



Graduate Student Handbook

SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Graduate Student Handbook School of Biomedical Sciences

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Background

The School of Biomedical Sciences supports a graduate program dedicated to training researchers and educators involved in all areas of the basic sciences related to biomedicine. This inter-institutional, interdepartmental organization includes more than 100 graduate faculty, whose primary appointments are at Kent State University (KSU), the Northeastern Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), the Lerner Research Institute (LRI) of the Cleveland Clinic (CC), the University of Akron (UA) and Youngstown State University (YSU). Approximately 80 graduate students join these faculty in five program areas: Biological Anthropology, Cell and Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Pharmacology and Physiology. Our students are expected to excel in all areas of the graduate experience, including coursework, teaching and research. The following student handbook details these expectations, as well as procedures involved in obtaining the graduate degree. The University’s Guide to Graduate Education can be accessed at: <https://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/guide-to-graduate-education> .

Financial Aid

As of Academic Year (AY) 2018/19, graduate assistantship stipends are \$23,000/yr. This amount increases to \$24,000 for Ph.D. students following successful completion of the Candidacy Exam. Please note that all stipends are for 12 months. Students are expected to participate in graduate education, teaching and research throughout the year, including summers. Being awarded a stipend involves a service commitment as described below. Financial aid also includes full tuition remission for supported students. All registered students have free access to the Student Recreation and Wellness Center.

Please be aware that failure to perform any required duties at acceptable levels will result in the termination of funding, regardless of the source of that support. All students are evaluated on an annual basis in order to determine if funding is to be continued for the coming year. Also be aware that funding is normally limited to 5 years of assistantship support. Those who have not completed their studies in the allotted time may remain in the program, but they will not receive financial support unless there are extenuating circumstances. Any student not making satisfactory progress towards the completion of their degrees may be dismissed, regardless of the funding situation.

Service Commitment

All students receiving a stipend have service commitments. There are two major classifications: Graduate Assistant - Teaching (TA) and Graduate Assistant – Non-Teaching (RA). Teaching Assistantships (TA) require service as instructors most commonly in a laboratory setting. These assistantships may require up to 20 hours effort per week for 30 weeks during the academic year. Service performed during Summer semester will be counted towards that 600 hour total.

Graduate Assistants – Non-Teaching are most commonly Research Assistants (RA). These students are funded from an advisor's non-School funds; typically a federal grant. RAs are not expected to teach, but are required to apply their service commitments to research efforts. Normally these efforts benefit the students, since they are carrying out their dissertation research.

It is important to note that in each case, the stipend is for a 12-month appointment. Funded students are expected to continue research throughout the year, with vacation time coordinated with the respective advisor. In addition, any student unable to comply with the service requirement will lose financial support and be dismissed from the program. In the case of a TA, that student must complete each semester's teaching assignment. Also, the TA must provide acceptable teaching, as indicated by student and faculty evaluations. Failure to do so will result in the cancellation of financial support. Similarly, each RA must provide an acceptable level of engagement in the advisor's research activities, or be subject to contract termination.

Orientation

There are a variety of orientation events for incoming graduate students. Many of these are organized under Graduate Student Orientation (GSO). This begins the week before fall semester classes. Incoming students will receive information on the when and where of these events directly from the Graduate Studies Office well before the orientation begins. Incoming students must keep that week free for orientation activities. In addition, international students will meet with GSO officials the weekend prior to the general orientation. Again, these students must keep those times free, in order to attend. Incoming students may direct questions about these orientation activities to Mr. Kyle Reynolds, Director of Student Services in Graduate Studies (kreynol3@kent.edu).

The Director of the School of Biomedical Sciences meets with incoming students during orientation week. In addition, the Director will meet individually with each new student as needed to advise them and answer any questions they may have. Each student must access Flashline as soon as possible after receiving a Letter of Admission. Flashline is the University portal to connect with the graduate catalog and course schedules. It is also used to register for courses each semester, apply for parking permits, obtain information on financial aid and receive notifications on campus-wide items of interest. In order to use Flashline, each student must click on “Get User Name and Login Help” under the word Flashline, which may be found on the University’s opening web page. Open “I’m new to Kent State” and follow the instructions to get started. Help in establishing a Flashline account can be obtained at the Help Desk at 2-4357, or online at support.kent.edu. Students must retain: user name, email address and Kent State ID number, in order to maintain communications with the University.

The FLASHcard is the official University ID and is required for all BMS students. New students must take identification with them to the FLASHcard Office located on the first floor of the Student Center, in order to be issued a card. These cards are used for many things on campus, including using the Wellness Center, checking out library materials and obtaining the 10% discount provided to students at the University Bookstore.

Please keep in mind that the email accounts issued to all students, faculty and staff are used for all official University business. All students, faculty and staff must use their University provided email accounts. All information disseminated to BMS students is through their kent.edu e-mail addresses.

Forms

All relevant forms for graduate students can be downloaded and should be completed at the appropriate times during your progression through the degree. All forms can found here: <https://www.kent.edu/biomedical/forms-graduate-students>. All forms need to be returned to office of the School of Biomedical Sciences.

Advising

New incoming graduate students consult with the Director of the School regarding their courses for the first semester. Prior to the start of the semester, admitted students are provided a list of graduate faculty interested in advising graduate students. Students can read their research descriptions and identify those that interest them. The Director can assist in this process. Ph.D. students will then do three laboratory rotations during the first year, in order to find the best match between student and advisor. The first rotation will be determined before or at the start of the first semester. Faculty interested in advising students may provide brief presentations on their work during the fall semester seminar series to help students with subsequent rotation selection and to

familiarize students with the different types of research going on in the program. Students may contact potential advisors, but they must get the approval of the Director, prior to starting a rotation in that faculty member's lab. An approval form must be signed by the advisor and the Director prior to commencing each of the rotations.

Each of the three lab rotations are expected to last approximately half a semester. Students must send an evaluation of the experience to the Director, immediately upon completion of the rotation. The evaluation form is found on the web site. In addition, the rotation advisor will provide the Director with a brief description of the student's efforts during that rotation.

Each student must complete a summary form, following the third rotation. This form is also found on the web site and must include a rank-ordered list of potential advisors. Both the students' summaries and the faculty evaluations will be used during the spring semester to match students with the most appropriate advisor. While it is hoped that each student will be placed with her/his first choice, this might not always be possible, due to financial constraints. **Any student who applies to our program with the expressed desire to work with a specific faculty member may not be required to complete all three rotations. The same is true for students who are admitted to the program with funding through a specific faculty member.**

Students are expected to engage fully in the research experience during each rotation. Students should read the advisors' publications, examine grant proposals, master lab methodologies and become familiar with the questions each faculty member seeks to answer. Students should attend lab meetings and interact with other lab members, as well as the advisor. Whether or not students fully engage in these processes will be obvious from the evaluations written by the students and the advisors. **M.S. students will work with the Director to find an advisor before or at the start of the fall semester, based on their interests. M.S. students do not do formal laboratory rotations.**

Although it is rare for a student to [change advisors](#) following the above selection process, it can be done. Students or faculty wishing to terminate the advising relationship must first discuss this with the Director. The Director will then bring the issue to the School's Executive Committee, if no simple resolution can be found. The Committee will then direct the student to an appropriate advisor. However, be aware that any student who cannot identify a willing advisor is subject to dismissal. Although a student who does not find a suitable advisor following three rotations may be allowed to add a rotation, the inability to find an advisor by the end of the Summer, or after a reasonable length of time in program, will lead to dismissal.

Program Requirements

Copies of the checklist that provides the series of events in the timeline to degree completion can be picked up in the Graduate Studies Office. They can also be downloaded from the School website.

for master's students:

https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/file/ms%20prog%20checklist_0.pdf

for doctoral students:

<https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/file/doc%20prog%20checklist.pdf>

or a copy can be emailed to you.

Coursework:

All funded students must register for at least 8 credits in fall and spring semesters and 6 credits in summer semesters, in order to be full-time and, therefore, receive a stipend. Failure to maintain those credit levels may result in cancellation of financial support. Although the school administration checks on registration, it is the student's responsibility to make sure that they are properly registered by the start of each semester.

All BMS students are required to take a set of core courses. These are Introduction to Biomedical Sciences, Responsible Conduct of Research, and one from a choice of statistics courses. The course numbers and the course options may be found under coursework on our web site. Similarly, each program area stipulates core courses and electives, which may be found on the web site. Course substitutions must be approved by the Director.

Course Substitutions and Waivers

If a student is to be exempted from a required course for their program, the following steps must be followed.

1. The student and advisor must consult with the student's guidance committee to make sure the deviation sought is appropriate in the view of the guidance committee. The student should bring a "[course substitution/waiver](#)" form to the meeting for the committee to sign indicating their approval.
2. The student's advisor must submit a written request, along with the required form, to the Director requesting that a specific deviation be authorized.
3. The rationale must be clearly stated. This rationale is what will be used by the Director in making a recommendation to the Executive Committee, so it must be clear and complete.
4. In the case of arguments for deviations based on prior coursework (i.e., course substitutions), the student must supply to the Director a syllabus, class notes, and any other information available about the prior course. The Director will then solicit a written statement from the instructor of the Kent course, for which the substitution is requested.
5. The Director in consultation with the Executive Committee will evaluate the original request and any support documentation and make a determination. This determination will be forwarded to the advisor and student.

Any requests for substitutions must be made prior to enrolling in the course that the student is attempting to use as a substitute. Thus, if a student wants to

substitute course B for course A, they should not sign up for course B until their request has been approved.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of 12 semester hours of graduate credit may be accepted by transfer from accredited institutions provided (1) the work was of "A" or "B" quality; (2) the work fits into the student's program at Kent State; (3) credit is less than six (nine) years old at the time of the master's (doctoral) degree is conferred at Kent State; (4) an official transcript *with an accompanying explanatory letter* is filed in the School; and (5) the student's adviser, Director and the graduate dean approve.

An "accredited" institution is one that is approved or accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency (e.g., North Central Association of Colleges and Schools) for graduate-level work.

Students must maintain a GPA > 3.0. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program, since a GPA > 3.0 is required to graduate as a matter of University policy. In addition, students must accumulate no more than four credit hours of C grades or worse, or seven hours of B- grades or worse.

Guidance Committee:

Shortly after each student is matched with an advisor, she/he must form a Guidance Committee. This Committee consists of the advisor plus two graduate faculty members in the student's program area. The choices are made by the student with input from the advisor. It is best to select members with some interest in the area of research, because they are likely to be more useful as the student progresses. The forms for committee make-up can be found here: <https://www.kent.edu/biomedical/forms-graduate-students>.

Requirements for Degree Completion:

The requirements for MS students are:

- Course work, including 20 credits of graded courses, with GPA > 3.0
- Guidance Committee Approval
- Program of Study
- Thesis Topic Approval
- Thesis

* Master's students in the School of Biomedical Sciences can also matriculate into the PhD program after completion of no more than 14hrs of coursework, but at least 9-10hrs of coursework, if they meet the PhD entrance requirements and with the approval of their guidance committee and the Director of the School of Biomedical Sciences. Students that wish to matriculate must be in good standing and have enthusiastic support from their advisor and guidance committee.

The requirements that must be completed, in order to earn a doctorate are:

- Course work, including 20-21 credits of graded courses, with GPA > 3.0
- Program of Study
- Candidacy Exam
- Prospectus
- Publications
- Dissertation

The program requirements that need to be met are explained below:

Program of Study:

The Program of Study form is two pages and is available for downloading from our web site (<https://www.kent.edu/biomedical/forms-graduate-students>). The information submitted includes the courses the student has taken, or plans to take, at the graduate level. It also includes the make-up of the student's Guidance Committee, verification of thesis topic approval for master's students and the organization and timing of the Candidacy Exam for doctoral students. This form should be completed during the third academic semester, with signed approval of the student's Guidance Committee. This committee consists of the student's advisor and two other graduate faculty from that Program Area. For example, a student in the Neuroscience program will need to have an advisor in that area, as well as two other faculty members with graduate appointments in that area.

The Program of Study is used to: 1) determine the adequacy of the student's coursework, including the completion of 20-21 credits of graded courses, 2) establish the make-up of the student's Candidacy Exam and 3) estimate completion times for the various exams and defenses. The Guidance Committee must agree on the student's course work and the arrangement of the Candidacy Exam. The procedures for this exam are described below. Once the Program of Study is completed and signed, it is delivered to the School office for the approval of the Director and placement in the student's file.

Candidacy Exam:

The Candidacy Exam can be completed in one of two fashions:

Option one:

The written portion of the exam will consist of a grant proposal written by the student, with no input from faculty members. The format of the proposal will be the NIH NRSA fellowship or other common fellowship format. If the NIH format is used, it will consist of three parts, the Specific Aims (1 page max), the Research Strategy (6 pages max, includes Significance and Background and Approach), and Literature Cited.

The topic of the proposal may NOT be the student's area of research, but may be in a related field. For example, if the student were studying the role of serotonin receptors in regulating feeding behavior, they could write their proposal on some other aspect of serotonin function, or some other aspect of feeding behavior regulation.

The student and the committee will meet 6-8 weeks prior to the due date of the candidacy exam to have a preliminary discussion of potential topics. The student will then look into these topics and report back to the committee (can be via e-mail) on the topic they have selected. The committee members must then approve the topic. **The student should have approximately 5 weeks to write the proposal.**

The committee will then evaluate the proposal to judge the student's knowledge of the background material and the logic of the scientific approach. If they are satisfied, the exam will proceed to the oral portion of the exam, in which the committee members can ask questions about the proposal or background material to ascertain the student's depth of knowledge on the topic, and ability to justify his/her experimental approaches.

If the written proposal is judged to be unacceptable, then the student may be given a second chance, at the discretion of the advisory committee. Students will be assigned a grade of either Pass, Fail, or Conditional Pass. Conditional Pass should be used infrequently and only in special circumstances.

Option two:

The written portion of is divided into three parts: the Major, Minor I and Minor II. The questions for each portion are conceived by the Guidance Committee member assigned that section, as shown on the Program of Study form. The committee members suggest readings for the student related to each section. The readings for the Major should provide information more general to the Program Area. For example, a student in Cellular and Molecular Biology might be assigned chapters from text books previously used in graduate courses. Readings for Minor I should be more related to the student's future area of research, while those for Minor II should be closely aligned with the student's research. This section is normally handled by the student's advisor. The written portion must be taken within a one week period. Testing for the Major should be tailored to be completed within eight hours, while the questions for Minor I and Minor II should require approximately four hours each to complete. An example of the labeling of the sections might be: Major – Neuroscience, Minor I – Neurochemistry and Minor II – Neurodegeneration. **The student should be provided approximately 5 weeks to prepare for the written portion of the exam.**

The written portion of the exam can be graded as pass, fail or conditional pass. With a conditional pass, the committee assigns further conditions that must be met by the student, in order to pass the exam. For example, they may provide more material and follow-up questions, or they may require more study by the student, followed by questioning similar to the original exam. **The student should be provided approximately 3 weeks to prepare for additional examination.** In the case of a failing grade, the committee members may allow the student to retake the exam, or they may recommend the student not be allowed to pursue a doctoral degree.

The oral portion of the candidacy exam should be held as soon as possible following successful completion of the written portion. Most commonly, committee members ask for more detailed answers to questions previously posed on the written part. The oral portion may be done by teleconferencing, or conference calls, if the distance between committee members is a problem. Still, an in-person oral defense is preferred. Should the student fail this portion, another opportunity to succeed may be offered, or they may be failed for the Candidacy Exam, which leads to dismissal from the doctoral program.

Prospectus:

The student's guidance committee is expanded at the time of the Prospectus, to include an addition faculty member who is not faculty in the student's program area. For example, the added member may come from Neuroscience, if the student is in the Pharmacology program area. Faculty from non-BMS departments at Kent State can also serve as outside members. Alternatively, an accomplished scientist from outside the school's faculty may be appointed and given temporary graduate faculty status in order to act as the outside member of the committee.

The Prospectus is a brief document in which the student describes the work that they plan to do to complete their dissertation. Preliminary data may be included if available. The purpose of the prospectus is to allow a student's committee to give feedback on the research plan and ascertain that the student understands what it is that he or she is proposing. From the student's perspective, approval of the Prospectus provides an indication that if they complete the proposed work their committee will find it sufficient for their dissertation.

The Prospectus should be prepared similar to the research narrative portion of a grant proposal. The format involves specific aims, a research strategy, which includes the significance of the proposed research, as well as potential innovations, the approach to be used, preliminary data and references. **The prospectus is to be completed within six months of passing candidacy exams.** One does not need "more data" to write a prospectus. Research plans can always change in the face of the first experiments done, and the student should keep their committee up to date about major deviations from the plan in the prospectus.

This committee evaluates the written Prospectus and convenes for the oral prospectus defense. This is not an exam like the candidacy exam – this is an opportunity for the committee to evaluate the student's knowledge of their research plan and for the student to get feedback. The committee may approve the prospectus after defense by student or may require the student to make additional changes to the plan. The approved Prospectus acts as a contract that describes the research to be completed by the student. A major change to the student's research requires the approval of a majority of the Committee and the Director of the School.

Publications:

Prior to the final submission of the completed thesis, master's students are required to have at least one peer-reviewed journal article (any authorship) submitted and under review. Prior to the final submission of the completed dissertation, doctoral students are required to have, at a minimum, one first author, peer-reviewed journal article published or in press, or two articles (at least one first authored) submitted to journals and under review.

Thesis:

The Master's Thesis should be prepared according to the Style Guide found at: <http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms>. The committee for the oral defense consists of the initial Thesis Committee and the defense proceeds according to the procedures outlined in the [Thesis Final Guidelines](#) document at the above link. Similarly, the deadline for completing the defense and submitting the Thesis, in order to attend graduation ceremonies that semester, are provided by the College early in the semester. Additional forms including Final Exam Report and Thesis Preparation Approval can be found here: <https://www.kent.edu/biomedical/forms-graduate-students>.

Dissertation:

The Dissertation should be written and defended by the end of the fifth year in the program. Prior to identifying a defense date, the student will request that a Graduate Faculty Representative be appointed by the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences to complete the Dissertation Committee. This is done through a form on the College of Arts & Sciences web site. <http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-faculty-representative>

The Graduate Faculty Representative is involved in all aspects of the defense, including voting on the outcome. The Dissertation must be prepared according to the Style Guide provided at: <http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms>. The completed Dissertation is provided to all committee members. After ten days, the members vote on the defensibility of the document. If all agree to proceed, the oral defense can be scheduled no sooner than ten days later. So, committee members must have a minimum of 20 calendar days from the time they receive the Dissertation until its defense. Should a majority of the committee find the Dissertation to be inadequate, the student must comply with suggested changes. Once the committee is satisfied with the document, the defense may take place.

A Moderator may be added to the Dissertation Defense Committee, in order to maintain the decorum and timing of the defense. The Moderator may be selected by the advisor, or the Graduate School Representative may assume this role.

While the [Dissertation Final Examination procedures](#) involved in the defense may vary at the discretion of the examining Committee, the defense normally commences with a short presentation by the candidate. The Committee members then pose a round of questions, with each member limited to a predetermined amount of time, usually ten

to fifteen minutes. The second round is most commonly limited to five minutes of questioning from each member. Questions from the audience are encouraged and may take place before or after the Committee's questions, depending on the sequence agreed to prior to commencing the defense. Ultimately, the student may pass, fail with an opportunity to make another attempt at a future date, or fail with a recommendation for dismissal from the program. The outcome is based on a majority of votes.

Each semester, the deadline for completing the defense and submitting the Dissertation, in order to attend graduation ceremonies that semester, are provided by the College early in the semester.

Additional forms including Final Exam Report and Dissertation Preparation Approval can be found here: <https://www.kent.edu/biomedical/forms-graduate-students>.

Time to Completion

The State of Ohio provides revenues to the University based on a number of criteria, including Time to Degree Completion. Therefore, support for doctoral students is only offered for a five year period. However, additional support may be provided for a limited period of time contingent upon documentation of extenuating circumstances.

In addition, it is important to be aware that post-graduation placement may be affected by the amount of time it takes to complete the program. So, proceeding with alacrity will benefit job searches.

Annual Performance Evaluations for Graduate Students

Students must continue to make progress in the program and get feedback about their progress. Thus, to help facilitate communication between graduate students and advisors, provide feedback to students, and provide an update to the department about student progress, graduate students must undergo an annual evaluation. These evaluations are to be completed by the advisor and student prior to the submission of reappointment requests; which are made towards the end of fall semester.

This form can be found in the schools form library online or can be provided by the School's office (251T Integrated Sciences Building).

Please keep in mind that graduate students within the Department must remain in [good academic standing](#). This means a minimum GPA of a 3.0 and progress towards degree completion (the annual evaluation is one way for us to evaluate the latter component).

Student Conduct

All students must adhere to the [KSU Code of Student Conduct](#). In addition, it is important to remember that you are working members of our department and as such it

is expected that you will conduct yourself in a professional manner, in the classroom, the laboratory, or as an instructor

Vacations, Leaves and Dismissals

Stipend support for a student is based on a 12-month appointment. Vacations are not guaranteed during this period, but they are encouraged. They must, however, be taken with the [approval](#) of the advisor. Vacations may not be taken by a TA during a teaching semester, without prior approval of the Director.

Leaves of Absence may be taken for a legitimate reason. The Leave of Absence Policy can be found at: <https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/file/leave-of-absence-policy11-8-2012.pdf>.

Students may be dismissed from the School for failing to meet program requirements. These include poor academic performance (GPA < 3.0), failure to make timely progress through the program (e.g. too long to Candidacy), poor teaching, or unethical activities (e.g. cheating/plagiarism). In this case, the Director submits a recommendation for dismissal to the Executive Committee and their recommendation is forwarded to the Dean of the College for approval, or denial.

Teaching Assistantships

Most students in our department serve as teaching assistants and this is a valuable chance to hone your communication abilities and to prepare for future employment. Each year a form is given to teaching assistants for them to request summer support and funding for the following year. The graduate studies committee evaluates these requests and reappointment is dependent upon your degree progress. You should take care to follow the timeline for your degree program and to document your progress. Make sure that when you turn in your request for reappointment that your documentation of progress is up to date.

The TA coordinator, Shelley Jurkiewicz, does the teaching assignments for all BSCI courses. Before the start of each semester, you will get a note asking you to indicate any teaching preferences. Courses are assigned based on your background and interests. You should also talk with faculty whom are teaching courses with which you would like to be involved.

Teaching assistantships involve more than teaching labs. Students may also be assigned to serve as lecture aides on occasion, to assist in lab preparation, and to help with training. Some are called on to serve as lab coordinators for the larger classes. The most important thing to remember is to take your responsibilities seriously but do not let them overwhelm you. You should do your job well but it should not take precedence over successful research progress.

Large classes with multiple lab sections typically require weekly TA meetings. The graduate student who is the Lab Coordinator or the faculty instructor may organize these. You should attend each meeting and participate fully. The key is communication. If everyone does their job, things go smoothly. If you have any problems, speak to the faculty member in charge.

New teaching assistants are required to take a TA training course, scheduled for the beginning of the fall semester. Other students and faculty can also provide guidance when you have questions.

You must set aside time each week for office hours. You need an hour for each lab section. Once you have determined the days/times, email them to the graduate office. You also need to inform the students in **writing** of your office hours, office location, and how they may contact you (e mail, lab phone, or whatever suits you). Also make sure and tell them what to do with papers that they might have to turn in outside of class time. Papers should not be turned into the main office.

For more information about Teaching Assistantships please refer to the [BSCI Teaching Assistant Handbook](#).

Academic Integrity: Cheating and Plagiarism

Unethical activities by BMS students will not be tolerated. All students must take the BMS course: Responsible Conduct of Research, which characterizes such activities. Of course these include cheating and plagiarism. The course professor is normally allowed to establish the punishment for cheating or plagiarizing in a course, but dismissal is encouraged. Cheating or plagiarizing in the scientific arena will always result in dismissal from our graduate program. The University's guidelines on these issues can be found at: <https://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism>, which may be accessed through Flashline.

Clearly, unethical academic or scientific behaviors will have a negative impact on a developing career. Formal letters detailing the cheating, or plagiarism are kept in the student's file and are available to potential employers, as well as journal editors.

International Student Guide

International graduate students attend a graduate student orientation program before they start during the fall semester. The following web address will provide some information regarding the Graduate Student Orientation (GSO): <https://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gso>.

You may find the following websites very useful:

International Student & Scholar Services:

<http://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/international-students-scholars-0>.

Office of Global Education: <http://www.kent.edu/globaleducation/international-admissions>.

Information about Kent State's English as a Second Language can be found here: <http://www.kent.edu/english/esl-center>.

Off-Campus Housing

The Commuter and Off-Campus Student Resource Guide is available online (you can also pick up a printed version at the COSO office located on the first floor of the Kent Student Center) and will provide useful information regarding not only off-campus housing, but also information regarding area utilities, banking, shopping, landlord-tenant information and much more.

<http://dept.kent.edu/csi/CommuterStudents/CommuterStudents.html>.

Transportation

Transportation is an important issue, given the distances between the various institutions that participate as members of the School. The Kent campus is approximately five miles from the NEOMED campus and all students will travel between them. In addition, the Cleveland Clinic campus is about a 45 minute drive from the Kent campus. Most commonly, students use their own automobiles. However, students who lack autos can find rides with other students. Although transportation is ultimately the responsibility of the student, the School office will attempt to coordinate ride sharing, when needed.

Campus and Local Environments:

KSU, NEOMED and the CC provide unique and engaging environments for BMS students. KSU was established in 1910 on the banks of the Cuyahoga River. There are approximately 28,000 students on the main campus and 42,000 students on all eight campuses of the KSU system. It is ranked as one of the top 200 universities in the world and has 28 doctoral programs. The University offers a wide variety of educational, cultural, athletic and outdoor activities, as might be expected of the second largest university in the state. These include intercollegiate sports, on-campus concerts, the Black Squirrel Festival, art and fashion shows, and the first-class Student Recreation and Wellness Center, which offers popular forms of recreation and athletics. Again, BMS students have free access to this Center. Of course you can find maps, directions and learn more about campus attractions and activities at <http://www.kent.edu>.

The KSU campus is located in the city of Kent, Ohio, which has its own attractions and activities. The city sponsors a Heritage Festival in the Summer and a nationally recognized Folk Festival in the Fall. In addition, the Kent Stage draws top level folk and jazz artists throughout the year. The surroundings are pastoral and offer

excellent opportunities for hiking, biking, kayaking and cross country skiing. You may find more on the city of Kent at <http://www.Kentohio.net>.

NEOMED was founded in 1973 and is located in Rootstown, Ohio, about five miles from the Kent campus. It is a community-based, state university. It is located in a semi-rural area, which offers a relaxing environment. It houses medical and pharmaceutical education and research. You may learn more about the graduate program, the facilities, as well as find maps and directions at <http://www.neomed.edu>. In contrast, the Cleveland Clinic is located in an urban environment with its 41 buildings in proximity to University Circle in Cleveland, Ohio. The CC was founded in 1921 and is ranked as one of the top four medical centers in the country. The graduate faculty associated with BMS are housed primarily in the Lerner Research Institute, which provides substantial contributions to the more than \$258 million in NIH funds garnered annually by CC researchers. You can find maps and directions, in addition to more information on the facilities and the faculty, at <http://www.clevelandclinic.org>.

Nearby to the three main campuses you can find a myriad of cultural, social, athletic and outdoor activities. For example, Akron, Ohio is located about 12 miles from the Kent campus. It is the fifth largest city in Ohio. It is the site of concerts and plays at Akron Civic Theater, E.J. Thomas Hall, Blossom Music Center and Lock Three. It also supports a minor league baseball team which plays at Canal Park, the Soap Box Derby, the PGA Championship and various museums. You may learn more on the activities in Akron at <http://www.ci.akron.oh.us/attract.html>.

There is much to do and see in Cleveland, one of the largest cities in the country. The city sponsors a world class Symphony Orchestra, as well as nationally known art and natural history museums. The city also supports professional baseball, football and basketball teams, in addition to a variety of performing arts venues, such as Severance Hall, Cain Park and the Nautica Stage. The city also houses world-class restaurants and the much appreciated Great Lakes Brewery. You can learn more about Cleveland attractions at www.cleveland.oh.us.

Career Development:

Our graduate students must excel in courses, teaching and research. Successful students attend classes and are not tardy. They focus on the lectures and assignments. Most commonly, the good students recopy notes shortly after each lecture and they read ahead, in order to more fully appreciate the presented materials. The best students also ask questions and it is imperative to study in preparation for exams. Written assignments must be organized, well-written and turned in on time. Transcripts are part of every job application and, therefore, they must be excellent, in order to obtain desired positions in the future.

Teaching is an important aspect of career development. Experience in this area will become an important part of future job applications. It is expected that all BMS students will develop into excellent teachers. To do so, organize the material and

present it clearly and in a logical fashion. Attend all prep sessions. Examine past notes, quizzes and exams, in order to help you organize the materials, as well as gain understanding into what information is supposed to be transmitted to the students. Create detailed notes for every presentation and practice their delivery. Be sure to use visual aids and provide straight forward quizzes and exams. Written materials should be graded in an objective manner using a detailed key. Always be fair and understanding. Act like your favorite teachers. You will be evaluated by both your students and the faculty member in charge of the course. Take pride in your teaching.

Success in research is most important. What you do in the lab and how you disseminate your data will define your graduate career. Your future depends on the research you publish. There are a number of practices that will help you develop into a first rate scientist. You must depend on the scientific method; asking pertinent questions that can be tested and, therefore, answered. You must master the literature in your area. This allows you to ask the pertinent questions and define the methods necessary to answer those questions. Of course those methods must be mastered. This requires planning and execution. It requires focus.

Success in research requires excellent communication skills. You must learn to write in a scientific manner, as well as provide clear and organized oral presentations. You may develop these skills by learning from good writing and speaking. Your advisor will help you with this. Finally, developing as a scientist requires engagement in the process. It is important to attend seminars and learn from them. It's important to join a society and attend its meetings, in order to present your work, learn about the research that is developing in your area and network with like-minded scientists. Of all areas that are part of your graduate experience, research is the most important. So, seek your advisor's help. Learn to experiment and communicate.

Helpful Hints:

Here are some suggestions to help you succeed.

- Know your advisor's scientific legacy; read her/his papers and grants
- Check your email every day
- Question everything, but be polite
- Ask questions
- Know the literature
- Be dependable
- Work harder than everyone; it will be rewarded
- Never be late
- Don't wait to seek help if you are struggling
- Learn from every seminar, lecture, journal club and conference
- Start writing early; organize your prospectus, dissertation and papers into sections; fill them in as you go
- Remember the Pi effect: everything takes 3.14 times longer than you think
- Use <http://www.kent.edu/biomedical> ; it has all forms, course requirements, etc.
- Only you are responsible for your success

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON ROLE AND STATUS OF GRADUATE STUDENT APPOINTEES

This document is intended for the guidance of graduate appointees and the graduate units in order to provide some uniformity in the role and status of these graduate students.

I. GRADUATE APPOINTEE INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE

Graduate appointees shall be represented at appropriate levels of university governance in order to insure a healthy exchange of ideas among students, faculty, and administration, and to utilize the valued counsel of graduate students. The principal guideline should be that graduate appointees participate in policy decisions and be excluded from personnel matters.

A. Departmental Level

Curriculum Committees

Graduate appointees shall be represented on curriculum committees. Those who are responsible for teaching a section of a course shall be represented by member(s) on appropriate course committees. The number of representatives, their qualifications, and their mode of selection shall be determined by the department. The committee chair shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

Department Meetings

Graduate appointees shall be invited to and included in general departmental meetings. The department chair shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

Graduate Studies Committee

Graduate students shall be represented by voting member(s) on Graduate Studies Committees. The number of such students and their qualifications shall be determined by the graduate faculty of the department. They shall be elected by the graduate students in the department. The committee chair shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

All departmental policies affecting graduate appointees (to include grievance procedures, programmatic specifications, and all other policy matters) shall be made available to each graduate appointee at the time of the student's initial enrollment for graduate studies. Graduate appointees shall be notified of modifications in departmental policies which occur during the course of their appointment tenure. 30

B. Collegial and Independent-School Level

Graduate appointees shall be invited to and included in college faculty and committee meetings which are concerned with graduate matters. The dean of the college shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

C. University Level

Faculty Meetings

Graduate appointees shall be invited to and included in university faculty meetings. The President shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

II. CATEGORIES FOR GRADUATE SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

In order to be eligible for a graduate appointment, a student must be enrolled in a specific degree program. A full-time graduate teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, or graduate administrative assistant is expected to devote 49% of the university-defined full-time work load per week (or equivalent assignment) in service and to enroll for a minimum of eight credit hours per semester (See Appendix 1). A half-time graduate teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, or graduate administrative assistant is expected to devote half of the service commitment expected of a full-time appointee per week (or equivalent assignment) in service and to enroll for a minimum of eight credit hours per semester. The tuition remission for a full-time appointee should cover a student's enrollment up to 16 hours per semester (prorated for a part-time assistantship). In some programs of study, a lesser tuition remission is acceptable but the appointee needs to be notified in advance.

An appointee who has tuition remission only does not have a service commitment. Such an appointee is expected to enroll for a minimum of eight credit hours per semester. An appointee who is in the combined baccalaureate and master's program will enroll for both graduate and undergraduate hours as determined by the student's advisor. Note that graduate students nearing completion of their degree who have satisfied all required coursework and that may be registered for only 2 credit hours of Thesis II or 1 credit hour of Dissertation II are considered full-time students.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE PROCEDURES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH THE COLLEGE'S ENROLLMENT PLAN AND MUST HAVE THE APPROVAL OF THE PROVOST.

Appointments or reappointments, including tuition remission, are not automatic, but are contingent upon good degree progress and satisfactory performance of duties as determined by the grantor of the stipend.

The graduate appointments outlined below are intended to provide minimal support to enable a student to spend the maximum amount of time in the pursuit of his/her graduate studies with the objective of completing the degree in the shortest amount of time. To this end, it is considered inappropriate for a full-time graduate appointee to be engaged in substantial additional employment other than in an incidental way. Except in unusual circumstances and with the approval of the academic college Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies, a graduate appointee may not hold an additional formal appointment through which the total commitment of service at Kent State University thus exceeds 20 hours per week.

A. Research Assistantship (RA)

A student receiving a Research Assistantship is expected to assist a faculty member in his or her research or other scholarly activities. No teaching or service responsibilities are assigned to full time Research Assistants.

B. Teaching Assistantship (TA)

A student receiving a Teaching Assistantship is expected to assist a faculty instructor of record (e.g., recitations, laboratories, grading) or be the instructor of record in their own course.

C. Administrative Assistantship (AA)

A student receiving an Administrative Assistantship is expected to work in service that promotes the mission(s) of the unit or university. These assistantships exclude responsibilities that would typically be assigned to current office staff, personal errands for faculty/staff etc.

III. STIPEND/TUITION REMISSION DURING SUMMER SESSIONS PRIOR TO OR AFTER A SERVICE APPOINTMENT

A graduate student may receive either a stipend and/or a tuition remission during the summer immediately prior to or after an academic year appointment. This may be done in consultation with the appropriate graduate dean and at the discretion of the department and is dependent upon the availability of funds.

IV. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

Departments shall establish effective means of evaluating and documenting the teaching and other duties performed by each graduate appointee, who has a service commitment, in order to aid the professional growth of the appointee. This evaluation and documentation shall be used for the purpose of counseling the graduate appointee and to assist in making decisions regarding reappointment.

V. COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS' POLICY

Kent State University affirms its adherence to the following Council of Graduate Schools' policy that is designed for new appointees:

Acceptance of an offer of financial aid (such as graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by an actual or prospective graduate student completes an agreement, which both student and graduate school expect to honor. In those instances in which the student accepts the offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

VI. REAPPOINTMENT, DISMISSAL AND RESIGNATION POLICY

At the time of the initial notification of appointment the department shall clearly communicate its policy on limits on the number of years of support at the master's and doctoral levels. Reappointment is determined by the student's department. Reappointment may be available, contingent upon good progress toward completion of the degree and satisfactory performance of duties. If a service appointee is not to be reappointed, he or she will be given written notice informing the student of the non-reappointment and of the reasons therefore. Notices of non-reappointment and of reappointment will be given to students no later than the last day of the semester. During the semester in which an appointee receives a master's degree, the student must apply and be accepted into a doctoral or educational specialist program in order to be considered for further appointments. A student may not simultaneously hold a graduate appointment and a full time fellowship or other appointment from a non-university source.

Dismissal is the termination of the contract for cause. Dismissal may be effected for the violation of the terms of the appointment. The department will give written notice of a recommendation for dismissal to the appointee along with the reasons for the recommendation. This recommendation is forwarded to the appropriate graduate dean for action. If a student is dismissed for academic reasons then the appointment is terminated at that time. Any service appointee who has not been reappointed or has been dismissed may appeal the decision. The appeal must be initiated in writing to the grantor of the appointment within one week of non-reappointment or dismissal.

Notification of resignation by a service appointee is expected to be early enough to obviate serious detriment to the university. An appointee intending to resign should give

written notice as early as possible. The appointee may inquire into and consider the acceptance of an appointment elsewhere anytime and without previous consultation. It is agreed, however, that if a definite offer follows, the appointee shall not accept it without giving such notice, in writing, as is indicated in the previous provision (Section V).

VII. GRADUATE APPOINTMENT SERVICE COMMITMENT

At Kent, a graduate appointment is granted to a graduate student in order to give that student partial financial assistance and support for graduate study and to obtain a service commitment which will be both beneficial to the student's professional needs and goals and to the University's endeavors. The role of a graduate appointee is often that of both student and instructional colleague. The question arises as to whether a graduate appointee has service responsibilities with respect to the academic year or the nine-month contractual time period agreed to by the faculty. In particular, is a graduate appointee "on duty" during the intersession between fall and spring semesters, during the spring recess, or during the time period following spring commencement and prior to the end of the nine-month calendar commitment of the faculty? This leads to additional confusion with respect to the appointment of graduate students as research assistants in that the time commitment for research assistants must be comparable to the time commitment for graduate assistants and teaching fellows.

A graduate appointee who holds an academic year full time appointment is expected to provide service to the appointing department which approximates 20 hours per week for a total of 300 hours per semester. This may include assignments during the week prior to classes and/or during exam week. The service obligation is prorated for each 5 week summer term.

The service commitment of a graduate appointee who has been appointed by a nonprogrammatic unit will be equivalent to the total time expectations of an appointee who is appointed through a programmatic unit. Due to specific operational requirements of nonprogrammatic units, some of the total time expectation may be satisfied during pre-semester, intersession, or post-semester time periods. If necessary to have the graduate assistant work the week before classes start, the week after classes end, or during breaks, the weekly hours need to be adjusted so no weekly total exceeds 25 hours and the total hours worked does not exceed the required hours of commitment. Such arrangements should be understood by the appointee and the appointing unit at the outset of the appointment period.

In all instances it is expected that the appointee and the appointing unit will strive to ensure that the service commitment is beneficial to the appointee's professional growth and is commensurate with the mission and goals of the appointing unit and of the University.

VIII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. Purpose

To provide guidelines and methods for resolving complaints by graduate appointees of actions by faculty members or administrators which may be in violation of the “Policy on Role and Status of Graduate Student Appointees.”

B. Resolution

If an issue cannot be resolved through informal conversations between the graduate appointee and other interested parties following reasonable attempts to achieve resolution, the graduate appointee may initiate a formal complaint by notifying, in writing, the Administrator of the graduate unit in which the student holds appointment. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies should be copied directly with such notification.

The Administrator may refer the complaint to the unit’s Graduate Studies Committee for a hearing and a recommendation or may impanel an ad hoc grievance committee for this purpose comprised of graduate faculty members who are able to render a disinterested judgment. Either of these committees will make a recommendation to the Administrator as to the disposition of the complaint.

C. Appeal

If the graduate appointee is dissatisfied with the resolution decided by the Administrator, he or she may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Dean of the College or, in the case of the independent schools, to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean may render a final decision based upon the record and information submitted by the complainant and the Administrator of the graduate unit or may appoint an ad hoc grievance committee which will hear the complaint and make recommendation to the Dean for its resolution. In either case the academic college Dean or the Dean of Graduate Studies is the final determinant.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE

Graduate Deans will be responsible for assuring compliance with this document within their respective units, with the Dean of Graduate Studies having overall university responsibility.

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