periods.

## **Eligibility of University Faculty and Administrators for Graduate Degrees**

No graduate degree will be granted to any faculty member above the rank of instructor who teaches in the same college in which the degree is to be granted. The only exception to the above rule applies to those members of the faculty who were, as of September 1, 1963, candidates for advanced degrees. This rule is applied also to adjunct appointments at any professorial rank and to interdisciplinary degrees when the same college is one of the interdisciplinary colleges; the only exception in the latter case will be when the faculty member was admitted to the interdisciplinary degree program prior to September 1, 1976.

No holder of an academic administrative title of Assistant Dean or equivalent or above shall be granted a graduate degree from the University of Cincinnati. The only exception will be when the administrator was admitted to the graduate program prior to September 1, 1976. This rule applies only to those who hold faculty rank above instructor. Those holding "equivalent rank" must petition the Graduate Council.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct or dishonesty is defined in the University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct and includes, but is not limited to, acts of cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and misappropriation of credit.

## **Summary**

The Neuroscience Graduate Program has established the following procedures to deal with cases of alleged academic misconduct that may occur among students in the graduate program. These rules, based upon the existing University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct, (<http://grad.uc.edu>, see Institution rules, policies and procedures) are designed to protect the accused student's rights and to protect the rights of innocent students whose academic integrity and success depend upon association with a University, a College, and a Graduate Program that uphold high academic and ethical standards.

Instances of alleged academic misconduct must be reported to the Dean of the College of Medicine or the University Student Conduct Officer. Informal procedures described in the Student Code of Conduct may resolve the matter. If not, the formal procedures described below shall be implemented. The result will be a recommendation for appropriate action, which may range from exoneration to dismissal from the University. Recommendations may be appealed as described in the Student Code of Conduct.

## Resolving Allegations of Misconduct

### *First Level Resolution*

Instances of academic misconduct may occur within the context of courses, laboratories, seminars or other academic settings. Therefore, allegations of academic misconduct may originate with faculty, students, or staff. The person suspecting misconduct must inform the student immediately and allow the student the opportunity to explain or respond. If the student is not informed or if no further action is taken within 10 days, the allegation shall be considered dismissed. If conversations between the student and person making the allegation do not resolve the problem to the satisfaction of both, further action is required.

In a course setting, a faculty member who has confirmed that academic misconduct has occurred may alter a grade or may assign a failing grade for the paper, exam or course. If such action is taken, the faculty member must notify the Dean of the College of Medicine and the Program Director within 10 days after informing the student. In settings other than courses, the person(s) bringing charges of academic misconduct may initiate appropriate disciplinary action by reporting the incident to a faculty member (in the case of a student accusing another student), the Program Director, and the Dean of the College of Medicine. Reports may also be made to the University Student Conduct Officer within 10 days of the alleged offense having occurred.

The report should include:

- a. Date of the report
- b. Name(s) of individual(s) involved
- c. Location/activity/setting of incident
- d. Date and time of incident
- e. Description of incident
- f. Names of witnesses
- g. Name and phone number of person(s) submitting report

Any instance of alleged academic misconduct that is not resolved between the student and person making the allegation will be investigated by the Neuroscience Graduate Program Ad Hoc Misconduct Review Committee. When appointed, the Neuroscience Graduate Program Misconduct Review Committee will consist of two faculty members and two students in the Neuroscience Graduate Program and a chair appointed by the Program Director. No faculty member or student directly involved in the pending allegation may serve on the Neuroscience Graduate Program Misconduct Review Committee.

The purposes of the investigation are to determine if the alleged misconduct occurred, to assess its severity, and to explore extenuating circumstances. Procedures to be used during the inquiry must be consistent with those described in the University Student Code of Conduct brochure under "Committee Procedures: Academic and Nonacademic Misconduct". All reports and documentation will be handled confidentially and in keeping with the manner appropriate for student records. Accused students should be given adequate time (generally, at least 48 hours) to prepare for the Misconduct Review Committee's inquiry. Should a student not wish to appear before the Misconduct Review Committee, the case will still be heard.

The Committee may recommend actions ranging from exoneration to expulsion of the student from the Program. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Program Directors, who will review the incident and inquiry, may solicit additional information, and will recommend final action to the Dean of the College of Medicine.

### *Second Level Resolution*

If First Level Resolution is not achieved, any party may request a Formal Hearing by the College Hearing Panel. Requests for a Formal Hearing must be made to the Dean, in writing. Such requests must be made within 5 days after the Dean has notified the parties that the First Level Resolution process is complete.

The College Hearing Panel shall consist of a Hearing Officer appointed by the Dean, two faculty representatives selected by the Faculty Forum President and two student representatives. The student representatives will be the two Co-Presidents of the Graduate Student Governance Association (GSGA) or their designated representatives. Either party may challenge "for cause" a specific member's presence on the Hearing Panel by notifying the Hearing Officer of the challenge. The Hearing Officer will decide if the challenge is granted. The College Hearing Panel shall be convened within 15 days of receipt by the Dean of a request for Formal Hearing and shall continue until the Formal Hearing is completed. The purposes of the hearing are to determine if the alleged misconduct occurred, to assess its severity, and to explore extenuating circumstances.

Procedures used during the inquiry must be consistent with those described in the University Student Code of Conduct brochure under "Committee Procedures: Academic and Nonacademic Misconduct". All reports and documentation will be handled confidentially and in keeping with the manner appropriate for student records. Should a student not wish to appear before the Hearing Panel, the case will still be heard.

The College Hearing Panel shall then determine what response is appropriate and recommend this action to the Dean. This recommendation will be based on a

majority vote. All members must be present to have a quorum. The Hearing Officer will forward the Review Board's recommendation to the Dean, the student and the faculty parties within five days of the conclusion of the hearing. The Dean will notify all parties of the action taken by the Dean within five days of receipt of the Review Board recommendation.

### Appeal

A decision by the Dean and any subsequent appeal by the student shall proceed as defined in the Student Code of Conduct.

## Summary of Academic Misconduct Procedures

Report Allegations to:

Dean of the College of Medicine:

Andrew Filak, M.D.  
CARE, E870  
513.558.7333

Director of University Judicial Affairs:

Aniesha Mitchell  
745 Steger Student Life Center (West Campus)  
513.556.6814

Neuroscience Program Director:

Mark Baccei, Ph.D.  
Medical Sciences Building, Room 3412  
513.558.5037

Neuroscience Graduate Program Ad Hoc Misconduct Review Committee:

Committee Chair (to be appointed by the Program Director), two Neuroscience faculty members, and two Neuroscience graduate students.

### Timetable for Action:

- Incident must be reported within 10 days.
- Possible First Level Resolution. If not, Dean appoints Hearing Officer.

- Hearing Officer convenes College Hearing Panel within 15 days after failure of First Level Resolution procedures.
- College Hearing Panel must notify Dean of recommendation within 5 days after hearing is held.
- Dean must notify all parties of action taken within 5 days after receiving Hearing Panel's recommendation.

**Updated 07.23.19**