Graduate Student Handbook

Integrated Program in Biomedical Sciences (IPBS) PhD
Loyola University Chicago
Health Sciences Division
2013-2014

Revised March, 2014
Welcome to Loyola University Health Sciences Campus! We are excited that you chose to continue your studies with us. In this handbook, you will find all the information to get you from orientation to graduation. It provides the basics about tuition, fees and online payments as well as information concerning qualifying exams, dissertation progression and other important educational milestones. Please retain a copy of this handbook to serve as a reference and guideline in your progress towards your PhD.

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook contains information both necessary and helpful to graduate students, pertaining to academic requirements, Graduate School policies, facilities and activities. The information presented here supplements that found in the Loyola University Chicago Graduate School Catalog. It is not intended to be definitive, since changes in the graduate program may occur, and interpretation of regulations may require decisions by the Director of Graduate Programs, the Track-specific Chairperson or Graduate Program Director (GPD), or the faculty.
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Integrated Program Description and Graduate School Policies

Overall Goals and Competencies

The goal of the PhD training program is to prepare the student for a professional career in science through the acquisition of a general base of scientific knowledge, the development of logical skills, and a set of methodological tools to identify relevant scientific questions and search for their answers. The students will learn to search the scientific literature and data repositories, and to evaluate and select the relevant information from these sources. They will also learn to communicate clearly with their science colleagues and with the lay public. The ability to challenge current paradigms, and apply critical thinking to new problems is central to this training. The training process is initially mentored by an established scientist, with the end goal of becoming an independent scientist. Nevertheless, in a sense, the training will stretch throughout the scientist’s career, in the postdoctoral years and beyond, with the initial mentoring replaced by continued interactions with peers and students. The PhD degree is conferred after demonstrating certain competencies:

1) Acquisition of general knowledge base in the biomedical sciences.
2) Acquisition of deep knowledge in a more specific field within these sciences.
3) The ability to identify relevant original questions, and to propose and execute critical experimental designs to address these questions.
4) The ability to search and critically evaluate the scientific literature and scientific data.
5) Acquisition of oral and written communication skills for scientific peers and the general public.
6) Ability to mentor junior scientists.

Director of Graduate Programs

During the first year, the Director of Graduate Programs (Dr. Leanne Cribbs) will serve as a general advisor to incoming IPBS PhD students. Dr. Cribbs will monitor academic performance, and help facilitate selection of lab rotations and a dissertation advisor in consultation with the track specific Graduate Program Directors (GPDs). Dr. Cribbs and the Graduate Program Office are located on the 4th floor of the Stritch School of Medicine within the Office of Research Services (Building 120, room 400).
General Track Information

Academic Tracks

The PhD Integrated Program in Biomedical Sciences consists of six academic tracks of study:

(1) Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

The Biochemistry and Molecular Biology program is an interdisciplinary program, offering students the opportunity to pursue research in molecular virology, eukaryotic and prokaryotic gene transcription and expression, bacteria/host symbiosis, eukaryotic and prokaryotic cellular stress responses, human cancer, molecular immunology, epigenetics, eukaryotic and prokaryotic genetics, molecular cardiology, and eukaryotic and prokaryotic signal transduction and signaling networks.

(2) Cell and Molecular Physiology

The Cell and Molecular Physiology track offers a solid foundation in basic medical sciences including biochemistry, biophysics, cell biology, molecular biology, physiology and pathophysiology, with cardiovascular and neuroscience research as the major focus. Doctoral graduates work as bench scientists, in teaching, or in scientific administration.

(3) Integrative Cell Biology

The Integrative Cell Biology track emphasizes interdisciplinary research in a broad array of disease and injury models in order to understand basic cellular mechanisms and to develop therapies. Using in vivo and in vitro approaches, major research topics include the host response to injury and infection; regeneration and stem cell biology in homeostatic, injury and transplantation paradigms; cancer vaccine and therapy; innate and adaptive immunity in aging; neuroendocrinology, neurological diseases and neuroregeneration.

(4) Microbiology and Immunology

This track prepares students for careers in microbiology, virology, immunology, and molecular biology. Major areas of research are molecular and cellular immunology, neuroimmunology, cancer immunology, immunodermatology, mucosal immunology, viral immunology, molecular biology, genetics, pathogenic and diagnostic microbiology, molecular virology, viral pathogenesis, microbial genetics, and microbial physiology.
(5) Molecular Pharmacology and Therapeutics

This track trains students for research and teaching in medical schools and other academic institutions, research centers, and the pharmaceutical industry. Students gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of drug action, drug-receptor interactions, and cellular signal transduction.

(6) Neuroscience

Neuroscience is one of the most exciting and challenging “frontiers” of the biomedical sciences. The Neuroscience Program at Loyola encompasses a vast interdisciplinary track where students are provided with hands-on opportunities to develop and contribute to this rapidly expanding discipline. The student who chooses to join our neuroscience academic community will have options available to them for advanced training in a diverse array of disciplines including behavioral neuroscience, biochemistry, chemistry, cellular and molecular neurobiology, neuropharmacology, neuroimmunology and autoimmune disease, neuroendocrinology, regeneration and repair, stroke, traumatic brain injury, or peripheral neuropathies. Students interested in pursuing a graduate education in the neurosciences are encouraged to contact the Neuroscience Institute for further information (http://www.stritch.luc.edu/nsi/content/welcome).

Track Administration

Each of the IPBS tracks will have a designated GPD, who (along with the Director of Graduate Programs) will aid first-year students in the selection of laboratory rotations and dissertation advisors. Beyond the first year, the GPD will oversee all aspects of the students’ progression through the dissertation research. This includes aiding in selection of course work and monitoring academic performance. Each track will also have a designated staff administrator, who will provide track-specific administrative support to the students studying in that track beyond the first year.

Coursework-IPBS PhD

Semester 1. 12 Credits (10 didactic)

- Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (4 cr)
- Cell Biology (4 cr)
- Methods in Biomedical Sciences (1 cr)
- Ethics in Biomedical Sciences (1 cr)
- Research (one lab rotation; 2 cr)
Semester 2. 12 Credits (8 didactic)

Systems Biology (3 cr)
Statistical Methods in Biomedical Sciences (2 cr)
Presentation Skills (1 cr; not included in lecture-based didactic total)
Elective course from any track (3 cr)
Research (two lab rotations; 3 cr)

All rotations are of approximately equal duration (8-10 weeks).
Students choose a lab and decide upon a track at the end of the second semester.

Semester 3. 9 credits (6 didactic).

Advanced/specialized course (3 cr)
Advanced/specialized course (3 cr)
Research (3 cr)

Semester 4. 7 credits (3 didactic)

Advanced/specialized course (3 cr)
Research (4 cr)

The Qualifying Exam will take place at the end of the 4th semester.

The minimum number of credits and lecture-based didactic credits at the end of the second year will be 40 and 27, respectively. Research or additional elective coursework will be taken to bring the total credit hours up to 48 by the end of year 3. Students are also required to register for and attend the Journal Club (0 cr) and Seminar (0 cr) associated with their track for the duration of their PhD training.
**Coursework-MD/PhD**

MD/PhD students begin research rotations the summer following the M1 year and, if necessary, during the summer following the M2 year. Research rotations are intended to identify a suitable mentor/laboratory for doctoral dissertation research.

After completion of year M2, the students will enter the PhD program under the appropriate track for their intended dissertation. Selection of the dissertation advisor and track will be done in consultation with the Director of Graduate Programs and the GPD and must be approved by the MD/PhD Program. Students will communicate this decision with the Graduate Program Office via submission of the “IPBS PhD Track & Advisor Selection Form” (Appendix 1). Students will complete the required course work and research training for that track.

MD/PhD course requirements will be similar for all tracks, consisting typically of:

- Methods (1 credit, BMSC 416, Fall semester)
- Ethics in Biomedical Science (1 credit, BMSC 405, Fall semester)
- Statistics (2 credits, BMSC 402, Spring semester)

Required/Elective courses-track-specific (2 courses, 6 credits, Fall or Spring semesters)

  Qualified elective courses to fulfill these 6 credits must be didactic, scientific content-based courses. Presentation or writing skills courses may be taken, but they cannot be used toward the 6 credits of required/elective courses.

- Journal Club and Seminar series (participation required every semester until graduation)
- Mentored Research (to bring total credits to 24)

The required/elective courses for MD/PhD students in each track are summarized below:

A. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
   
   Any 2 elective courses.

B. Microbiology and Immunology
   
   Any 2 elective courses listed in Table 1 under Microbiology and Immunology except Microbial Pathogenesis (MIIM 401).

C. Molecular Pharmacology and Therapeutics
   
   Receptor Pharmacology (PHAR 408) and any elective course.
D. Neuroscience

Cell and Molecular Neurobiology (NRSC 410) and Neurochemistry (BICH 415).
Teaching Neuroscience (NRSC 421) is also required.

E. Integrative Cell Biology

Any 2 elective courses listed in Table 1 under Integrative Cell Biology

F. Cell and Molecular Physiology

PIOL 470 and PIOL 472 are recommended, but these can be substituted with any 2 elective courses.

At the end of the first year of the PhD program MD/PhD students must pass the Qualifying Examination, under the same rules as for other PhD students. After passing the qualifying examination the students will proceed with their dissertation research following the guidelines established for other PhD students. The students will typically defend their dissertation within 2-3 additional years and then return to the medical school curriculum (Years M3-M4) to complete their MD degree requirements.
PhD Lab Rotations

During the first semester, students will be introduced to ongoing research in the Biomedical Sciences by way of faculty presentations, seminars and/or poster sessions. Three laboratory rotations of similar duration (approx. 8-10 weeks) are mandatory for each first-year student. Lab rotations will be arranged with the guidance of the Director of Graduate Programs, and in consultation with the Graduate Program Directors (GPDs) and faculty within the six academic tracks. Rotation preferences should be communicated to the Director of Graduate Programs and relevant GPD as early as possible, and no later than two weeks before the start date of the rotation. During lab rotations, students are expected to attend journal clubs and seminars appropriate for their current lab.

Track/Lab Selection

By the completion of the first year, students will have completed the three required laboratory rotations and will select a dissertation advisor and track in consultation with the Director of Graduate Programs and GPD. Students will communicate this decision with the Graduate Program Office via submission of the “IPBS PhD Track & Advisor Selection Form” (Appendix 1). Forms will also be available online at the Graduate Program website: https://gsps.luc.edu/Secure/login.aspx.

Qualifying Examination

For admission to candidacy for the PhD degree, all students must pass a Qualifying Examination. The Qualifying Examination is standardized among all IPBS tracks, and is administered at the end of the 4th semester after the required coursework is complete. The purpose of the Qualifying Exam is to evaluate the student’s competency in the following areas:

1. **Hypothesis or Experimental Question.** The student must have a hypothesis or experimental question which is clearly stated, testable, and well-justified. The rationale for this hypothesis or question must be clear, and the student must be able to defend his/her proposed hypothesis or question.

2. **Experimental Approach.** The student must present an experimental approach that is clearly described and logical. The approach must directly test the hypothesis or experimental question. Discussion of expected and alternative outcomes, potential pitfalls, and alternative approaches must be included.

3. **Background Knowledge.** The student must display a deep understanding of the Qualifying Exam topic and supporting literature. The student must also have broad knowledge of the general biomedical sciences and experimental approaches, especially in their specific track.

(cont.)
4. **Oral Presentation.** The student must be able to clearly articulate and describe the research proposal. The student must be able to defend his/her rationale for specific approaches and respond to critiques in a professional manner. Overall oral communication skills are evaluated in this section.

**Procedure**

The Qualifying Examination will consist of preparation and oral defense of a mock grant proposal on a topic different from the intended dissertation research. The topic of the grant proposal should be determined by the student who should submit a Specific Aims page for approval no later than June 1st of the second year (see below). The format of the grant proposal should be as follows: Specific Aims page, Background and Significance, Preliminary data (from the literature), and Research Design and Methods. The proposal should be a maximum of 20 pages in length and double-spaced, not including references. Detailed format instructions can be found in Appendix 1, and can also be found on the HSD Graduate Program website (www.luc.edu/biomed under “Student Resources”, and “Academics”).

An Examination Committee for each student will be composed of four Graduate Faculty members from among any of the 6 IPBS academic tracks. The Examination Committee will include the student’s Advisor as a non-voting member; selection of the other three committee members will be completed by the student’s academic track Ph.D. program committee (which includes the GPD and two other faculty members) in consultation with the Advisor. The composition of the Examination Committee should be decided early in the 4th semester (Spring of Year 2) and communicated to the student in early February. The student will arrange a meeting with the Examination Committee, no later than June 1st of that year, to evaluate the Specific Aims page. The committee will approve the Specific Aims page or recommend changes that must be completed within one week. The student will then prepare a written proposal which must be defended orally to the Examination Committee by August 1. The student should not discuss the contents of the proposal with faculty members or others with established expertise in the topic of the proposal. The Examination Committee will evaluate both the written document and the oral presentation/discussion of the proposal on the basis of its originality, the student’s mastery of the material, the degree of logicality/rationality of the presentation, the quality of the justification and the defense of the proposed research plan. To pass the qualifying examination the student must be assigned grades of “Pass” by at least two of the three grading examiners. The Chair of the Examination Committee will prepare a written summary of the Committee’s evaluation. If the Committee determines that there are deficiencies in performance on the exam, at the discretion of the committee a final grading decision may be deferred. In this case the student will be given the opportunity to correct the deficiencies within a specified time frame, **not to exceed one month**, at which time the performance will be re-evaluated and a decision rendered.

(cont.)
Important dates:

**Early 4th semester** - Qualifying Examination Committee formed

**June 1st** - Specific Aims Page must be approved by Examination Committee and changes completed within one week

**August 1st** - Oral defense of written proposal must be complete

**Upon completion of the Qualifying Examination** the GPD will login to the GSPS (https://gsps.luc.edu/Secure/login.aspx) and initiate the Qualifying Examination form (which is found under “Student Forms”, and is called the “Comprehensive Exam” by the LUC Graduate School).
Dissertation

Dissertation Committee

Soon after passing the Qualifying Examination, the student should form a PhD Dissertation Committee. The student in consultation with the advisor will select at least five members for his/her Dissertation Committee. The student's advisor and three of the members must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the Integrated Program in Biomedical Sciences. It is recommended that one member is from outside the Program, including from outside the institution. The committee membership must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and communicated to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, who will have the responsibility of officially appointing the Committee by January 1st of the third year. The student should schedule meetings with the Dissertation Committee at least once a year to discuss progress or changes of direction in his/her dissertation work. In the first meeting the Committee members will select a Committee Chair different from the student's advisor.

The student will initiate the Dissertation Committee form by logging into the Graduate Student Progress System (GSPS) at https://gsps.luc.edu/Secure/login.aspx. Once committee members are entered, the form will be approved (electronically) by the Director of the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate School.

Dissertation Proposal

The student will send to the Dissertation Committee a written Dissertation Proposal which outlines the dissertation, including: Background, Specific Aims, Experimental Plan, and Bibliography, by January 1st of the third year. The experimental plan in the Proposal is not binding, and can be modified after consultation with the Dissertation Committee. A meeting of the Committee should be scheduled at least two weeks, but not more than a month, after submission of the document. At that meeting, the student will defend the Dissertation Proposal during an oral presentation. The Dissertation Committee must approve the Proposal with or without modifications by written vote of the members, and submit the written document to the Graduate School Office.

Students must initiate the “Ballot for Approval of a Dissertation Proposal” by logging into the GSPS https://gsps.luc.edu/Secure/login.aspx. Committee members, the Graduate Program Director and the Dean will approve by electronic signature.

Subsequent Dissertation Committee Meetings

At least once a year, and at more frequent intervals as necessary, the student will schedule Dissertation Committee meetings to evaluate his/her progress. Prior to the meeting, the student will submit a Progress Report detailing the experimental work performed since the last Dissertation Committee meeting. The committee will evaluate the progress, and the student will
write a report reflecting the consensus of the Committee members. After approval and editing by the committee, copies of this report will be given to the student and submitted to the Graduate Program Office to be included in the student’s file. In addition to evaluating the student’s progress, the committee may make recommendations for supplementary didactic courses or training in special methods. These recommendations should be included in the Dissertation Committee written report.

Dissertation Defense

The candidate must be registered for the term in which he/she takes the final oral examination, the Dissertation Defense. The candidate must send each Dissertation Committee member a complete written document of the Dissertation at least 4 weeks prior to the defense. All Dissertation Committee members must be present at the defense, unless the Dean of the Graduate School approves the absence. In most cases, presence of an out-of-town committee member via teleconference will be acceptable. The final revised document must be approved by all Dissertation Committee members prior to degree conferral.

At least one week before the defense, a public invitation must be made to the Dean of the Graduate School, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the Health Sciences Division, the Dean of the Medical School, and the Health Science Division faculty and students, announcing the oral presentation of the candidate's research and its defense. This invitation can be printed as a brochure including the candidate’s curriculum vitae, publications, dissertation abstract, and the constitution of the Dissertation Committee.

A 45 minute public oral presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer period, after which a closed examination with the candidate and the Dissertation Committee members will be held. The candidate must successfully defend his/her document and must demonstrate solid background knowledge of the corresponding field of inquiry.

Successful completion of the oral examination requires approval by the Chair of the Committee, and at least three of the other voting Committee members. The student will make any modifications requested by the Committee, and submit the final copy of the Dissertation to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the Health Sciences Division within a month following the oral defense.

In case of failure to get approval of the Dissertation by the Committee at the oral examination, the student may request to schedule a second examination, which must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, with input from the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the Health Sciences Division.

The Graduate Program Director will initiate the Thesis/Dissertation Defense form by logging into GSPS at https://gspsluc.edu/Secure/login.aspx. Following electronic approvals, this form will be submitted to the Graduate School.
Academic Policies and Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Honesty and fairness in using information that we obtain from others, in attributing the origin of such information, in communicating our own findings accurately, and in attributing credit to our collaborators for their contributions, are aspects of personal ethics essential to the functioning of the scientific enterprise.

A violation of these ethic principles, including, but not limited to, plagiarism or willful misrepresentation of data, is considered scientific misconduct, and will be considered cause for dismissal from the program. Additional information about Academic Integrity can be found within Loyola’s statement of Academic Policies: http://www.luc.edu/gradschool/academics_policies.shtml.

Grading, Grade Requirements and Remediation Policy

Students are expected to maintain an average of not less than a B (3.0). No more than two grades of C and no grades of D or F may be counted as fulfilling degree requirements. Such grades, however, will be used to calculate the student’s GPA. No student will be allowed to graduate with less than a B average (3.0).

The Graduate School uses the following grade conversion system:

- A = 4.0
- A- = 3.67
- B+ = 3.33
- B = 3.0
- B- = 2.67
- C+ = 2.33
- C = 2.0
- C- = 1.67
- D+ = 1.33
- D=1.0
- F = 0.0

- I = Incomplete
- X = Absent from examination
- W = withdrawal
- WF = Withdrawal with failure
- CR = Credit
- NC = No credit
- AU = Audit

Students are expected to complete the course work by the end of the semester. However, if the professor agrees in advance, students may receive a grade of “I” at the end of the semester.
The incomplete work should be finished according to a schedule approved by the professor, but within a maximum period of 1 year. Within the 1 year period evaluative grades will be added to the record (e.g., I/A). After 1 year, no evaluative grades may be added.

Students may withdraw from courses before the midterm, as specified in the Biomedical Sciences Course Registration Packet each semester, with the approval of the instructor of the course. After midterm, the recommendation of the track Graduate Program Director and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School are required. No re-examinations are allowed for individual courses.

A student that fails to maintain a B grade average at the end of a semester, or who got a D or F in any course in that semester, will be placed on academic probation during the following semester. He/she will be required to raise the grade average to B within the next two semesters, and/or obtain a grade above B in the deficient courses.

**Classroom Recording**

Video/audio recording of lectures and classroom discussion is prohibited; however, in some cases recording may be permitted *provided the instructor and all members of the classroom are notified and have given consent*. Lectures and course material are intended solely for the students enrolled in the class, and should not be transmitted or distributed publicly. Please refer to course syllabi for more specific information.

**Causes for Dismissal**

A student will be dismissed from the program if he/she:

a) Is found to have violated the academic integrity or research ethics rules during an exam or during the performance of his/her research work.

b) Fails to maintain a B grade average in his/her coursework or obtain a grade above B after the academic probation period.

c) Fails the Qualifying Exam with no option for remediation.

d) Fails to produce and defend an acceptable Dissertation project outline as judged by the Dissertation Committee.

e) Fails to make adequate progress on their dissertation research as judged by the Dissertation Committee.

f) Fails his/her final Dissertation defense as judged by the Dissertation Committee.
**LUC Grievance Policy**

The IPBS follows Loyola University Chicago’s Academic Grievance Procedure as outlined in the following website: [http://www.luc.edu/gradschool/academics_policies.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/gradschool/academics_policies.shtml). Grievances should first be brought to the attention of the student’s advisor unless the advisor is the subject of the grievance. In this case, or if the grievance cannot be resolved after discussion with the advisor, it should be brought before the Graduate Program Director who may consult with other authorities before making a judgment on the grievance. If the Graduate Program Director decision is unsatisfactory, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the Health Sciences Division or eventually to the Dean of the Graduate School at Loyola University Chicago.

**Vacation and Leave Policies**

The following policies apply to all full-time graduate students in good standing in biomedical sciences masters and doctoral degree programs in the Health Sciences Division of Loyola University Chicago. **Students who are not registered or who are not already receiving stipends will not be eligible for stipend support during a period of sick leave or family leave.** Full, formal policies can be seen online at [www.luc.edu/biomed](http://www.luc.edu/biomed) under “Student Resources”, HSD Academic Policies. (These policies supersede policies of the LUC Graduate School.)

**Vacation Policy**

Graduate students enrolled in the Biomedical Sciences PhD and MS programs are entitled to time off from their studies and research as established by the Loyola University Chicago holiday calendar plus 10 working days of vacation each year. Students can elect to add unused vacation or holiday time from one year to their allotted vacation in the following year in order to have a longer period of vacation (up to 20 working days). For first year students, vacations must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs. The Dissertation Advisor must approve the vacation schedule once the student joins his/her laboratory. Approval of vacation scheduling is intended to minimize disruption of the student’s course work, research or other academic activities, and should be restricted to the allowable vacation time set by this policy. Student requests for vacation time should be submitted at least one month in advance of the intended vacation start date.

**Sick Leave.** Full-time biomedical sciences graduate students in the LUC HSD may continue to receive stipends for up to 15 calendar days of sick leave per year. Sick leave may be used for medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth (in addition to Family Leave as described below).

**Family Leave.** Full-time biomedical sciences graduate students in the LUC HSD may take up to 60 calendar days (equivalent to 8 work weeks) of parental leave per year (with stipend support if applicable) for the adoption or the birth of a child. Either parent is eligible for parental leave. The
use of parental leave requires notification of the dissertation advisor four months in advance of the anticipated leave date unless dictated by unexpected circumstances (e.g. sudden notification of adoption).

Full-time biomedical sciences graduate students in the LUC HSD may take up to 60 calendar days (equivalent to 8 work weeks) of family leave as the primary caregiver of a dependent relative or spouse (with stipend support if applicable). This is not in addition to parental leave. The primary caregiver is defined as devoting at least 40 hours per week to the direct care and supervision of the relative or spouse. A dependent relative or spouse is defined as one who is incapable of self-care.

Sick Leave, if available, may be added to Family Leave such that the total duration of paid leave may be up to 10 work weeks. Students may petition the HSD Associate Dean of the Graduate School for full or partial stipend support in the event that extramural funding agencies do not allow full stipend support during a period of Family leave.

**Procedures for application for Family Leave**

a. A petition for approval of Family Leave should be submitted to the HSD Associate Dean of the Graduate School. To facilitate accommodations for expected lapses in course work, teaching, research, etc., the petition should be submitted as early as possible. In the case of expectant mothers and adoptive parents, a petition should be submitted at least 4 months prior to the expected delivery or adoption date.

b. Approval by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School will be based on the student’s standing in a biomedical sciences graduate program.

c. If a student is receiving stipend support from an extramural source, the student is responsible for notifying the Director of the HSD Office of Research Services of an intended leave of absence.

d. International students with student visas should notify the International Students Office of the intended leave of absence and ascertain any impact on their visa status.

e. Students requiring relief from responsibilities in ongoing course work, research, teaching, etc. during the period of approved leave must initiate a discussion of academic accommodations as early as possible.

Relief from responsibilities related to:

i. **Course work**

   Students are required to inform program directors and course directors of the intended leave of absence and arrange to minimize the interruption of their course work. Typically, the requirement to attend classes will be waived during
the period of Leave, but students may incur a delay in their ability to complete required course work if logistics prevent progression in the course or recovery of the missed classes or assignments. Course directors must make reasonable efforts to accommodate a student on approved Family Leave to minimize any delay or interruption of the student’s intended course schedule.

ii. Research

Students are required to notify their research advisor and Graduate Program Director of the intended leave of absence and make any arrangements to minimize the impact of the leave on the ongoing research. A requirement to participate in research activities will normally be waived during the period of approved Family Leave, but the students should make every effort to assure that collaborative projects are not compromised, e.g. by enabling essential research work to be completed by other individuals during the period of Family Leave.

iii. Teaching

Teaching obligations are suspended during the Family Leave, but it is the student’s responsibility to consult with faculty and with departmental administrators to identify appropriate substitute teachers to fulfill the teaching duties during their absence. Adequate advance planning should enable a smooth transition at the beginning of the leave and resumption of teaching activities following the leave of absence. The suspension of teaching obligations during the period of leave does not constitute a waiver of teaching requirements; students should consult with their Graduate Program Director regarding how and when to make up any missed teaching experience.

iv. Other

Students should consult with their Graduate Program Director regarding policies or procedures pertaining to any other responsibilities or obligations that cannot be fulfilled during the period of the approved Family Leave.

Extended (unpaid) Leave. Full-time biomedical sciences graduate students in the LUC HSD requiring extended absence from the graduate program, that is, more than 15 calendar days of sick leave or more than 60 calendar days of family leave, must seek approval from the LUC HSD Associate Dean of the Graduate School for an extended leave of absence without stipend support according to current policies and procedures of the Loyola University Chicago Graduate School, which can be seen at http://www.luc.edu/gradschool/academics_policies.shtml.

Depending on circumstances, students on extended leave may need to transfer their research project to another individual to ensure that sponsored work be continued. Upon return from an extended leave, it cannot be guaranteed that the student will be able to resume the original
research project. Students on extended leave of absence will forfeit their active student status. International students with student visas and students with educational loans should be aware of the potential consequences of loss of active student status.

Extended Leave of Absence requests should be initiated by the student at https://gsps.luc.edu/Secure/login.aspx.
Administrative Information

Tuition, Stipend, Fees and Financial Aid

Tuition Awards

Each PhD student will receive a yearly tuition award letter, which delineates the total amount of credit hours awarded each semester. If there are problems with your award letter, please come to the Graduate Program Office in the Office of Research Services (Bldg. 120, room 400).

Payments and Fees

The tuition for PhD students is paid by the graduate school for the first 21 months and then, through the funding of the student’s mentor. However, there are mandatory fees associated with enrollment as a student, as described below, that are the responsibility of each student. Information about your student account can be found by logging into LOCUS at https://locus.luc.edu. An electronic bill (e-bill) is generated by Loyola on the 15th of every month. Payments are due on the 5th of the following month. Late fees are assessed at 1.5% of the past due balance on your student account. Your e-bill can be found on LOCUS under Campus Finances → View E-bill → View Details.

Mandatory fees are explained in detail below. The deadline to pay fees is September 5th for all incoming students. DO NOT wait until your tuition is paid before you pay this fee or you will be charged a late fee. If you want to know when your fees are due or have questions about your fees, call the Bursar’s Office (x87705).

Activity Fee: $50/semester

The mandatory activity fee covers extra activities/outings that the Graduate School Council coordinates for the graduate students, such as bar nights, baseball games, the Graduate School Picnic, shows and events in downtown Chicago and St. Albert’s Day dance. The deadline for payment of the activity fee is dependent on when you register, so be sure to check your e-bill on LOCUS.

Student Health Services: $150/semester

All students must pay the Student Health Services fee whether or not they have Loyola health insurance or another health insurance provider. It covers minor treatments at Student Health located on the 3rd floor of the Loyola Outpatient Center. To make an appointment please call (708)-216-3400.
**Fitness Center Fee: $142/semester**

The Fitness Center fee covers mandatory membership to Loyola’s Center for Health and Fitness. This represents a highly discounted rate for membership in the state-of-the-art facility.

**Matriculation Fee: $100**

This is a one-time fee for all graduate students. This fee will be billed to your student account in LOCUS during your first semester of enrollment.

**Other helpful websites for payments and fees:**

- **E-Bill:** [http://luc.edu/bursar/ebilling/index.shtml](http://luc.edu/bursar/ebilling/index.shtml)
- **Payment Options:** [http://www.luc.edu/bursar/payment_options.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/bursar/payment_options.shtml)
- **Credits & Refunds:** [http://www.luc.edu/bursar/refunds.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/bursar/refunds.shtml)

**Financial Aid**

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is education assistance in the form of grants or loans from the government. Students receiving an assistantship may want to complete the FAFSA to help out with living expenses. This is available to everyone including students in the military.

To determine if you qualify for federal grants or loans, you can complete the FAFSA online at [http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/).

If you have any questions concerning this issue, contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance by phone 773-508-7704, email: lufinaid@luc.edu or online at [http://www.luc.edu/finaid/](http://www.luc.edu/finaid/).

**Student ID/Parking**

During orientation, you will be issued a student ID and have the option to pay for parking in Deck C located at the south end of campus, adjacent to the outpatient building. The yearly charge for parking in Deck C is $286. You may also purchase a separate key card for $5 to allow access to the parking lot between Maguire and the Stritch School of Medicine between 5 PM and 5 AM on weekdays and all day on weekends.
Your student ID is required to gain access to the Stritch School of Medicine, the Fitness Center, and many of the laboratories and buildings on campus. If you have a problem with electronic access to a building, please contact Dean Mike Lambesis (mlambes@lumc.edu). He will help coordinate building access with the parking and ID department.

Student Health and Counseling Services

Student Health

Student Health services include acute injury and illness evaluation and follow-up, work place exposure evaluation, TB testing, fit testing, flu shots and Pap smears. Usual in-office diagnostics (urine dip, pregnancy, rapid strep, etc.) are also included. The student health team will facilitate the transition to the appropriate specialist when follow up is needed with a specialist. Prescription medication will be prescribed as clinically indicated. However, stimulants, anxiolytics, sedatives, sleeping pills, antidepressants, etc. will not be prescribed. Students requesting such will be referred to the student psychiatrist located at the Hines V.A. (currently Dr. Bruce Roberts).

If the student's situation requires further testing such as blood work and/or imaging, that will be ordered by the student health team and the student will follow up with Student Health regarding the results. However, diagnostic testing done outside of the Student Health space (lab, radiology, etc.) would be done according to the student’s health insurance.

Chronic disease management is not part of the services offered at Student Health. For those students, it is required that they have a primary care physician.

To make an appointment with Student Health, please dial x6-3400.

Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 7:00 am-noon and 1:00-3:30 pm
Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30 am-noon and 1:00-5:00 pm

Loyola Health Insurance Plan

Students will be enrolled automatically in Loyola’s Health Care Plan. It is required that you be enrolled in either Loyola’s health insurance or another insurance provider. If you are enrolled in another health insurance plan, you MUST WAIVE Loyola’s Health Care Plan on-line. This can be done via LOCUS at https://locus.luc.edu. Under Campus Finances → Student Health Insurance, please provide the name of your insurance carrier & policy number.

All PhD students are eligible to receive health insurance coverage as long as they remain in good academic standing. Health insurance coverage is paid for by the graduate school for the
first 21 months. After the first 21 months, student health insurance is covered by mentor or student grant support.

Counseling Services

- Students have access to counseling services with Loyola psychiatrist Dr. Bruce Roberts (discretely located at Hines VA Hospital and fully confidential):

  Bruce Roberts, MD, PhD  
  Bruce.Roberts@va.gov  
  x6-3272

- Also available to students is on-site social worker, Barry Bennett:

  Barry Bennett  
  bbennet@lumc.edu  
  x6-5455

- The Director of Medical School/(Campus) Ministry is Sister Brenda Eagan, located in the Office of University Ministry, SSOM 270.

  Sr. Brenda Eagan, IBVM  
  beagan@lumc.edu  
  x6-1242

Loyola Center for Health and Fitness

As a student, you have access to the Loyola Center for Health and Fitness. You will be enrolled in the Health and Fitness Center during new student Orientation. Information about the Fitness Center hours and services/classes can be found at http://www.loyolafitness.org/

Housing

There are many options for students to find housing in the area surrounding the Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences campus. Many students live in the surrounding suburbs including Forest Park, Oak Park and Riverside, while others live in downtown Chicago. You can find useful links to housing and communicate with classmates (including incoming Biomedical Science MS students) by accessing the Biomedical Science Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/loyolauniversitychicagobiomedicals). Also, please see the Graduate Student Council website (http://www.stritch.luc.edu/bgsc/content/where-live) for additional resources.
Loyola University Health Sciences Library

The library is a great resource to aid you in your graduate education. Library staff can teach more effective techniques to search the literature, introduce you to reference managing software and help you obtain articles that may not be available on campus. For all the library has to offer, see their website at http://library.luhs.org/hslibrary/index.htm.

Laboratory Safety

An introduction to radiation and biosafety training will be completed during your orientation and first week of classes. Following a presentation, you will complete a short exam to evaluate your competency. Additionally, you will receive brief training concerning human subjects and animal welfare, overseen by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively. Additional training may be required for students who pursue research involving the use of radioisotopes, human subjects, or animals; the requirements should be discussed with the research mentor.

Information for International Students

Below is a list of important things to consider during your training in the United States. Additionally, instructions and/or forms for maintaining your legal immigration status, obtaining a social security card and obtaining a driver’s license can be found in Appendix 2.

1. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
   a. PASSPORT–must be valid at all times during your stay in U.S. Usually must have 6 months remaining on visa for travel purposes.
   b. VISA-only an entry document. Does not need to be renewed as long as you remain in the U.S.; period of validity of visa does not represent the period of authorized stay in the U.S. after entry. For all PhD students, visas should have D/S marked on them.
   c. I-94-indicates date of admission, category of admission & period of authorized stay. ONLY the I-94 card determines length of authorized stay in the U.S. J-1 & F-1 should state D/S; should not have an actual date.
   d. I-20-must remain valid at all times while studying in the U.S.

2. MAINTAINING STATUS
   a. FULL-TIME PROGRAM OF STUDIES (8 CREDIT HOURS PER SEMESTER, or Dissertation Supervision).
b. END DATE ON I-20—If you need time past this date to finish program, please speak to International Office at least 30-60 days PRIOR to expiration date. Janet Flores checks expiration dates often and will e-mail you and your advisor. There are certain documents needed in order to authorize an extension of time on your visa. Usually a visa is 60 months duration for doctorate degree and 48 months for a master’s degree. We know in the real world that may not be the case and therefore extensions are authorized on an individual basis.

3. TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE US

a. VISA—must have valid visa to re-enter the U.S. Your passport must have at least 6 months remaining in order to re-enter country unless we have an agreement with your country that allows travel up to the expired date and authorizes an additional 6 months on passport.

b. TRAVEL SIGNATURE on I-20—make an appointment with International Office so that we can validate/sign the I-20 prior to your travel abroad

c. TRAVEL LETTER—Contact International Office for travel letter (recommended, not required)

4. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

a. CHANGE OF ADDRESS—must be done within 10 days of move

b. ANY CHANGES TO PROGRAM

c. INABILITY TO TAKE FULL-TIME COURSE OF STUDY

Questions and important changes to any of your documents or status should be directed to:

Janet Flores
Phone: 708-216-4989
Email: jflores@lumc.edu

Office Location: 4th floor of Stritch School of Medicine in the Student Services Office, room 420.
Milestones

The Integrated Program in Biomedical Sciences has established a set of academic milestones, which provides a guideline for timely completion of the PhD degree. Accomplishment of these milestones will be monitored biannually for each student by the Director of Graduate Programs and track GPDs, and recorded by the Graduate Program Office. Below are the milestones that are mandatory for successful completion of the PhD degree:

1st Year
- Core Curriculum
- Laboratory Rotations
- Selection of Dissertation Advisor

2nd Year
- Advanced/Specialized Course Work
- Qualifying Examination
- Form Dissertation Committee and present Dissertation Proposal

3rd Year
- Dissertation Supervision
- Dissertation Committee Meeting (minimum of once yearly)

4th Year+
- Dissertation Supervision
- Dissertation Committee Meeting (minimum of once yearly)
- Dissertation Defense
- Application for Graduation
Student Life

Graduate Student Council (GSC)

The purpose of the Biomedical Graduate Student Council at Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences Division is to act as the liaison between the students and administration, as well as to provide opportunities to enhance the experience of graduate students campus-wide. The GSC consists of representatives from each of the programs and departments, as well as a governing board that is elected by the student body each academic year.

The GSC organizes a number of academic and social events. The academic events include a career development seminar series, where invited speakers provide insight on potential careers that are beyond the standard academic pathway. Other events include town hall meetings with the dean and administrators of the graduate school, which provides a unique opportunity for the students to voice their concerns directly to the administration. The GSC also participates in at least one philanthropic service event each semester in order to give back to the community of the greater Chicagoland area. The social events that are organized by the GSC occur several times per semester. Annual events include the New Student Orientation, the Graduate School picnic, and St. Albert’s Day. Other events and trips often include trivia nights, nights out in the city, Chicago museums, Major League Baseball games, comedy clubs, and various events in Chicago or the suburbs.

How to get involved

At the start of each school year, the first year class is asked to choose a minimum of two students as their representatives on the GSC. Students who have joined a track can volunteer to be one of their track representatives on the council. Officers of the GSC executive board are elected to serve for one school year, with the elections taking place in May of the previous school year. To be an officer you must have previously served on GSC as a student representative. The GSC meets on the first Monday of every month to discuss issues brought forward by the students and to plan future events.

Current Officers and Contacts

The GSC is always available to address the comments and concerns of any student. A list of the current GSC officers and department representatives as well as their contact information can be found online at: http://stritch.luc.edu/bgsc/content/contact-ussuggestions.

St. Albert’s Day

St. Albert’s Day is Loyola University’s annual celebration of research. The event usually occurs on a Friday in late October at the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine. The day’s events include research poster presentations, oral presentation competitions for graduate students and
post-doctoral fellows, and presentations from medical students who take part in summer research programs at Loyola. St. Albert’s Day also includes an awards banquet for the Biomedical Science graduate students and faculty.

Funding Opportunities

Students working towards the PhD are eligible to submit grant proposals to several agencies to obtain funding for their research projects.

Funding from Loyola University Chicago

The Arthur J. Schmitt Dissertation Fellowship is awarded to students in their final stage of doctoral work. These students must have demonstrated excellence in all aspects of graduate student. The award includes as stipend and a scholarship to cover the fees for student health insurance and Dissertation Supervision (course #600). If the fellowship is granted, students must participate in a lunch seminar concerning “pursuing knowledge in the service of humanity” and in a service project during the award year.

Eligibility Requirements:
At the time of application, applicants are required to have:
1) Successfully completed all coursework and been awarded candidacy;
2) An anticipated defense of the dissertation no sooner than January 30 and no later than the end of the award year;
3) Submitted all required application material so that it is received in the Graduate School Office (LSC or HSD) no later than 5:00 PM on the deadline date.

More information on the Schmitt fellowship can be found on the LUC website: http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/gradschool/forms/Schmitt%20Announcement.pdf

Funding from external agencies.

1. National Institutes of Health (NIH)

The NIH offers the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA F31 Grants for PhD students or F30 Grants for MD/PhD students) for Individual Pre-doctoral Fellowships. These grants fund pre-doctoral researchers for 2-3 years. As of 2012, these grants are available through 8 of the 27 institutes of the NIH. Verify that an institute suited to the proposed project is funding the F30 or F31 NRSA grants before submitting.

For more information visit the NIH grant website: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/pa-07-002.html
2. American Heart Association (AHA)

The AHA Midwest-Affiliate sponsors grants for pre-doctoral MD and PhD students working towards beginning their career in research. These fellowships fund pre-doctoral students for 1-2 years and are non-renewable. Grants submitted to the AHA do not have to be primarily cardiovascular in nature, but they should be related to the overall goals of the AHA. For more information about these grants see the AHA Midwest Affiliate’s website:

http://my.americanheart.org/professional/Research/FundingOpportunities/ForScientists/Winter-2012---Midwest-Affiliate-Predoctoral-Fellowship_UCM_321918_Article.jsp#.TwX7oDWJeIA

3. National Science Foundation (NSF)

Another source for a variety of funding opportunities is the NSF. For more information go to: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/