# Table of Contents

**Welcome!**

- Responsibilities of a Microbiology Graduate Student ................................................. 4
- The Graduate School ..................................................................................................... 4
- The College of Natural Sciences (CNS) ......................................................................... 4
- The Institute for Cell and Molecular Biology (ICMB) .................................................. 4

**The Microbiology Graduate Program (MICRO)**

- Microbiology Graduate Program Administration .......................................................... 5
- The Microbiology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) ................................................. 6
- Admission to Micro from Biochemistry (BCH) or Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) Graduate Programs .................................................................................. 6
- Laboratory Rotations .................................................................................................... 6
- Permanent Laboratories .................................................................................................. 7
- Core Courses .................................................................................................................. 7
- Additional Required Coursework .................................................................................. 8
- Required Grade Point Average ..................................................................................... 8
- Annual Meetings ........................................................................................................... 9

**Degrees Offered**

- Doctor of Philosophy .................................................................................................... 9
- Academic Requirements for a Ph.D. in the Microbiology Graduate Program .................. 9
- Qualifying Examination ................................................................................................. 9
- Qualifying Examination Timeline and Procedures ....................................................... 10
- Admission to Candidacy ................................................................................................. 12
- Annual Meetings with the Dissertation Committee .................................................... 13
- Final Oral Exam/Dissertation Defense .......................................................................... 13
- Timeline and Milestones of the Microbiology Ph.D. Program ...................................... 14
- Master of Arts with Thesis ............................................................................................. 15

**Financial Support and Considerations**

- Policy for Graduate Student Stipends .......................................................................... 15
- Graduate Research Assistantships ................................................................................ 15
- Teaching Assistantships ............................................................................................... 16
- Teaching Requirement ................................................................................................... 16
- English Certification for International Students ............................................................ 16
- Re-Appointments ........................................................................................................... 16
- Limit on the Number of Hours of an Appointment Per Semester .................................. 16
- University Fellowships ................................................................................................. 16
- Competitive National Fellowships ............................................................................... 16
- Other Aid ......................................................................................................................... 17
Outside Employment .................................................................................................................. 17

**General Information and Policies** .......................................................................................... 17

Contact Information .................................................................................................................. 17
Required Student Training .......................................................................................................... 17
Academic Integrity .................................................................................................................... 18
Incomplete Grades: ................................................................................................................... 18
Holiday Schedules ..................................................................................................................... 18
Second Degrees ........................................................................................................................ 19
Progress Towards Degree ......................................................................................................... 19
Registration .................................................................................................................................. 19
  Fall and Spring Registration .................................................................................................... 19
  Continuous Registration ......................................................................................................... 19
  Add/Drop Courses .................................................................................................................. 20
  Registration for Graduation .................................................................................................... 20
  Registration for the Masters Student ...................................................................................... 20
  International Students.............................................................................................................. 20
  Confirming Registration ......................................................................................................... 20
Out-Of-State Tuition Waivers .................................................................................................... 20
International Insurance Waivers ............................................................................................ 20
Student Records ........................................................................................................................ 21
Disability Services ..................................................................................................................... 21
Parental Accommodation Policy ............................................................................................... 21
Where to Go When Problems Arise .......................................................................................... 21
Campus Safety .......................................................................................................................... 22
Other Contacts & Support .......................................................................................................... 22
Welcome!

Welcome to the graduate program in Microbiology at The University of Texas at Austin. This handbook will serve as a resource for incoming and current graduate students in the program, acquainting you with the policies and procedures involved in obtaining an advanced degree. We look forward to working with you and supporting your progress towards a graduate degree in Microbiology. We encourage you to actively use this handbook throughout your studies. This handbook is a summary of university, program and departmental policies. This handbook contains guidelines applicable to the classes entering in Fall 2019 and subsequent years and replaces all preceding versions applicable to previous classes.

Responsibilities of a Microbiology Graduate Student

You are responsible for understanding and following the rules and policies that govern your academic degree. Diligent planning is required to ensure that you meet all milestones, deadlines and requirements of your degree. Note that the Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.0. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School will place you on academic probation. You will have one semester to raise your cumulative GPA above 3.0 or you will be dismissed from the program. The Graduate School website is a centralized resource for information on policies, deadlines, and general doctoral degree requirements. The policies and requirements governing your graduate career are dynamic. You are well advised to stay in frequent contact with the Graduate Program Administrator and default to her with any questions.

Two University catalogs are essential references: The General Information Catalog and The Graduate Catalog. These catalogs are available online at this link.

The Graduate School

As a graduate student, you are admitted to both the Microbiology Graduate Program and the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin. All graduate degrees are the responsibility of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School includes the Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School and staff, plus about 100 Graduate Studies Committees. The Graduate School can be reached at (512) 471-4511.

Each department or field of study offering a graduate degree has a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) composed of active assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors (tenured and tenure-track faculty). Each Graduate Studies Committee sets policy and supervises its graduate program.

Approximately 30 faculty members from various Graduate Studies Committees, plus six graduate students, serve as representatives in the Graduate Assembly, the legislative body of the Graduate School.

There is also a student organization concerned with issues related to graduate study called the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA). Each graduate program may elect one representative to the Graduate Assembly, although any graduate student is welcome as a member.

The College of Natural Sciences (CNS)

Dr. Paul Goldbart is the Dean of Natural Sciences. The Dean’s office is located in W.C. Hogg 3.134 and can be reached at (512) 471-3285. The website can be found here.

The College of Natural Sciences consists of 34 Organized Research Units, including the departments of Astronomy, Chemistry, Computer Sciences, Human Ecology, Integrative Biology, Marine Science, Mathematics, Molecular Biosciences, Neuroscience, Physics and Statistics and Scientific Computation. There are also several research institutes including the Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (ICMB).

The Institute for Cell and Molecular Biology (ICMB)
The Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (www.icmb.utexas.edu) is a university-wide unit that supports the Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB), Biochemistry (BCH) and Microbiology (MICRO) Graduate Programs. ICMB faculty members are from seven departments within the College of Natural Sciences (Molecular Biosciences, Integrative Biology, Neuroscience, Computer Science, Nutrition, Physics, Chemistry), the College of Engineering, College of Pharmacy, and the Dell Medical School. The Institute Director is Dr. Jon Huibregtse and the Associate Director is Dr. Alan Lloyd.

ICMB administrative offices are currently located in NHB 2.606.

US mailing address:
The University of Texas at Austin
The Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology
100 E. 24th St.
Austin, TX 78712

Campus mailing address:
ICMB, Mail Code A5000

Numbers:
Phone number: (512) 471-2150

The Microbiology Graduate Program (MICRO)

The Microbiology Graduate Program (www.icmb.utexas.edu/microbiology) is housed in the Norman Hackerman Building (NHB).

US mailing address:
The University of Texas at Austin
Microbiology Graduate Program
100 E. 24th St.
Austin, TX 78712

Campus mailing address:
Microbiology Graduate Program, A5000

Numbers:
Phone number: (512) 471-2150

Microbiology Graduate Program Administration

An important resource for all prospective and current students is the Graduate Program Administrator. The Graduate Program Administrator is a full-time staff person who organizes admissions, teaching assistantships, fellowships etc. She is knowledgeable about the program and is typically the first point of contact for students with questions and issues. The Graduate Advisor is the faculty member who is responsible for students currently enrolled in the program. The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for overseeing the admissions process and the program as a whole.

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<thead>
<tr>
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The Microbiology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

The Microbiology Graduate Program is administered through an executive committee that represents the 40 faculty members of the Graduate Studies Committee. These members are drawn from diverse departments, with faculty primarily from Molecular Biosciences. The committee bears responsibility under its chairperson and the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate study in the program.

Hal Alper  George Georgiou  Andreas Matouschek  Shelley Payne
Jeffrey Barrick  Vernita Gordon  Jason McLellan  Scott Stevens
Clarence Chan  Rasika Harshey  Richard Meyer  Christopher Sullivan
Lydia Contreras  Jon Huibregtse  Kyle Miller  Haley Tucker
Bryan Davies  Vishy Iyer  Ian Molineux  James Walker
Arturo De Lozanne  Makkuni Jayaram  Nancy Moran  Blerta Xhemalce
Jaquelin Dudley  Arlen Johnson  Theresa O'Halloran
Lauren Ehrlich  Jonghwan Kim  Howard Ochman
Andrew Ellington  Alan Lambowitz  Tanya Paull

Graduate Studies Committee Chair (Dr. Chris Sullivan)

The GSC Chair oversees the Microbiology Graduate Studies Committee, which is a committee of all Microbiology faculty members that sets policy concerning academics and requirements for the program. The GSC Chair also oversees graduate admissions for the program.

Graduate Program Adviser (Dr. Bryan Davies)

The Graduate Advisor is a faculty member appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to advise Microbiology students (generally in the sense of clarifying policy or granting exceptions to policy), to monitor their academic progress, and to represent the Graduate School in matters relating to graduate students.

ICMB Graduate Program Administrator (Justine Meccio)

The Graduate Administrator is the person who handles most of the day-to-day operations involved in running the program. Her responsibilities include responding to inquiries, handling petitions and special requests, assisting with TA assignments, registration, international student issues and maintaining graduate student files. Questions concerning the program should be addressed to the Graduate Program Administrator, who will consult with the Graduate Program Advisor as necessary. The Graduate Program Administrator also oversees the recruitment and admission of applicants to the ICMB. She is responsible for onboarding for the incoming cohort, and supporting the administrative needs of new students throughout their first year in the program until they matriculate into a permanent lab.

Admission to Micro from Biochemistry (BCH) or Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) Graduate Programs

The Graduate Programs administered by the ICMB are set up to have maximum flexibility for students to move between them. The GSC Chair and the Graduate Program Adviser must approve transfers to the Micro program from BCH or CMB. Approval is on a case-by-case basis and dependent on academic and research performance prior to the transfer request. Transfers for first-year students are typically performed at the end of the summer, upon completion of a full year in the original program. If students are considering changing programs, they should consult with the Graduate Adviser and the Graduate Program Administrator at the beginning of deliberations.

Laboratory Rotations

During the first nine months in the program, students perform rotation projects in the laboratories of three ICMB faculty. These rotations broaden laboratory experience and will help students find the research area and permanent laboratory that best suits them. Students are required to spend at least 20 hours per week working in their rotation lab. At the end of each rotation, the faculty member completes a rotation evaluation of the student’s performance. These evaluations determine whether the student receives credit that semester for research hours.
Rotations are arranged through mutual agreement between the student and the faculty member (Principal Investigator or ‘PI’) of the lab in which the rotation is arranged. Students should start this process early to ensure rotation through the labs that they are interested in.

Faculty members must be part of the MIC, BCH or CMB GSCs in order to accept a Micro student for rotation. Changes in an assigned rotation may be made only with permission of the Graduate Program Adviser.

**Permanent Laboratories**

At the end of a student's third rotation, they will choose which laboratory to work in on a permanent basis. This is done after careful consideration and consultation with the PI of the lab. First-year students who start their first rotation in June will be required to join a lab by the end of their third rotation, which will be in the beginning of February, 2020. All other students who start their first rotation in September will join a permanent lab after their third rotation ends, at the beginning of May, 2020. ICMB support ends on 5/31/20 for all rotation students. Student support becomes the responsibility of the permanent lab as of 6/1/20. It is program policy that 1st year students may not TA, therefore PIs are expected to support their 1st year Micro student as a GRA in the summer of 2020.

If students have not made arrangements for a permanent lab by the end of the first nine months in the program, they will be notified that the next six weeks constitute their last in the program. If students find a permanent lab before the end of the six-week period, that PI must petition the Graduate Adviser to approve the student to continue in the Ph.D. program. Students may not be eligible for financial support during this six-week period.

Once in a permanent laboratory, students may change to another laboratory; however, any change must be discussed with and approved by the Graduate Adviser and GSC Chair. The new PI must be a member in good standing of the Micro GSC.

If, for any reason, a student ends their association with their permanent laboratory before arranging for a new laboratory, they will be allowed two months to find another laboratory. While a student is without a laboratory, they may not continue to work toward the Ph.D. and may not have financial support unless through a TA position. The new PI must be a member in good standing of the Micro GSC and must petition the Graduate Adviser that the student be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program.

**Core Courses**

The standard core courses are:
- BIO 395G Structure and Function of Proteins and Membranes
- BIO 395J Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression
- BIO 395H Cellular Systems: From Biology to Disease and Back Again
- BIO 395M Advanced Microbiology

BIO 395G and BIO 395J are taken during the fall semester of your 1st year in the program. BIO 395H and BIO 395M are taken in the spring semester. If you earn less than a B (3.0) in any of the core courses, you will need to retake the course. If it is necessary to repeat a core course, it must be taken at the very next opportunity. The core courses may not be taken more than twice.
Basic Core Course Descriptions

FALL CORE COURSES

BIO 395G Structure and Function of Proteins and Membranes
Explore how genomes are maintained, propagated, and converted to functional RNAs and proteins. Understand the primary literature that has led to key advances in these research areas and the experimental approaches that are currently being used to forge new advances. Appreciate the current frontiers in these areas and explore the boundaries; what questions have known or hypothesized answers, and what questions remain to be answered by the next group of researchers and students.

BIO 395J Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression
BIO 395J requires graduate students to develop novel approaches to problems, especially translation and entrepreneurial approaches. It focuses on providing insights into recent work, especially from UT faculty, that has the opportunity to play out in larger contexts, and challenges them to figure out what could be done to realize these greater innovations. It is primarily a course about biotechnology, but is largely student-led. Assignments focus on multiple in-class presentations and numerous short writing pieces.

SPRING CORE COURSES

BIO 395H Cellular Systems: From Biology to Disease and Back Again
Mechanisms of growth control, cell regulation, mitosis, cell signaling, protein targeting, and the integration of these processes in various cellular processes.

BIO 395M Advanced Microbiology
Prokaryotic and lower eukaryote genome organization; control of gene/operon/regulon expression; chromosome replication and its control; signal transduction; protein trafficking; organelle assembly; the cell cycle and its control; developmental processes; cell to cell communication; and DNA polymorphisms and adaption.

Additional Required Coursework

BIO 391 Grant Writing and Presentation Skills
In preparation for the qualifying exam, 2nd Year students are required to take BIO391 Grant Writing & Presentation Skills. BIO391 is a writing-intensive course for 2nd year Ph.D. student in the fall semester that involves writing of an NIH-style grant proposal on their own research, presentation of the proposal to the class, and practice in identifying specific aims in research areas outside their primary area. The class is taken by students in the Microbiology, Biochemistry, and Cell and Molecular Biology Programs.

Microbiology Elective
One additional Microbiology specific elective course is required, and may be taken in the 2nd or 3rd year but no later than the 4th year. Students typically take one of the 3 approved elective courses, which are Advanced Virology, Molecular Immunology, and Advanced Immunology. Students may petition to have a different course to count towards their Micro elective requirement, but must do so in consultation with their PI and Graduate Adviser.

Microbiology Research Seminar Course (BIO396R)
Students are required to take the Microbiology research seminar course, BIO 396R, beginning in the 3rd year (after completion of the qualifying exam and advancement to candidacy) through their fifth year. Students present current research findings and receive feedback from faculty and peers. This course is designed to help students refine their presentation techniques, practice giving critical feedback, and gain familiarity with a wide variety of research topics.

Required Grade Point Average
The Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain a cumulative, graduate GPA of at least 3.0. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School will place you on academic probation. You will have one semester to raise your cumulative GPA above 3.0 or be dismissed from the program.
**Annual Meetings**

Each year you will meet with an appropriate faculty member or committee to discuss the current status of your studies. In the 1st year this should be the PI of the lab you choose to join at the end of the rotation periods. During subsequent years, it will be with your PI and your dissertation committee. The purpose of this meeting is to assess your progress towards completing your degree and allows an opportunity for individualized attention and feedback.

**Degrees Offered**

The Microbiology Graduate Program is designed for students seeking a Ph.D.; however, under certain rare circumstances with the consent of the PI and Graduate Advisor, a Master of Arts with Thesis may be allowed.

**Doctor of Philosophy**

The Ph.D. program prepares you for a career in research by emphasizing scholarship and original research. By the submission of a dissertation, you demonstrate that you have a mature knowledge of the field and that you can design and execute original research.

**Academic Requirements for a Ph.D. in the Microbiology Graduate Program**

- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of the core courses with a grade of at least a B
- Continuous membership in a permanent lab (after 1st year rotations)
- Completed TA Training Workshop prior to 1st TA position
- 1 semester as a teaching assistant (after 1st year)
- International Students - successful completion of ITA English exam and workshop during 1st year
- Completion of Grant Writing Course (fall of 2nd year)
- 1 Microbiology elective course (2nd or 3rd year)
- Successful completion of qualifying exam in the spring of 2nd year
- Admission to candidacy (2nd year spring or summer)
- Microbiology research seminar course beginning in the 3rd year until graduation
- Concurrent registration in dissertation hours from admittance to Candidacy to Graduation
- Annual meetings with dissertation committee
- Successful completion of dissertation and final defense

The UT Graduate School has set up a web-based system of Milestones that should be achieved during the Ph.D. It is a Graduate School requirement for students to update their Milestones. The site for this system can be found at this link.

**Qualifying Examination**

The Qualifying Exam, often called the “qual” or “prelim”, is a major milestone in the Ph.D. program. The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to evaluate a graduate student’s aptitude to perform original and independent research, and to write a doctoral dissertation. The examination provides a means for a faculty committee to assess the student’s mastery of concepts and methodological approaches by evaluating the student’s (1) general knowledge and fundamental understanding of Microbiology, (2) ability to design, articulate, explain and defend the proposed aims and research approach of their dissertation research, and (3) to critically evaluate and develop a set of experimentally testable hypotheses for a selected topic in Microbiology and related disciplines that is not their research specialty. The ultimate goal of the Qualifying Examination is to ensure that the student has achieved a sufficiently high level of knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of a Ph.D. dissertation.

In order to proceed with the Qualifying Exam, a Micro graduate student must:

- Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0
- Have completed all core courses with a grade of B or above
• Be assigned to a permanent laboratory
• If an international student, be ITA certified as eligible for employment “with student contact”

Qualifying Examination Timeline and Procedures

1. All graduate students in their second year who have passed the appropriate number of required courses will take the Qualifying Exam to advance to candidacy. If a student has not passed all the core courses with a grade of B or above, or, if they are an international student and are not yet “certified for employment with student contact,” the Qualifying Exam will be delayed to within 3 months of completing these requirements. The exam must be taken before the end of the student's fourth long semester. The Qualifying Exam is normally taken in the spring semester of a student’s second year. (Students who have not taken the Qualifying Exam by the end of their second year must write an explanatory letter of appeal to the GSC Chair and will be assigned a probationary status until further notice). If the student is completing any core courses in the spring of their second year, then they may not conduct the Qualifying Exam until the summer of their second year, after they have met all course requirements.

2. A Qualifying Exam informational meeting for second-year students will take place in November each year. At this meeting, students will hear about the timetable and guidelines of the Qualifying Exam as well as the expectations and exam process, as outlined below:

3. At the beginning of the spring semester (usually in January), exam-eligible graduate students will submit to the Graduate Program Administrator (i) a one-paragraph summary (100-200 words) of their intended research proposal (abstract), and (ii) a list of four faculty members, in consultation with their faculty adviser, who might be appropriate to serve on their examination committee. Selected faculty members must be members of the Micro GSC. The GSC will use this information to form the student’s Qualifying Exam Committee.

4. The student will be notified of the composition of their Qualifying Exam Committee within 30 days after submission of their abstract. Upon learning the members of their exam committee, the student is responsible for scheduling their Qualifying Examination, which involves polling the committee members and their PI for their availability for a 2.5-hour timeslot. Upon finding a time when all members can attend, the student must reserve a room for the exam and notify the Graduate Program Administrator and their exam committee members of the date, time and location of the exam. If the student’s PI cannot attend the exam, they will be required to provide the committee chair with a short statement on the student’s progress. Deadlines for the written portions of the exam are relative to each student’s exam date (detailed below in article 5a and 5b); all students are responsible for meeting their relative deadlines. The Graduate Program Administrator will provide the committee chair with the student’s file, containing the Qualifying Exam results form and the student’s transcript, which will need to be brought to the exam.

5. The Qualifying Exam consists of written and oral components. Both written components are submitted prior to the Qualifying Exam and form a large basis of the oral exam.

(a) The Written Proposal, based on a topic of choice but usually aligned to the student’s dissertation research, must be submitted to the Graduate Program Administrator and distributed to faculty members of the examination committee no less than 14 days before the Qualifying Exam. The Written Proposal should be modeled on and follow the format of a NIH F31 pre-doctoral fellowship application. As a guide, the general format of the Written Proposal is listed below but students should download the F31 application guide to obtain additional information about the contents and formatting of these applications.

The proposal will consist of the following sections. (Note that the margins on all sides cannot be less than ½”, and the allowable fonts no smaller than Times 12, or Georgia or Arial 11. All information presented in figures and tables must be legible and easily readable by all committee members.

1. The Specific Aims page should describe concisely the Specific Aims of the proposal, including broad, long-term objectives and the specific goals of the proposed research to test a stated hypothesis. A Specific Aims page often includes one or two introductory paragraphs followed by the objective and description of each of three aims, which together form the basis of the research undertaken in the proposal. This is limited to 1 page.

2. The Research Strategy section, including all tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts, is limited to 6 pages. This section should address the significance of the proposed studies, including the background leading to the proposed research projects; and the approach (including preliminary results, if any) will be used to provide experimental support of the proposed hypothesis. The precise format of this section can vary, but students should include the rationale of each proposed project, a discussion of the experimental
or methodological approach, expected/anticipated results, interpretations, conclusions and significance, potential pitfalls, and alternative approaches.

3. A Literature Cited section (no explicit page limit) must be included in the Written Proposal, and students are expected to have read each of the papers listed in this section.

**WHEREAS STUDENTS MAY SEEK INPUT ON THEIR WRITTEN PROPOSAL, THE STUDENT MUST WRITE THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT. THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BEING KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AND DEFENDING THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THE WRITTEN PROPOSAL. FACULTY ADVISORS, AND OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS, MAY READ, DISCUSS, AND MAKE GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE WRITTEN PROPOSAL BUT MAY NOT WRITE, EDIT OR IN ANY WAY DIRECTLY PREPARE A STUDENT’S MATERIALS. PEERS MAY PROVIDE EDITS FOR GRAMMAR, CLARITY, STYLE, AND SPELLING, BUT THEY CANNOT WRITE ANY PART OF THE DOCUMENT.**

(b) Students will also submit an Off-topic Specific Aims Page (“OSAP”) to their exam committee. The procedure for this written component is as follows:

1. Two weeks before the Qualifying Exam, the students will be given three research papers selected by their Qualifying Exam Committee members. Within 72 hours, the student must select one of these papers and report their choice to the Graduate Program Administrator and their committee via email. Additionally, students should attach their paper choice in the email notification.

2. After selecting the research paper, the student has one week to research and write a Specific Aims page that proposes at least three Specific Aims that follow from the research and results reported in the selected paper. This aims page will be of the same format described above (e.g., one page in length).

*Expectations for knowledge on the off-topic proposal:* Despite the short format of the written off-topic proposal (an Aims page), students are expected to have sufficient knowledge about this topic and their proposed work to defend it. Thus, students should be familiar with the background in this area in enough depth to defend the rationale of their proposed work. Such knowledge usually requires reading additional papers on the topic. Recent reviews are typically valuable in this regard. Students should be familiar with the experimental approaches they will use, including the controls that will be necessary to interpret the results. They should be aware of any significant limitations in the proposed work, and they should have backup plans prepared for potential pitfalls. They should have a plan for how the data will be interpreted, including statistical analysis as warranted.

**The OSAP must represent the sole work of the student and be distributed to their exam committee members dictated by their exam date (detailed above). The rules and expectations stated above, as described for the written proposal, apply to the OSAP.**

(c) The oral component of the Qualifying Exam should be scheduled to last 2.5 hours. Students are not allowed to bring refreshments for their exam committee to the Qualifying Exam. At the beginning of the meeting, the student will be excused and the exam committee will briefly discuss the materials that were submitted by the student, and the specific exam format and questioning procedures. Additionally, the committee will discuss the student's academic standing and progress, and the student's faculty adviser should be asked for input about these issues. **If the faculty adviser cannot attend the exam, he/she will be asked to submit written comments to the committee chair, which should be shared with the committee at this time.** The student will re-enter, and the exam will begin with the on-topic proposal followed by the off-topic proposal. At the completion of both proposals, the student will again exit and the committee will discuss the outcome of the exam; the committee should ask the PI again for input. Students will receive outcomes for each of the written and oral portions of the exam. The first portion of the exam will focus on the topics and projects covered in the Written Proposal (approximately one hour, but the time will vary), and the second portion will focus on the topics and projects covered in the selected research paper and the Off-topic Specific Aims Page. The Qualifying Exam Committee, whose aim is to realize the purpose and goals of the Qualifying Exam, will decide the times devoted to each proposal and the specific format of the oral exam.

The student should prepare a 15-minute presentation, with a maximum of 15 slides, for each of the written components. These brief presentations will introduce the background material, and the proposed research goals and projects. The presentation should include an introduction that states the broad research question(s), an overview of the present state of knowledge, and the background work leading to the proposed projects, questions and hypotheses. This should be followed by a description of each of the specific aims, the
experimental approach and anticipated results. **Students may practice their on-topic presentation in front of any audience they choose, whereas off-topic presentations of the OSAP may not be practiced in front of any faculty members.**

During and after each presentation, the examiners will question the student in order to assess the student’s depth of knowledge in the topic areas and understanding of the experimental approaches. The committee will ask general questions as well as questions pertaining to the specific topic areas. Students may be asked to draw or explain concepts using the whiteboard. One purpose of the exam is to probe a student’s breadth and depth of knowledge, so the committee may spend more time on areas where it is not clear whether the student has extensive knowledge, and correspondingly less time on areas where the student demonstrates expertise.

**Composition of the Qualifying Examination Committee:** The Qualifying Exam Committee will be comprised of three Micro GSC faculty members. Ideally, at least one of these will be selected from the list of four submitted by the student and who has expertise in the general area covered in the student’s Written Proposal. Each of the committee members will submit a published paper to the Graduate Program Administrator, which will form the basis of the student’s OSAP. The student’s faculty adviser is encouraged to attend the Qualifying Exam but is not obliged to do so. **If the faculty adviser cannot attend the exam, he/she will be asked to submit written comments to the committee chair, which will be shared with the committee at the exam.** If in attendance, the faculty adviser is expected to be a silent observer and may speak only by permission of members of the exam committee.

**Qualifying Exam Outcomes and Consequences:** At the conclusion of the examination (usually when committee members have no further questions), the student will again be asked to leave the room. The PI will be asked for any additional input and then s/he may also be asked to leave the room. The committee will then deliberate the outcome of the examination. The entire committee as a group will then call the student back into the room to convey its decision. The student’s advisor, if s/he has exited the room, may come back into the room along with the student. A student may pass the Qualifying Exam unconditionally, or may fail one or more portions (i.e., the Written Proposal and/or the OSAP) of the exam. Additionally, the committee may vote to conditionally pass the student but ask for revisions of the written components or for the student to take additional coursework. **(Serving as a TA for a course in an area that the student was deemed deficient cannot be a requirement for a conditional pass.)** Possible outcomes are (1) Pass; (2) Conditional Pass (with conditions specified by the exam committee); (3) Re-examination of one or more parts of the Qualifying Exam at a later date; (4) Termination of work toward the Ph.D.

**Re-examination Procedures and Rules**

In the event of a failing performance, and at the discretion of the Qualifying Exam Committee, the student will be advised of deficiencies and may be allowed to retake one or both portions of the Qualifying Exam.

- A student given the option to repeat the Qualifying Exam must do so by within three months of the original exam, except in exceptional circumstances requiring exemption by the Micro GSC Chair. At least one member of the student's original Qualifying Exam Committee must agree to serve on the subsequent exam committee. All three members may re-serve. The PI may request to the Micro GSC Chair that one or two members of the committee be replaced. If the student’s re-examination includes a new written OSAP, the re-examination committee will submit research papers that differ from those originally submitted for the first exam. A student who fails to pass the relevant portions of the examination a second time must leave the graduate program by the end of the following long semester.
- A student who is not offered the option of re-examination must terminate work towards a Ph.D. and may not re-register in the Micro Program.
- A student advised to take a terminal Master’s degree may register only for those courses counted toward the Master’s degree and must complete the courses within a year.

**Admission to Candidacy**

Once you successfully complete your Qualifying Exam, you will apply for, and be admitted to candidacy. From this point on, you no longer register for “Advanced Study and Research” but instead must be registered for “Dissertation Hours” every long semester. All subsequent semesters, until graduation, you will take Dissertation Hours with a course number ending with a “W” (BIO 399W, or BIO 699W). Additionally, once you enter candidacy, you must register for the Microbiology Research Seminar Course (BIO 396R) for every semester until graduation.

Admission to Ph.D. candidacy has 4 requirements:
• Have completed all core courses with a grade of B or above
• Have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0
• Successful completion of the Qualifying Exam
• Submission and final approval of a Candidacy Application.

Students may retain Qualifying Exam Committee members as their Dissertation Committee, however this is not a requirement. Students should consult with their PI and Graduate Program Advisor to form a suitable Dissertation Committee. Students should explicitly confirm with proposed committee members that they agree to serve on the Dissertation Committee. Any changes in committee membership should be made prior to application for candidacy. Once you are admitted to candidacy, you must meet with your Dissertation Committee yearly until your final defense.

Microbiology Dissertation Committees are typically comprised of five UT GSC members total, including the student’s supervising professor (PI). The student’s PI chairs the committee, and at least one member must be completely outside of the Micro GSC. If it’s not possible to acquire a committee member that is outside of the Micro GSC, then the student must have at least one member that is outside of the student’s primary department. The University permits a committee of four members if one member is completely outside of the Micro GSC. Nevertheless, the policy of the Microbiology Program is for each committee to include five members, regardless of whether one member is outside of the GSC.

It is sometimes necessary to change the membership of the Dissertation Committee prior to completion of the dissertation. The Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Dean must approve the “Petition for A Change to the Doctoral Committee” form found on the Graduate School website. Changes for the sole purpose of constituting a more compliant committee will not be approved. Changes in the committee must be completed well in advance of the dissertation defense.

If you elect to have a scholar from off-campus serve on the Dissertation Committee, they must be appropriately credentialed to serve on a dissertation committee. The Graduate Advisor and Graduate Dean will approve an addition of such a committee member only under exceptional circumstances, and only if the expertise he/she offers cannot be provided by a faculty member on campus. You should consult with the Graduate Advisor for approval prior to contacting faculty members outside of UT Austin.

**Annual Meetings with the Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee has three primary responsibilities:
- General supervision of your research;
- Monitoring your progress toward your degree;
- Certifying to the Graduate Dean that an acceptable dissertation has been submitted.

Once you have been admitted to candidacy, your first Annual Meeting with your Dissertation Committee should be held within the next long semester (typically by the end of the fall semester). The Dissertation Committee will convene annually to review your progress. Email the Graduate Program Administrator with the location, date, and time of your meeting for the Annual Meeting form. Following this meeting, your PI will prepare a written summary of recommendations that emerged from the meeting, and the form should be submitted to the Graduate Program Administrator and will become a part of your student file.

If you have not completed the dissertation within 3 years of admission to candidacy, the results of the annual review will be presented with recommendations to the Graduate Studies Committee.

Although the supervising professor provides day-to-day guidance, all committee members are expected to be available for consultation so feel free to ask for advice from any faculty member.

**Final Oral Exam/Dissertation Defense**

When the dissertation is in final form, it is circulated to the dissertation committee 4 weeks prior to setting the final oral exam. When each member of the committee has had an opportunity to read the draft and agrees that it is ready to defend, as indicated by signing the request for final oral exam, you may schedule the defense. The request is submitted to the Graduate School at least 3 weeks prior to the exam, following the Graduate School graduation procedures.
The defense consists of 2 parts. The first is a public seminar that is open to all faculty and students. Immediately following the seminar, you meet privately with the Dissertation Committee to respond to questions from the committee members.

If all members of the committee approve, the committee signs the Degree Certification Form (also referred to as the “gold sheet”). The Chair of the GSC committee must also sign the Degree Certification form. This is the **only** document that notifies the Graduate Dean of successful completion of the exam and is necessary for graduation.

All graduation paperwork must be turned into the Graduate School, located in MAI 101, by the last class day and no later than 3PM. Failure to turn in the paperwork at this time will result in the degree not being certified.

**Timeline and Milestones of the Microbiology Ph.D. Program**

**First Year**
- **Fall semester**
  - RCR training (on-line)
  - ICMB Conference and Retreat
  - Core Courses (BIO 395G, BIO 395J)
  - Laboratory rotations
- **Spring Semester**
  - Core Courses (BIO 395M, BIO 395H)
  - Laboratory rotations
  - ITA Certification (International students only)
  - Choose a permanent laboratory by May 10
  - End of May: financial support from ICMB ends
  - First of June: newly assigned permanent laboratory assumes financial responsibility of student

**Second Year**
- **Fall semester**
  - BIO 391: Grant Writing and Presentation Skills
  - Required Elective (may be completed in 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year)
- **Spring semester**
  - Required Elective (may be completed in 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year)
  - Qualifying Exam
  - Apply for Candidacy (end of spring semester, once all requirements are complete)

**Third Year**
- **Fall semester**
  - Required Elective (may be completed in 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year)
  - Dissertation Hours 399W or 699W after admittance to Candidacy until Graduation
  - Microbiology Research Seminar Course (396R)
  - First Annual Committee Meeting with Dissertation Committee
- **Spring semester**
  - Required Elective (may be completed in 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year)
  - Microbiology Research Seminar Course (396R)

**Fourth Year to Graduation**
- Annual meeting with Dissertation Committee
- Microbiology Research Seminar Course (396R)
- Completion of TA requirement (may be completed any time after student’s first year)
- **Final semester**
  - Apply to graduate – the deadline is early in the semester
  - Schedule final defense with committee
Complete all forms and graduation procedures
Meet all deadlines required by Graduate School

**Master of Arts with Thesis**

The Master of Arts with Thesis involves original research carried out under the supervision of a member of the Microbiology GSC. This option is allowed only under certain circumstances and requires the permission of the research supervisor and the Graduate Advisor.

**Academic Requirements**
- Completion of core courses with a grade of at least a B and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- Completion of required Microbiology elective;
- Completed TA Training Workshop prior to 1st TA position;
- Completed 1 long semester TA requirement;
- Total of at least 30 semester hours of course work with the following requirements:
  - 21 hours must be graduate-level course work,
  - 18 hours must be in the major area,
  - 6 must be in supporting work (non-core biology/chemistry graduate or upper division course).

All work for a MA must have been initiated no earlier than 6 years before date of degree. Once a student has 30 hours of graded course work, they may then have up to 6 hours of CR/NC. Approval of the Graduate Advisor is required prior to registration for a CR/NC course. No course counted toward any other degree may be counted towards a master’s degree.

**Master of Arts Committee**
Your major professor and one other Microbiology GSC member will serve as readers of your thesis. It is your responsibility to arrange for the 2nd reader. Any faculty member asked to be a reader should have an interest in the topic.

The readers must be allowed at least 2 weeks to read the thesis and return it to the student. Since revisions are often necessary, the earlier in the semester you get the thesis to the readers the better your chances of getting the thesis into the Graduate School on time.

**Financial Support and Considerations**

As an entering graduate student, you are supported for the first 9 months (September – May) as a graduate research assistant (GRA) or by a University Fellowship which includes tuition and insurance, so long as you are in a laboratory rotation. Continued financial support becomes the responsibility of the permanent laboratory starting June 1. When selecting laboratories, you should inquire as to the availability of summer support from grants as TA positions are very limited during the summer. Your primary means of support as a continuing student is through an appointment as a graduate research assistant (GRA), teaching assistant (TA), receipt of a University Fellowship or external fellowship (NIH, NSF, etc.). A student appointed as a GRA or TA qualifies for resident tuition rates. Additionally, any student holding an internal fellowship paying $1,000 or more per year qualifies for resident tuition rates.

**Policy for Graduate Student Stipends**

It is program policy that graduate students maintain a stipend in line with their entering year fellowship. The 2019/2020 stipend rate is $2,500/month plus benefits and in-state tuition. The 2019/2020 TA stipend is $2,295/month, and it is program policy that the student’s PI supplement the student’s stipend to the first-year fellowship of $2,500/month. Upon joining a lab, it is the student’s responsibility of discussing their stipend and source of support with the PI. CNS policies on graduate student employment and stipends can be found at this link.

**Graduate Research Assistantships**
Many faculty members have research grants that allow them to appoint students as graduate research assistants. Check with your supervising professor concerning the availability of such appointments.

**Teaching Assistantships**

CNS and program policy states that Microbiology graduate students entering in 2019/20 may only TA a total of 4 times throughout their graduate studies. Exceptions to this rule would require approval in advance by the CNS Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

The Microbiology program does not directly control any TA positions; Microbiology students are assigned TA positions by the Biology Instructional Office. Requests for TA positions must be made by the supervisor (not the student) directly to the Graduate Program Administrator. Once a TA position has been requested for you and the count has been turned into the Biology Instructional Office, you are responsible for that position. This means you are not allowed to pull out of the TA position without having someone else replace you.

**Teaching Requirement**

The Microbiology Graduate Program has a one semester teaching requirement. You will be required to complete this before you graduate but not before admission to candidacy. This is to allow increased flexibility in scheduling without compromising the standard timetable for advancement to candidacy. All TAs need to complete one of the TA workshops offered twice a year in August and January prior to the semester that they will fulfill their first TA-ship.

**English Certification for International Students**

UT Austin conducts English Certification for TAs whose first language is not English. The Microbiology program requires this certification of all international students within the 1st year in the program, regardless of whether they serve as teaching assistants.

All international students admitted to the Microbiology graduate program are expected to unconditionally pass the Oral English Proficiency Assessment, complete the online workshop, and be “certified with student contact.” Students must be certified to be employed “with student contact” before serving as a TA, completing the qualifying exam, and/or being admitted to candidacy.

**Re-Appointments**

Re-appointment as a TA or GRA is contingent on satisfactory progress towards the degree. This includes compliance with the schedule set by the graduate program and demonstrated effectiveness as a TA or GRA.

**Limit on the Number of Hours of an Appointment Per Semester**

Graduate students may not be appointed as a TA, GRA, or grader, alone or in combination, for more than 20 hours during the first 2 long-session semesters of graduate study. In the 3rd semester of graduate study or beyond, a graduate student may not be appointed to these titles, alone or in combination, for more than 30 hours. International students on F-1 or J-1 visas may not be appointed for more than 20 hours during any fall or spring semester.

**University Fellowships**

Each year the Graduate School accepts nominations from each graduate program for University Fellowships. These provide year-long stipends and some are quite lucrative. Your supervising professor will nominate you based on research accomplishments and promise of research excellence. The Graduate Advisor determines whose name(s) will be sent forward to the Graduate School. Nominees for these awards are selected based on the strength of their applications and on their records of performance.

**Competitive National Fellowships**
All 1st year students with strong GRE scores and grade point averages should apply for federally funded competitive national fellowships, such as the NIH or NSF Pre-doctoral Fellowships or the Howard Hughes Pre-doctoral Fellowship. These fellowships are prestigious and will support you for several years of graduate education. You are also encouraged to explore and apply to fellowship programs on your own for which you may be uniquely qualified (www.nsf.gov/funding/; www.grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm)

Other Aid

The Office of Student Financial Services (512-475-6282, www.finaid.utexas.edu/) administers several long-term loan programs, the College Work-Study Program (for which graduate students are eligible), and a short-term loan program for registration and other emergency needs. Assistance with part-time or full-time job placement is also offered for students or student spouses. Student Accounts Receivable can provide information about institutional tuition/emergency loans and tuition and fee rates as well as information regarding fee payment and deadlines, loans, tax credits, etc. The Graduate Program Administrator will email notices of fellowships that become available throughout the year.

Outside Employment

Microbiology students are not allowed to have outside employment such as part-time positions in restaurants, retail, etc. or any type of job that interferes with class work or research. Students may have up to 5 hours of employment that is related to their role as graduate students such as tutoring or grading. These situations should be discussed with your PI prior to beginning any outside work.

General Information and Policies

Contact Information

Mailboxes

All student’s mailboxes correspond with their lab’s mailbox. First-year students will need to routinely update their directory information to reflect what lab they are rotating in so that they receive mail. All MBS labs’ mailboxes are located in the mailroom of NHB 2.606.

Change of Address and Phone Number

It is important that all directory information be kept up to date; it can be updated via UT Direct. Students must list a phone number where voice mail messages may be left.

Email Information

The Microbiology Graduate Program and the University of Texas uses e-mail as the primary method of communication with students. Whether we are communicating with students individually or with the entire cohort, it will be done via e-mail. If e-mail addresses given are not accepting mail (full mailbox) or if students are not checking e-mail often, students may miss important correspondence.

The Micro Graduate Program will correspond with students using a UT email account only. Micro students must have a UT email account at all times. Students can acquire a UT email account here.

Please notify the Graduate Program Administrator of any changes in email addresses immediately and only make changes in UT Direct to receive email from Canvas courses and groups.

Required Student Training

The University of Texas requires safety training for laboratory employees, which includes all Micro graduate students. Micro students are required to be in compliance with these safety classes prior to being assigned a rotation. The required safety courses are:

- OH 101 Hazard Communication
• OH 201 Laboratory Safety
• OH 202 Hazardous Waste Management
• OH 207 Biological Safety
You can find all above courses at this link.

RR 102. RCR Biomedical Ethics Training. This 6-hour online ethics course is required before you can start your 1st rotation. The Graduate Program Administrator will provide instructions on how to sign up for this specific training, to ensure you are given proper credit.

Fire Extinguisher Use, Animal Use Training, and Radiological Health are on-campus classes and are offered during the orientation period.

The Environmental Health and Safety Office: 471-3511.

The Fire Prevention Services Office sponsors the Fire Extinguisher Use course.

All of the above requirements must be satisfied within the first 30 days of the fall semester.

**Academic Integrity**

Ethical conduct is expected of every student in the Microbiology program. You will be held accountable for your conduct and decision-making. The Microbiology graduate program has a zero-tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty, and if you are found participating in any form of academic dishonesty, you will face immediate dismissal from the program. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, misrepresenting facts, and falsification of academic work, research, data or records.

Responsible Conduct of Research online training and attendance at an in-person training session Online Training is required at the beginning of the 1st year. The Graduate Program Administrator will notify you when the in-person training is scheduled.

**Incomplete Grades:**

If a student does not complete all the assignments in a course before the end of the course, the instructor may report the symbol X (incomplete) to the registrar in place of a grade. The student must then complete the course requirements by the last class day in his or her next long-session semester of enrollment. The instructor must report a final grade by the end of the grade-reporting period in that semester. If these deadlines are not met, the symbol X is converted to the symbol I (permanent incomplete). If the student is not enrolled during a long-session semester for twenty-four months following the end of the semester in which the X is reported and the instructor does not report a final grade, then the symbol X is converted to the symbol I. The symbol I cannot be converted to a grade. When the symbol I is recorded, the symbol X also remains on the student's record.

The period for completion of course requirements may be extended only under unusual circumstances beyond the student's control and only upon the recommendation of the instructor and the approval of the Graduate Dean. The instructor of record must make requests for an extension of X to the Graduate Dean through the submission of a completed “Update to Student Academic Record” form. This request must provide reasons why the student was unable to complete the course work by the last class day in his or her next long-session semester of enrollment after receiving the X.

*Note: TAs and GRAs may acquire no more than one temporary incomplete grade (X) and one permanent incomplete grade (I), or two temporary incompletes (X).*

**Holiday Schedules**

Graduate students do not have the same break schedules as undergraduates. All Microbiology graduate students are paid continuously through the December, spring and May breaks, and thus, have the same work
schedule and holiday schedule as university staff. The relative tranquility of campus during breaks is very conducive to research progress in the laboratory.

Second Degrees

Microbiology students will not be allowed to work toward or obtain a second degree outside of the Microbiology program (e.g., a Master’s degree in a separate graduate program) without the written consent of their supervising professor and the graduate advisor.

Progress Towards Degree

All students are expected to make reasonable progress towards the degree. Among other situations, any of the following could be cause for being dropped from the Microbiology program due to failure to progress:
- Core courses not successfully completed by May of 2nd year;
- Qualifying Exam not completed by end of 2nd year;
- Admission to candidacy not initiated by start of 3rd year;
- Annual Meetings not conducted annually;
- Dissertation not completed within 3-4 years of admission to candidacy.

Registration

In general, students must be enrolled for classes whenever they are receiving services from the University, such as course instruction, faculty interaction, employment, and fellowship or training grant stipends. Please read the following section carefully and check with the Graduate Program Administrator if you have any questions regarding course load requirements.

Fall and Spring Registration

Graduate students may register between a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 15 hours per semester. The Graduate School considers 9 hours to be full-time, therefore the University will only pay for up to 9 hours of course work, if your appointment allows tuition to be covered. For students who are employed by the University as a teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, or grader, or received a stipend from a scholarship or training grant, you must be registered as a full-time student. Immigration requires international students to be registered on a full-time basis regardless of their appointment status, unless they are in candidacy and finishing their degree.

Summer Registration

The Graduate School does not require graduate students to register during the summer unless they hold academic appointments, are planning to graduate, or hold some fellowships. Full-time registration in the summer is 3 hours. Students wishing to receive student loans must be registered for 6 hours in order to be eligible to receive them. Immigration does not require international students to register during the summer unless it’s their initial or final semester of graduate school.

Continuous Registration

The Graduate School requires that all graduate students in candidacy be continuously registered for all long semesters (Fall and Spring) until completion of the degree. Students not yet in candidacy must obtain authorization from the Graduate Advisor for a leave of absence. Those admitted to candidacy must receive approval from the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Advisor for a leave of absence. A student on approved leave must apply for readmission in order to return to the University, but readmission during the approved period is automatic and the application fee is waived. A student on leave may not use any University facilities; nor is he/she entitled to receive advice from any member of the faculty. A leave of absence does not alter the time limits for degrees or course work.

Registration for continuing students for fall and summer semesters begins in April. Spring semester registration begins in October. New graduate students will have registration days in June, August and January. If you delay and are registered at the last minute, you will be responsible for paying the “late” registration fee,
which ranges between $25 and $200. All late registrations require the approval of the Graduate Advisor. Be aware that if you are appointed to an academic title, you must be registered before the appointment can be processed. Late registration may delay your initial paycheck.

**Add/Drop Courses**

You may add and drop courses during the add/drop period without penalty. After the 12th class day, you cannot add a class without petitioning the Graduate School. Petitions of this nature are rarely approved, so be certain your registration is the way you want it to be before the add/drop period ends. If you need to drop a course after the 12th class day deadline and the petition letter is approved, you will not be reimbursed for the course. If you have to add a course to keep full-time status due to TA/RA obligations, you will have to pay for the additional course.

**Registration for Graduation**

Doctoral graduate students must be registered for the appropriate class the semester they graduate (BIO X99W). Further information about this and the graduation process is available on the Graduate School website.

**Registration for the Masters Student**

The last 2 semesters before graduation, thesis students must be registered in thesis courses, BIO 698A and BIO 698B. BIO 698A may only be taken once and must be taken before BIO 698B. Students must be registered for BIO 698B the semester in which the thesis is submitted.

**Early withdrawal from the program** in the 1st year could result in a requirement to pay tuition for that semester. Consult with the Graduate Program Administrator if you are considering leaving the program during your 1st year.

**Withdrawal from the University** before the last class day of a semester will result in a requirement to personally pay the tuition for that semester. Withdrawals during a semester will cancel most UT payments of tuition and tuition waivers. These cancelations result in a large balance due which UT Austin will bill to you. This information does not apply to medical withdrawals.

**International Students**

You will begin your first registration at UT Austin in the International Office. Your current command of English will be evaluated and you may be required to take a class in spoken or written English during your 1st and/or 2nd semesters of study.

**Confirming Registration**

If you have a zero-fee bill (a third party is paying your tuition and fees), you must still confirm your registration, or it will be canceled. To confirm your registration, go to the tuition payment web site and click the “CONFIRM” button.

**Out-Of-State Tuition Waivers**

Employment as a TA or RA qualifies non-Texas residents for resident tuition through out-of-state tuition waivers. These are very important as they remove the out-of-state portion of the tuition bill. The waiver is requested online, applied directly to your fee bill, and must be completed each semester before your tuition bill is paid. You can access the waiver through UT Direct.

Recipients of a Pre-emptive University Fellowship should not complete this form, as the Graduate Program Administrator will request the tuition waiver for you.

**International Insurance Waivers**
If you are an international student and will be appointed as a TA or GRA, you will have health insurance provided to you. Therefore, you must request a waiver of the student international health insurance that is automatically added to your fee bill. You can get this charge removed from your bill by requesting this waiver. You will need to do this each semester that you are appointed as an GRA or TA. This request must be done before your tuition bill is paid and you confirm your registration. Claim the waiver here.

**Student Records**

The Graduate Program Administrator maintains the official records of graduate students. It is your responsibility to ensure that your records are current. Members of the Microbiology GSC, any person appointed to your dissertation committee, and the Graduate Program Administrator have access to your file. No other person has access without your written permission unless the Graduate Advisor authorizes him/her. Those authorized by the Graduate Advisor are staff members whose assistance is necessary to carry out administrative responsibilities.

Your student file may contain:

- Permanent Laboratory Form
- Qualifying Exam Form
- Safety Certificates and CITI RCR Training (Hazard Communication, Radiological Health, Laboratory Safety and Fire Extinguisher)
- Curriculum Vitae
- Admission Documents
- TA Evaluations
- Each time that you assist in a course, the supervising faculty member fills out an evaluation of your performance. One copy of the evaluation goes into your student file. You may request that copies of your student evaluations be placed in your file. If you choose, you may prepare a statement that will be appended to the evaluation and become part of the file.
- Annual Meeting of Dissertation Committee Forms
- It is imperative each Annual Meeting is documented with an Annual Meeting Form, which will be kept in your student file.
- Other items that provide a record of the student’s activities and progress.

**Disability Services**

The University of Texas at Austin is committed to providing every necessary resource to students with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and have special academic circumstances – whether permanent or temporary – please visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website.

**Parental Accommodation Policy**

In the cases of childbirth or adoption, graduate students in the College of Natural Sciences are allowed a 1-semester extension in the completion of academic responsibilities required for their degree. Academic responsibilities include course work, qualifying exams, committee meetings, presentations, or any other required academic milestones. These responsibilities may be postponed either during or immediately following the semester in which the student’s child is born or adopted. The full policy and faculty contacts in each department can be found at this link.

**Where to Go When Problems Arise**

The University provides several support services for graduate students:

The Office of the Student Ombuds provides a neutral, impartial and confidential environment for students to express concerns related to life at the University of Texas at Austin. The office can assist graduate students with university related difficulties, and help identify pathways and options for conflict resolution.
The UT Counseling and Mental Health Center provides services for graduate students, including a 24-hour telephone counseling service – 512-471-2255.

The International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) Office provides advice, programs, information, and services to the international community, including incoming graduate students.

**Campus Safety**

The Office of Campus Safety & Security oversees Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Health and Safety, Fire Prevention Services, Parking and Transportation, and the University of Texas at Austin Police Department. Students should explore their website to learn more about safety and security on campus.

For emergencies, the University also has a dedicated phone number, 512-232-9999, and website. You can also sign up for text message alerts for emergencies.

**Other Contacts & Support**

The Office of the Dean of Students provides a variety of student support services along with opportunities for leadership experience, diverse student work environments, engaging programming and specialized resources. Below are quick links to some of these resources and services.

University Health Services: (512) 471-4955  
Student Emergency Services: 512-471-5017  
Behavioral Concern Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050  
24/7 (anonymous) crisis hotline: 512-471-2255  
[Title IX Office](#).

The CNS Office of Graduate Education also provides a variety of support and resources for Graduate Students.