

***Cedars-Sinai Graduate School of Biomedical Science***

Policy Handbook

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**The Graduate School in Biomedical Science Policy Handbook may not cover every situation which may arise during your education, but is a general guide to the goals, policies, practices, benefits and expectations of the Graduate School. These policies are in addition to, and do not supersede those of Cedars-Sinai. Each student is responsible to be aware of all policies that govern education and training. Academic leadership, staff, and human resources are available to answer any questions concerning the contents of this handbook as well as Cedars-Sinai policies.**

## **ARTICLE 1. ADMINISTRATION**

### **1.1 The Graduate School of Biomedical Science**

The Cedars-Sinai Graduate School of Biomedical Science are unique graduate programs focusing on translating laboratory discoveries into therapies, treatment, and cures, and located in one of the country's most distinguished clinical settings, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.

#### **1.1.1 Mission Statement**

It is the Graduate School's mission to:

- Educate biomedical science students in a spirit of self-learning, creativity and independence, so as to optimize their opportunities and success in their chosen career pathways.
- Provide an understanding of the relevance of basic biomedical science to human disease through an exploration of the foundations of translational and clinical research and through interactions with medical practitioners.
- Instill the ability to communicate scientific information accurately and effectively to professional and non-professional audiences, in both written and verbal formats.

#### **1.1.2 Accreditation**

Cedars-Sinai is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, #100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510-748-9001.

### **1.2 Program Directors**

The Program Directors of each degree program oversee and manage their respective program within an operational level and provides leadership at the levels of recruitment and curriculum development. Each Program Director reports to the Director of Graduate Research Education and works with the Director and faculty members of each Program to establish educational principles, standards and program objectives. In addition, the Program Director will:

1. Act as a "senior" mentor to all students in each program as well as advise and assist students in all aspects of their educational experience.
2. Appoint a Chair of the Admissions Committee.
3. Chair the Curriculum Committee.
4. Serve as an advisor to student and research supervisors in selection of laboratory rotations and dissertation research laboratories (PhD/MSBTS programs).
5. Work with the Graduate School staff to streamline student management and to act as an advocate for students in the Office of Graduate Research Education with respect to their cultural and educational backgrounds.

6. Monitor student learning patterns and responses to stressful circumstances.
7. Provide input into evaluation of student success in attaining learning objectives.

### 1.3 Associate Director

The Associate Director, or Co-director of each Graduate Program assists the Program Director in the management of each Program, is appointed by each Program Director and approved by the Director of Graduate Research Education.

### 1.4 Faculty

The Graduate School Faculty shall consist of members of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center who play an active role in the education and training of graduate students through teaching, supervision of research, and other supporting activities, including recruitment, evaluation and committee participation.

#### 1.4.1 Criteria for Appointment to the Graduate School Faculty

All faculty members functioning as mentors/principal investigators, full-time instructors, or committee members of the PhD Program must be eligible for an academic appointment in the Professorial or Clinical Professorial Series of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Appointment to the PhD Program faculty is made by the PhD Program Director.

For the master's degree programs, faculty are selected by the respective Program Director and approved by the Director of GRE. Criteria for appointment include expertise in the area of teaching, teaching experience and overall knowledge of the program's educational objectives.

Application for initial appointment to the Graduate School faculty must be accompanied by a current CV. The request for appointment to the Graduate School faculty and subsequent membership into the Graduate School denotes the faculty's consent to abide by the policies established by the Graduate School.

Faculty members are expected to perform specialized duties unique to graduate training. These include teaching and co-curricular activities. Teaching experience may include activities such as formal classroom participation, research seminars, serving as a member of committees pertaining to the Graduate Programs, participating in journal clubs and discussion groups.

#### 1.4.2 Principal Investigator/Mentor (PhD/MSBTS Programs)

A mentor/principal investigator (PI) must take an active role in the education, growth, and well-being of a student throughout his/her education in the PhD and MSBTS Programs. To provide students with the most qualified and suitable mentor/PI and to broaden each student's experience and knowledge the following is required:

1. A mentor/PI must have suitable assigned laboratory space.
2. A mentor/PI must conduct and/or oversee laboratory research projects that are amendable to developing a 4-year project suitable for a PhD candidate or a 1-year project suitable for a MS student.

3. A mentor/PI must have existing NIH and/or other significant funding extending to at least 2 years from the entrance of a PhD student into the lab.
4. There must be reliable assurance that continued support of funds needed for a PhD student's project will be maintained throughout a student's training period in the lab.
5. A mentor/PI must be able to provide an environment of additional laboratory members and community such that the student can be immersed in a group of people from which to learn.
6. A "Mentor & Student Agreement" must be completed each time a student rotates in a laboratory and when they select their thesis laboratory.
7. Mentor/PI must agree to the Financial Commitment Agreement that stipulates their annual contribution to the student's stipend.
8. All Mentors must adhere to the AAMC guidelines: "Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors."  
<https://services.aamc.org/Publications/showfile.cfm?file=version127.pdf>

#### 1.5.4 Reassignment of Laboratory Mentor (PhD/MSBTS Program)

Should a student and/or mentor decide to sever their professional relationship, the PhD Program provides a provision for the reassignment of a laboratory mentor and/or research area for valid reasons or for incompatibility, although it is the student's responsibility to procure a new mentor. Neither the PhD Program, nor Cedars-Sinai can coerce professional relations between persons who are incompatible.

Once the selection of a laboratory mentor has been agreed to by the student and mentor, both parties have the obligation to work in good faith to accomplish the student's educational goals and the research required for the degree.

When a change of mentor and terms of severance of the relationship are agreed to, both parties must abide by the agreement. Retaliation by either party would constitute a violation of Cedars-Sinai human resource policy on retaliation or other applicable policies and could constitute the basis for a grievance procedure.

If a student wishes to request a mentor reassignment, the following guidelines are suggested:

- Attempt to work out any differences prior to making the decision to change mentors.
- Seek advice from the Program Director to determine if switching mentors would be advisable for your educational goals.
- On the basis of advice received, communicate your wish to change mentors in a meeting with the mentor and the Program Director.
- If the agreement of the existing mentor is obtained, complete the necessary paperwork to request a mentor change.

If issues with the laboratory mentor cannot be resolved informally, then the following formal procedure must be followed:



- The student must notify the Program Director, in writing, of a request to change mentors. This written request must state the reasons for requesting a change.
- The Program Director will then meet with all individuals involved in an effort to determine if a change is warranted.
- If a student proposes a new mentor, the Program Director must approve the mentor's ability to support the student for the duration of his/her research.
- Formal approval for change will be given in writing by the Program Director and distributed to the mentor, student and Graduate School office.
- Once a formal change is made, it must be clear to the student that this change may lengthen the time it takes to complete his/her graduate degree requirements.
- If a mutually agreeable new mentor cannot be identified, the student may be dismissed from the program.

### 1.5.5 Faculty Grievances

Faculty is responsible for bringing problems, issues, or concerns to each Program Director. If satisfaction is not obtained, faculty should then use the Chain of Command by contacting the Vice-Dean for GRE, VP of Research and/or Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs.

## ARTICLE 2. COMMITTEES

Each degree program has both standing committees and ad hoc committees to carry out governance of each Program. Members of the standing committees of each program are either appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Medical Faculty or by the Program Directors, with the exception of the Doctoral Committees for each PhD student. Those members are selected by each graduate student with the approval of their mentor/Principal Investigator and the PhD Program Director. The committees are the Admission Committee, the Oversight/Curriculum Committee, the Doctoral Committees and the Qualifying Examination Committee.

Ad hoc committees are convened for a specific purpose or to evaluate a specific student's progress. Members of ad hoc committees are either appointed or in the case of Doctoral Committees, members are selected by each graduate student with the approval of their mentor/Principal Investigator and the Program Director. Ad hoc committees are the: Doctoral Committee, the Grade Appeal Committee, the Dismissal Appeals Committee and the Academic Misconduct Investigative Committee.

### 2.1 Admissions Committee

Each program's Admissions Committee's mission is to matriculate the brightest and most qualified applicants to each program.

Each prospective candidate's complete admission file is carefully reviewed by the Admissions Committee. The prospect is evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Undergraduate degree
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE), if required

- Strength of personal essay
- Strength of personal recommendation letters
- Personal interview, if required

The Admissions Committee convenes annually following the admission application deadline and selects applicants to extend invitations for either an interview or for enrollment. Upon evaluation of applicants' files and interviews, the committee also makes the final selection of students to admit to the program. All admissions decisions are communicated by the Committee Chair to each Program Director.

## 2.2 Oversight/Curriculum Committee

The mission of each program's Oversight/ Curriculum Committee is to provide the guidance, advocacy and supervision to each program by ensuring that the curriculum is academically sound, comprehensive and responsive to the evolving needs of the students. It serves the Graduate School's mission, goals and educational needs of our students.

The Committee will:

1. Plan and deliver the curriculum.
2. Determine the principles and the process of the student's learning experiences (e.g. laboratory rotations, capstone projects, dissertation and thesis development etc.).
3. Assist in the development of educational programs in accordance with the Graduate School's mission and educational objectives.
4. Consider every action possible to encourage creativity and innovation in curriculum development.
5. Recommend changes and new directions based upon feedback from students, faculty and staff.
6. Provide pedagogic support for faculty by formal meetings with teaching staff both prior to and at the end of academic year.
7. Determine educational policies regarding teaching and evaluation.
8. Determine program tuition and set students fees.
9. Develop faculty support by providing additional pedagogical training opportunities through the Office of Faculty Development.

## 2.3 Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The mission of the Cedars-Sinai Graduate Student Association (GSA) is to represent and support the interests of the current and future graduate student community by supporting scholarly activities and providing leadership, service and social opportunities. GSA exists to enrich the experience of all students at Cedars-Sinai and accomplishes these objectives by flexibly responding to the changing

collective needs of our primary constituents, graduate students. GSA is organized to accomplish the following functions:

- Further the academic experience of all Cedars-Sinai graduate students.
- Promote a sense of community among graduate students.
- Furnish useful information to current and prospective graduate students for both academic and personal matters.
- Represent the interests of graduate students to the broader Cedars-Sinai community.
- Provide a forum for interaction among an extraordinary diverse graduate student population.
- Encourage and facilitate communication with and interaction among other graduate student organizations.

## 2.4 Doctoral Committees (PhD Program)

The mission of the Doctoral Committee is to:

- Assess each student's ability to progress towards PhD candidacy.
- Each student's Dissertation Research progress.
- Award the PhD in Biomedical and Translational Sciences to qualified students.

**First Meeting; QE.** The Doctoral Committee is chosen once a student joins their dissertation laboratory and will convene for the first time no later than the end of February during the student's second year in the program. This first meeting of the Doctoral Committee functions as the student's QE. Successful competition is the QE is required to progress towards PhD candidacy.

Each student will present a written NIH-style grant proposal outlining the background and the proposed goals of their project. The committee will evaluate the student's command of their chosen dissertation research project and will, by unanimous agreement, accept the plan or instruct the student to revise the plan.

**Subsequent Meetings.** The Doctoral Committee will then meet once per year to evaluate student progress and student plans – additional meetings may be required based on student progress. The Committee will then evaluate the completed dissertation, conduct the oral defense, and vote to certify the dissertation. Of the five (5) members of the Doctoral Committee, no more than one (1) may vote "not pass" to certify the dissertation.

Doctoral Committees will be comprised of **four to five (4-5) faculty members**; an additional, external member is added to the final Doctoral Committee for the student's defense. The selection of Doctoral Committee member should adhere to the following criteria:

- The student's advisor is one (1) member but does not chair the committee.
- Three to four (3-4) additional Doctoral Committee members must be members of the Cedars-Sinai faculty and be on the Physician/Scientist Investigator Professorial track.
- At least two (2) members of the Doctoral Committee must hold the rank of associate or full professor.
- At least one (1) member must be from a department/institute that is different from the primary affiliation of the student's thesis lab.

- One (1) committee member other than the primary faculty advisor will be designated as chair of the committee. *The Committee Chair should have previous experience in serving on a Doctoral Committee.*
- Additional members may be added to the committee at the discretion of the student and faculty advisor, provided they meet the above requirements. Additional members will have the same voting rights in the committee as other members.
- The final External Committee Member, who ideally is a renowned investigator, must be identified and approved by the Program Director ***no later than eight (8) weeks before the dissertation defense.***

**Doctoral Committee Approval.** The Committee Chair and the other members of the student's Doctoral Committee must be approved by the PhD Program Director.

Once a Doctoral Committee has been chosen, should issues arise between the student and any Doctoral Committee member, the student should follow the procedures found under the Student Grievances Policy.

The student must provide a copy of these guidelines and a copy of the **Doctoral Committee Member Agreement Form** to all members of her/his Doctoral Committee. The student is then responsible to complete the Doctoral Committee Approval Form and submit it for approval to the PhD Program Director and submit to the PhD Program Coordinator no later than one (1) week after receiving approval of his/her Doctoral Committee membership.

## 2.9 Dismissal Appeals Committee

The mission of the Dismissal Appeals Committee is to provide due process to dismissed students and to ensure fairness in the dismissal decision. The committee will review and evaluate the dismissal circumstances and decision and consider additional information. The committee will deliberate and vote to uphold or reverse the dismissal decision.

The committee shall be composed of at least three Cedars-Sinai faculty members. Members are appointed by the Program Director. Faculty who serve on a graduate student's Qualifying Examination Committee or Doctoral Committee may not serve on a Dismissal Appeals Committee for the same student.

## 2.10 Grade Appeal Committee

The mission of the Grade Appeal Committee is to ensure the integrity of the grading process. The committee will review and evaluate grade assignments after a student and instructor have unsuccessfully come to agreement on a perceived grade injustice.

The committee shall be composed of at least three Cedars-Sinai faculty members appointed by the Program Director.

### **2.11 Academic Misconduct Investigative Committee**

The mission of the Academic Misconduct Investigative Committee is to provide an investigative process into allegations of student academic misconduct. The committee is appointed by the Program Director at the request of the student. The committee consists of a minimum of 2 faculty members.

### **2.12 Master's Thesis Review Committee (MSBTS Program)**

Students enrolled in the MSBTS program must generate a Master's Thesis, based on their research subject area as well as orally defend this thesis to the student's program committee. The committee is made up of the student's mentor, the Program Director, 1 faculty member and 1 external member (from the institution) for specialty input as required. Members are chosen by the student with input from the Program Director.

## **ARTICLE 3. ADMISSION**

### **3.1 Academic Requirements**

Prospective students are required to have a Bachelor's degree (BA or BS). The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test is required unless applicants meet GRE waiver standards. In the case of individuals possessing post-graduate degrees such as a MD, the GRE requirement may be waived if there is evidence that the required skills have been acquired prior to or during the course of the post-graduate degree. Applicants are advised to take the GRE early enough in the academic year to have scores reported in support of their applications.

All applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit either a TOEFL or IELTS requirement. To be considered for admission, applicants are required to achieve the minimum score of 213 (CBT), 80 (iBT), or 550 (PBT) on the TOEFL exam.

University of Cambridge's International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score may be considered in lieu of a TOEFL score. Applicants are required to achieve a minimum score of 6.5 or higher.

International students are required to submit official transcripts from undergraduate and/or graduate school in the original. In addition, all transcripts must be evaluated by an outside agency for U.S. equivalency.

### **3.2 Non-Discrimination Policy**

At Cedars-Sinai, we solicit and encourage applicants who will strengthen our diversity. Cedars-Sinai does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, ancestry,

physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), marital status, sex, pregnancy, age (40 or older), veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal or state law.

### 3.3 Retention of Admissions Records

In accordance with Federal Policy (IRS), the Graduate School will retain admissions records for a period of three years for all applicants. The admission records of matriculated applicants will become part of the students' permanent file maintained by the Graduate School Office.

## ARTICLE 4. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

### 4.1 Tuition

Tuition for a full-time course of study for one academic year (3 trimesters) is set by each program's Oversight/Curriculum Committee and approved by Academic Affairs. All students will be charged full tuition during their entire graduate school career. Students who are enrolled for less than the entire academic year are charged on a proportional basis. Those students pursuing a PhD Degree are given a stipend by Cedars-Sinai for the full amount of tuition.

### 4.2 Tuition Refund Policy (MSMRM, MHDS Programs)

Tuition is refunded on a prorated basis starting with the first week through the end of the fourth week of the term for each trimester. **Please note the all institutional related fees (e.g., student fees) are non-refundable to MHDS students once the trimester starts.** Students allowed to drop enrollment for the term will be granted a refund according to the schedule below. The approval to drop any course or withdraw from a program, including the date on which the action takes effect, must be certified by the Program Director.

Students wishing to withdraw from a Master's program must meet with the Program Director or Associate Director prior to submitting a Tuition Refund Request Form to the Program Coordinator/Advisor. Tuition refunds can take up to four weeks to process.

Date of Withdrawal	Refund of Tuition and Fees
1 <sup>st</sup> week of classes	100%
2 <sup>nd</sup> week of classes	75%

3 <sup>rd</sup> week of classes	50%
4 <sup>th</sup> week of classes	25%
Thereafter	0%

### 4.3 Student Refund Requests (MSMRM, MHDS Programs)

To request a student refund, a student must submit a Student Refund Request form to the Student Financial Services Administrator. A student must verify that a valid credit exists on their student account before submitting their request. If the credit balance on a student account is a result of funding from Cedars-Sinai or its affiliates, that credit is not subject to a student refund. Once all charges and aid have been posted, refunds can be requested and processed.

Student refund request will be processed within 10 business days of receipt of the Student Refund Request form. Once processed, it could take up to 30 business days before the refund is issued to the student.

### 4.4 Financial Assistance – PhD Stipends

All PhD students receive an annual stipend while enrolled as full-time students in the Graduate School. The amount of the stipend is established by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Medical Faculty. Students who make satisfactory progress toward the degree will be paid the stipend for five years of study. If a student completes the degree requirements prior to five years, the stipend will continue for 30 days following completion of the degree (the date of a successful dissertation defense). If a student does not complete their degree requirements within five years, the student’s laboratory will be responsible to fund the stipend for up to two additional years.

### 4.5 Outside Employment (PhD Program)

The stipends awarded to PhD students are intended to contribute sufficiently to meeting educational and living costs so that students can devote full time to their studies. It is the expectation of the Graduate School that PhD students holding stipends will not undertake activities, including employment that will interfere with their educational program or delay their progress toward the degree. Any exception must be approved by the PhD Program Director. Those students enrolled in master’s degree programs are exempt from this policy.

### 4.6 Cedars-Sinai Employment

MSMRM and MHDS students may pursue employment within Cedars-Sinai Medical Center contingent on approval from the GRE Manager and each Program Director. To receive approval to work at CSMC, students must have been enrolled in their respective program for at least one year (MSMRM) or for one trimester (MHDS) and must be in Good Academic Standing (see 6.5 Good Academic Standing).

Upon accepting an employment offer, students may have to attend New Employee Orientation and will be under the purview of all CSMC policies.

Students in the MSMRM program may only work limited hours (<30/week), with the exception of academic breaks and holidays, and must still abide by all class attendance policies and program requirements.

F-1 Student Employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session (can be full-time when school is not in session or during annual vacation)

## 4.7 Financial Responsibility

Graduate students are expected to conduct their financial affairs in such a manner that their personal accounts and any outstanding loans remain current. Student fees, including tuition, are the responsibility of the student and must be paid by the set deadline of each year. For non-payment of tuition and student fees, the student is charged a late fee and a hold is placed on the individual student records.

# ARTICLE 5. REGISTRATION & COURSES

## 5.1 Academic Year

The academic year begins in late August/early September and ends in late August. There are three terms: Fall Trimester, Winter Trimester and Summer Trimester (one trimester = ~16 weeks). Entering students begin their studies in the Fall Trimester.

## 5.2 Credit Hour Policy

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 16 weeks of instruction for one trimester hour of credit.
2. At least an equivalent amount of work included in laboratory rotations, clinical rotations and dissertation activity.

A graduate course shall meet for the required number of hours and shall offer an opportunity to prepare, to study, and to cogitate for the required hours as stated in the General Catalog.

A credit hour shall represent 60 minutes of lecture or recitation combined with two hours of preparation per week throughout one trimester of approximately 16 weeks. One credit hour of activity (i.e. Clinical Rotations), two credit hours of activity (i.e. Laboratory Rotations) shall be considered equivalent to one credit hour of lecture.



A course offered in a term of less than 16 weeks shall contain the same contact hours, preparation time, content and requirements as the same course offered over a 16-week trimester.

The approval of the program and of the Director of the Graduate Program shall be required to schedule all short-term or weekend courses.

### 5.3 Research Rotation Requirement (PhD)

PhD students will complete up to 3 laboratory rotations during their first year in the program. Each rotation spans the length of each trimester.

Research rotations are meant to broaden the student's research experience and to provide graduate students an opportunity to experience different research opportunities, investigators, and laboratory environments. In addition, these rotations allow the faculty to evaluate each student's research potential and allow both students and faculty to determine the most appropriate laboratory in which to complete dissertation research. *Students should consider and assess potential rotations carefully. After all, selection of a strong mentor who will provide the training required to master laboratory research is the most important decision they will make in graduate school.* For specific student and mentor expectations, please reference the BMS 600 syllabus.

The outcome of research rotations is that the student will have chosen – along with the consent of the proposed advisor and Program Director – their mentor and outlined the nature of their dissertation project. For some students, arriving at this critical decision may come early, e.g., during their 2<sup>nd</sup> rotation. In such cases – and again with the full consent of the proposed advisor and Program Director – the need to complete 3 rotations may be waived. Under such circumstances, however, a 3<sup>rd</sup> rotation would be encouraged to provide training in needed technologies, to establish new collaborative relationships, to firm-up experience with a co-mentor (if planned), or other possible strategic goals related to the student's dissertation plans.

If a student is unable to identify her/his dissertation lab and mentor within 3 rotations, a 4<sup>th</sup> rotation may be granted but only if the inability to identify a dissertation lab was due to circumstances beyond the student's control. Under such circumstances, a 4<sup>th</sup> rotation may be granted but only upon approval by the Program Director. If a student is not able to secure her/his dissertation lab due to her/his performance within one or more of the three 1<sup>st</sup>-year rotations (e.g., receiving poor to failing rotation grades), leading to a loss of Good Academic Standing (see XXX), then the student may be dismissed from the program.

#### A. Terms and Conditions – Laboratory Rotations

1. Students are expected to independently arrange their rotations with Cedars-Sinai research faculty who actively participate in the PhD program. Students are expected to look into potential research areas at CSMC, and they should seek guidance from the Program Director, their 1<sup>st</sup>-year mentor, other faculty, and other students. Students will schedule face-to-face meetings with PIs of interest to explore the possibility of a rotation and project scope. Students are encouraged to meet with multiple faculty to expand their awareness of research opportunities.
2. Because the principal goal of rotations is to allow a student to get to know the research opportunities and experimental approaches, the laboratory personnel, and the mentoring

potential of the supervisor, *it is implicit that rotations should be offered only i) by laboratories willing to take on students for dissertation or thesis research or ii) for students that have decided on their dissertation/thesis mentor, by labs that can provide experimental training needed for the student's project or that may hold some involvement in the student's planned project.*

3. Students and lab PI must complete and sign the "Rotation Agreement" form, and the student should meet with the Program Director to sign the form and approve the rotation *at least one week before the start of the new rotation.*
4. Laboratory rotations run congruent with the academic trimesters.
5. During a rotation, students are expected to partake fully in the laboratory's activities including but not limited to lab and group meetings and journal clubs.
6. The student and rotation mentor should recognize that significant research accomplishment is not a requirement for a successful rotation. However, it is fully expected that students will devote the effort and time needed to assure a meaningful experience.
7. The rotation mentor will provide a grade for each student's rotation and indicate if she/he is willing to allow the student to join the lab for their dissertation research. If a student receives a failing grade (i.e., B– or less) in any single rotation, they may be placed on Academic Probation and may be dismissed from the program. Once submitted to the Graduate School office, the rotation mentor's grade and evaluation of the student's lab performance during the rotation cannot be changed without an appeal to the Oversight/Curriculum Committee.

## 5.4 Dissertation Requirement (PhD Program)

Upon successful completion of the core curriculum (see Policy 6.5, Good Academic Standing) PhD students will choose a dissertation mentor from one of the laboratories in which they successfully rotated. Should a student separate from her or his mentor for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to find another mentor with whom to complete their dissertation research.

### 1.5.4 Reassignment of Laboratory Mentor (PhD/MSBTS Program)

Should a student and/or mentor decide to sever their professional relationship, the PhD Program provides a provision for the reassignment of a laboratory mentor and/or research area for valid reasons (e.g., the mentor leaves Cedars-Sinai) or for incompatibility. However, it is the student's responsibility to procure a new mentor. Neither the PhD Program nor the Cedars-Sinai can coerce professional relations between persons who are incompatible. In addition, it is not the responsibility of the PhD Program or the Cedars-Sinai to identify and form specific trainee-mentor relationships.

Once the selection of a laboratory mentor has been agreed to by the student and mentor, both parties have the obligation to work in good faith to accomplish the student's educational goals and the research required for the degree.

When a change of mentor and terms of severance of the relationship are agreed to, both parties must abide by the agreement. Retaliation by either party would constitute a violation of Cedars-

Sinai human resource policy on retaliation or other applicable policies and could constitute the basis for a grievance procedure.

If a student wishes to request a mentor reassignment, the following guidelines are suggested:

- Attempt to work out any differences prior to making the decision to change mentors.
- Seek advice from the Program Director and the student's Doctoral Committee members to determine if switching mentors would be advisable for your educational goals.
- On the basis of advice received, communicate your wish to change mentors in a meeting with the mentor and the Program Director.
- If the agreement of the existing mentor is obtained, complete the necessary paperwork to request a mentor change.

If issues with the laboratory mentor cannot be resolved informally, then the following formal procedure must be followed:

- The student must notify the Program Director, in writing, of a request to change mentors. This written request must state the reasons for requesting a change.
- The Program Director will then meet with all individuals involved in an effort to determine if a change is warranted.
- If a student proposes a new mentor, the Program Director must approve the mentor's ability to support the student for the duration of his/her research.
- Formal approval for change will be given in writing by the Program Director along with the student, mentor and Graduate School office.
- Once a formal change is made, it must be clear to the student that this change may lengthen the time it takes to complete his/her graduate degree requirements.
- If a mutually agreeable new mentor cannot be identified, the student may be dismissed from the program.

#### 5.4.1 Doctoral Committee (PhD Program)

Students must assemble a Doctoral Committee whose members will assume responsibility for guiding the dissertation process and conducting the oral defense of the dissertation. Membership of the Doctoral Committee will consist of **5-6 members**. The membership is defined and approved by the Program Director and the Director for Graduate Research Education. The selection is determined by the following criteria:

- Three (3) additional regular Doctoral Committee members must be members of the Cedars-Sinai faculty.
- At least two (2) members of the Doctoral Committee must hold the rank of associate or full professor.

- At least two (2) members must be from a department/institute that is different from the primary affiliation of the student's thesis lab.
- One (1) committee member other than the faculty advisor/ principal investigator will be designated as chair of the committee.
- Additional members may be added to the committee at the discretion of the student and faculty advisor, if they all meet the above requirements. Such additional members will have the same voting rights in the committee as other members.
- The final "External Committee Member" must be identified and approved ***no later than 8 weeks prior to the dissertation defense.***

The Committee Chair must be a full-time faculty member of Cedars-Sinai. The Committee Chair should have previous experience in serving on a Doctoral Committee.

### 5.5 Retroactive Credit (PhD Program)

In **exceptional** cases, students may be accepted into the program and be granted retroactive credit for completed research or education, if the following conditions are met:

#### A. Research

1. The period of retroactive credit for research does not exceed 1 year.
2. The supervisor under whom the student has worked continues to act as supervisor for the full duration of the research project until graduation.
3. Evidence is provided by the candidate and the supervisor, which is acceptable to the admissions committee, attesting to the fact that the candidate has contributed to the degree and execution of the research and has played a significant role in determining the direction of the research conducted prior to application to the program.
4. The completed research is considered as the first laboratory rotation. The candidate agrees to complete one or two additional laboratory rotations before rejoining the original supervisor. (The program director will determine the required number of rotations appropriate for the candidate prior to acceptance into the program)

#### A. Education

1. The candidate will provide evidence of course material completed while studying for another degree to obtain retroactive educational credits and commits to obtain any additional educational credits required by Program Director.

Retroactive credit can only be granted in during the admissions process and not after the student has been enrolled in the Graduate School.

## 5.6 Floating Holidays and Term Breaks

Courses, exams and other required activities will not be scheduled on the five Cedars-Sinai floating holidays (Labor Day, Thanksgiving Holiday, Christmas Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day) or during graduate school term breaks. For PhD students in their dissertation laboratories, arrangements for floating holidays or other time off must be discussed with the student's mentor/Principal Investigator.

## 5.7 Student Evaluation of Faculty

The evaluation of teaching has three primary goals:

1. To provide information to teachers about how effectively their teaching is encouraging student learning.
2. To assist teachers in improving their teaching.
3. To provide information about the overall quality of the courses.

The policy for student evaluation of faculty is based on the following assumptions:

1. Students have the responsibility of maintaining maturity and objectivity and providing constructive criticism.
2. Faculty has the responsibility of seriously considering student input and implementing changes as appropriate.
3. Administration must recognize that summative evaluations are useful as only one measure of teaching performance.

### EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Each course and lecture that is given in each degree program undergoes anonymous student evaluations of teaching.
2. Evaluations will be administered and collected by the Graduate School Office in a manner that assures their confidentiality.
3. Core Module Coordinators/Course Directors receive the original evaluation of each lecturer within the module. Core module coordinator/Course Directors are then responsible to execute the following:
  - a. Review evaluations for each lecturer in their course.
  - b. Distribute the evaluations to each individual lecturer.
  - c. Determine lecturer(s) that merit a discussion with regards to their evaluations and schedule individual meetings with such individuals.
  - d. Document the discussion and decisions concluded from the meeting.
4. All original evaluations are kept on file in the Graduate School Office.

## 5.9 Student Lounge Usage

The student lounge located in Pacific Design Center is for the *students use only*. It provides a quiet place for students to study, read, and use their laptops. The following terms and conditions apply:

1. The student lounge is for the use of current & enrolled ***students only***.
2. Students must respect the furniture and equipment in the student lounge always.
3. Students must be respectful to other students while in the lounge and keep noise to a minimum.
4. Students should not use their cell phones in the student lounge; they should step outside if they need to make a phone call.
5. Students should report any problems with equipment and/or lounge to the Graduate Office immediately.
6. Graduate School reference books and journals should not be removed from the student lounge at any time; they are to be available to all students always.

## 5.10 PhD Training Grant Policy

The PhD Program aims to introduce students to the rigors of grant and research funding early in their careers. After the first year of study, PhD students are expected to apply for support that is competitively awarded from sources such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), or other government / private funding opportunities. This includes pre-doctoral fellowships as well as supplements specifically written to support the student stipend (currently about \$50,000/year including fringe benefits).

To be prepared to apply for a grant a student must be:

1. In good academic standing
2. Have completed their first year of studies
3. Taken and passed the Qualifying Exam.
4. Chosen their dissertation lab and started working on their project.

The first 6 months in the dissertation lab consists of determining the thesis project by the student and Principal Investigator (PI). At this time the PI will be charged a \$25,000 contribution to the respective graduate student's stipend. Within the next 12 months the PI and student are required to prepare and submit a grant. If this is not completed within the 18-month period, the PI's stipend contribution will be increased to \$35,000 annually until an application is submitted; thereafter the stipend contribution from the PI will decrease to \$25,000 annually. Note that this decrease is not dependent on successfully being awarded a grant or supplement; it is only dependent on completing and applying.

## 5.11 Class Regulations

Graduate students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in the classroom always. The following applies to all graduate students:

1. Instructors may exclude latecomers from their classes at their discretion. Exclusion is considered an absence.
2. Visitors are permitted in the classroom at the discretion of the instructor(s). Children are not permitted in the classroom during lectures.
3. Any student who misses a final exam because of illness, family emergency or unforeseen event must receive approval from their instructor to take a make-up exam at a time designated by the instructor. A student who misses the make-up exam will not be given further opportunity for a make-up exam.
4. Any student who gives or receives help on a quiz or examination or is involved in unethical practices in fulfilling the required assignments of a course, will receive an "F" for that exam or assignment.
5. All students are responsible for their attendance in class.

## 5.12 MHDS Attendance Requirements

The MHDS will allow one class absence per trimester, although attending all classes is strongly encouraged. If students need to miss one or two additional classes for **important** personal or work reasons, accommodations will try to be made. Students are required to let the course director know, **in advance**, if they plan to miss one or more classes to ensure make-up assignments may be scheduled. It is advised to ask a classmate to prepare an audio or video recording of the missed class, if the instructor allows this (it is the student's responsibility to ensure this is acceptable). If a student is absent for more than three classes per trimester, per course, they may be required to re-take the course.

## ARTICLE 6. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

### 6.1 The Grading System and Assigning Credit

The following is conferred as the grading system:

A	Excellent	F	Failure
B	Good	I	Incomplete
C	Average	P	Passing Work
D	Barely passing	NP	Failing Work

#### PhD Program

A grade of "F", "I" or "NP" does not confer credit toward graduate degree requirements. An Incomplete (I) grade is to be used only to represent incomplete work; no other use of the grade is to be accepted. The grade may be carried no longer than three trimesters. After the third trimester has elapsed, the grade becomes an "F". Course numbers 501-507 and Course 510 will be graded on letters grades A through F. All other courses are Pass/No Pass, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.

**MHDS Program**

A student will receive a grade of 'I' (incomplete) when his/her work is of passing quality but is incomplete for a good cause. A student may remove the Incomplete and receive credit(s) and a grade if he/she satisfactorily completes the work of the course by the end of the next trimester in which the student is enrolled. If the student fails to complete the appropriate course work by the end of the next trimester, the 'I' grade will automatically be replaced with the grade 'F' or 'U' (unsatisfactory) as appropriate.

In cases where the work for a course was not completed and the student's 'I' was replaced with an 'F' or 'U', with permission from the instructor, the student may complete the course in a subsequent trimester and the appropriate earned grade will be assigned to the record. Until that time the 'F' or 'U' will appear on the student record and the 'F' will be calculated into the grade-point average. Once the student completes the course during the subsequent trimester and the grade has been assigned by the instructor, the 'F' or 'U' will be replaced with the earned grade.

## 6.2 Grade Appeal Policy & Procedure

Faculty members are vested with the authority to establish course requirements and standards of performance.

- a. It is the responsibility of faculty to articulate and communicate course requirements and standards of performance to students at the beginning of each course and apply all grading criteria uniformly and in a timely manner.
- b. It is the responsibility of the faculty to communicate with any student whose performance is sub-par as soon as possible during the course to assess the problem.

A student, who has questions about a grade received in a course, should first seek to resolve the issue by consulting with the instructor. If the issue has not been resolved after consultation, and the student believes there are grounds for appealing the grade the student may invoke the grade appeal procedure outlined below.

The grade appeal procedure is designed to give the student the opportunity to correct a perceived grade injustice. It should be utilized only when the student contends that the final course grade assigned by the teacher is arbitrary or capricious. It is not used to challenge grades on individual assignments. "Arbitrary or capricious" implies that:

1. The student has been assigned a grade based on something other than his/her performance in the course.
2. Standards utilized in the determination of the student's grade are more exacting or demanding than those applied to other students in the course.
3. The grade is based upon standards that are significant, unannounced and unreasonable from those articulated in the course syllabus distributed at the beginning of the course.



The grade appeals policy is not applicable when it is the instructor's judgment about the quality of the student's work that is at issue. The assessment of the quality of the student's academic performance is one of the major responsibilities of Cedars-Sinai faculty members. A student who is uncertain about whether a grade should be appealed or who needs additional information about the grade appeals process should contact the Graduate School Office.

The student must begin the grade appeals process by contacting the instructor to resolve the disagreement in an informal and cooperative atmosphere. This discussion should take place as soon as possible but no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> class day after the grade has been assigned.

If the student and faculty member cannot, after consultation, reach a satisfactory resolution within the designated time period, the student may begin the formal grade appeals process.

**Formal Grade Appeals Process:** The student requests, in writing, that the Program Director initiate a formal appeal procedure involving the presentation of the case to the Grade Appeal Committee.

If a formal grade appeal is requested, the committee shall commence deliberations within ten (10) days after submission of this request. In initiating the formal appeal procedure, the Program Director shall take the following actions:

1. Solicit formal written statements from the student and faculty member, specifying the details of their respective viewpoints, along with any pertinent supporting documents
2. If necessary, clarify procedures for either or both parties in the preparation of the formal written statements to be presented to the committee.
3. Distribute the written presentations from both parties to the committee.

The committee shall conduct one or more meetings, at which time the committee shall take one of the following actions:

1. May request that one or both parties write a more definitive statement when the language in the original statement is vague and/or ambiguous and the committee cannot make a determination concerning the allegation of unfair treatment compared to the standard applied to the remainder of the class
2. May decline to hold a hearing because the information presented in the student's statement fails to meet the criteria specified in Section II, "Procedure"
3. May conduct a hearing with both the student and faculty member present (unless the committee goes into executive session to discuss procedural issues), whereby, both parties will be allowed to call witnesses as approved by the committee chair, and the committee members may ask questions of any individuals involved.

After the formal review, the committee shall meet in executive session to deliberate, under the following conditions:

- a. The committee shall limit its concern to the specific issues of unfairness specified in the complaint as detailed in the student's written statement; and
- b. The committee shall reach a final decision (by majority vote of those present) that will either support the original course grade or designate an alternative grade.

Within five (5) class days of the committee's decision, the committee chair shall forward the committee's decision (and written justification) to the student and teacher concerned. If the committee recommends a change of grade, the Program Director shall submit a Request for Change of Grade.

### 6.2.1 Grade Forgiveness (MSMRM Program Only)

If a grade forgiveness form is submitted before a student receives their final grade, the course grade will be recorded as "I" to indicate an incomplete. An incomplete agreement form must also be submitted to program director/coordinator for record purposes.

A student may remove the Incomplete and receive credit(s) and a grade if he/she satisfactorily completes the work of the course by the end of the next trimester in which the student is enrolled. For additional information on incomplete grades, please refer to the [Graduate Research Education Course Catalog](#).

### 6.2.2 GPA Improvement/Adjustment (MSMRM Program Only)

**MSMRM 2<sup>nd</sup> year students** may repeat a course one time for purposes of GPA improvement if the grade of record is below a B (3.0 grade points).

All attempts for the course will be recorded on the student's transcript and will be part of the GPA calculation.

Grade replacement shall not be applicable to courses for which the original grade was a result of a finding of academic dishonesty.

**Students repeating courses in these must consult with Program Director.**

## 6.3 Student Evaluation

The evaluation of teaching has three primary goals:

4. To provide information to faculty about how effectively their teaching is encouraging student learning.
5. To assist faculty in improving their teaching.
6. To provide information about the overall quality of the courses.

## PHILOSOPHY

The policy for student evaluation of faculty is based on the following assumptions:

4. Students have the responsibility of maintaining maturity and objectivity and providing constructive criticism.
5. Faculty has the responsibility of seriously considering student input and implementing changes as appropriate.

6. Administration must recognize that summative evaluations are useful as only one measure of teaching performance.

### **EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

5. Each course and lecture that is given in the Graduate School undergoes anonymous student evaluations of teaching.
6. Evaluations will be administered and collected by the Graduate School Office in a manner that assures their confidentiality.
7. Core Module Coordinators/Course Directors receive the original evaluation of each lecturer within the course. They are then responsible to execute the following:
  - a. Review evaluations for each lecturer in their course.
  - b. Distribute the evaluations to each individual lecturer.
  - c. Determine lecturer(s) that merit a discussion with regards to their evaluations and schedule individual meetings with such individuals.
  - d. Document the discussion and decisions concluded from the meeting.
8. All original evaluations are kept on file in the Graduate School Office.

## **6.4 Transcripts**

The Graduate School Office maintains a transcript for each student. This document is a cumulative academic record of all course work taken at, and accepted by, the Graduate School in Biomedical Science. To obtain official copies of the transcript, a written request containing the student's signature must be submitted to the Graduate School Office. Federal law prohibits the release of a transcript without the student's signature. Should a student wish to pick up a copy personally, minimum advance notice of 24 hours is requested for processing. Currently, there is no fee charged for a single copy of the student's transcript, however, a fee may be assessed for multiple copies.

## **6.5 Good Academic Standing**

### **PhD Program**

Students in the PhD Program are expected to remain in Good Academic Standing for the duration of their education and training. Should any student not retain Good Academic Standing, they will retain their stipend and benefits.

Good academic standing at Cedars-Sinai requires that PhD students meet all the requirements listed below:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better for all graded, required coursework.

- A passing grade for all laboratory rotations.
- A passing grade for all classes that are Pass/Fail.
- During the thesis years (i.e., years 2 and beyond), students must have formal meetings with their dissertation committee at least once per year (unless modified by the committee and approved by the Program Director).
- Student must achieve a 70% attendance rate per trimester in Journal Club and attend all other required Graduate School events (exceptions for health, family issues, etc. are permitted and need to be approved the Program staff or Director).
- All students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and ethically (section 6.10).

Hence, PhD students may lose their good academic standing and be placed on academic probation if they meet one of the following:

- Fails to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better for all graded, required coursework.
- A student receives a “Fail” grade for one or more laboratory rotations.
- A student receives a “Fail” grade for any class that is Pass/Fail.
- During the thesis years, a student fails to hold the required dissertation committee meetings per years, as determined by the committee.
- A PhD student does not achieve a 70% attendance rate per trimester in Journal Club or attend other Graduate School events.
- A student seriously violates the expectations of professional and ethical behavior (section 6.10).

A student who does not achieve good academic standing will be **ineligible for student travel stipends and will not be allowed to defend their thesis (i.e., earn their PhD) suspended** until they improve their status and are deemed in good academic standing. If the student does not make substantial progress towards improvement as indicated by the Program Director, the student may be subject to dismissal from the program. In addition, students who fail to meet two or more of the above-mentioned items may be subject to dismissal from the program (see 6.6 Academic Probation).

### Master of Science in Magnetic Resonance in Imaging

Master of Science students in the MSMRM program are required to maintain at least a ‘B’ (3.0) average in all courses taken during their 1<sup>st</sup> year of the MS program to remain in “good academic standing.” Students may be placed on probation if their work in any two consecutive terms falls below a ‘B’ (3.0) average (see 6.6 Academic Probation).

Master’s students may also not be in “good academic standing” if:

- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, a student fails to hold the required number of progress meetings, as determined by the Program Director.

- A MSMRM student does not achieve the required attendance rate in all classes or attend other required MS program events.

### Master of Health Delivery Science Program

Master of Health Delivery Science students are required to maintain at least a 'C+' (2.3) in every course to remain in "good academic standing." Students will not receive course credit(s) for grade lower than C+. Students may be placed on probation if their work in any two courses below a 'C+' (2.3) (see 6.6 Academic Probation).

### 6.6 Academic Probation

PhD graduate students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree. PhD and MSMRM students are required to maintain at least a "B" (3.0) average in all required courses taken during their graduate status in the program, as well as successfully complete laboratory rotations and all Pass/Fail classes with a "Pass." If a student's GPA falls below a "B" (3.0) average, at any time, they will be put on Academic Probation until their GPA has returned to above a 3.0. The Program Director will determine a student's eligibility to continue graduate study. If granted the ability to continue in probationary status, the student is required to make expeditious progress in improving their scholastic status. If the student does not make substantial progress towards improvement, the student may be subject to dismissal from the program. This will be determined by the Program Director.

MHDS students are expected to maintain a C+ or above in all courses taken during their graduate status in the program. If a student's GPA falls below a 'C+' (2.3) for two courses, at any time, they will be put on Academic Probation. The Program Director will determine a student's eligibility to continue graduate study. If granted the ability to continue in probationary status, the student is required to make expeditious progress in improving their scholastic status. If the student does not make substantial progress towards improvement, the student may be subject to dismissal from the program. This will be determined by the Program Director.

MSMRM graduate students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students are required to maintain at least a "B" (3.0) average in all required courses taken during their graduate status in the program, as well as successfully complete laboratory rotations and all Pass/Fail classes with a "Pass." If a student's GPA falls below a "B" (3.0) average, at any time, they will be put on Academic Probation until their GPA has returned to above a 3.0. The Program Director will determine a student's eligibility to continue graduate study. If granted the ability to continue in probationary status, the student is required to make expeditious progress in improving their scholastic status. If the student does not make substantial progress towards improvement, the student may be subject to dismissal from the program. This will be determined by the Program Director.

### 6.7 Program Suspension

A graduate student may be placed on program suspension when a student's performance indicates a need to interrupt his/her enrollment status and reassess his/her goals, plans and ability to be successful. Students who

are on program suspension will not have use of the Graduate School facilities or faculty time, nor will PhD students receive their stipend. Each Program Director, along with academic leadership, will determine the appropriate length of the suspension, not to exceed one academic year.

Time spent on program suspension will not be counted in the seven-year time limit to complete the PhD degree, and the two-year time limit to complete the MSBTS degree. Once the suspension has ended, the student will meet with their respective Program Director to assess the student's re-admission to the Program. If the Graduate Program Director allows the student to re-enter the program, the student may be required to provide a health clearance, if appropriate. If following the assessment, the Program Director determines it is not appropriate for the student to continue in the program, the student may be dismissed from the program, or withdraw.

## 6.8 Dismissal

### 6.8.1 Academic Dismissal

A student who fails any course (i.e., earns a D+ or lower grade) may be dismissed from the Graduate School.

A PhD student who is not making substantial progress – as determined by their mentor and Doctoral Committee – towards their degree may be dismissed from the program. A student may be placed on probation if they exhibit gross failure to progress towards the PhD degree. In event of probation, an individualized plan of progression will be developed, indicating the terms for probation. Failure to adhere to the probation plan will result in dismissal from the program.

A student who fails to pass the Qualifying Examination will be dismissed from the PhD Program. The Director will notify the student in writing of the decision for dismissal. If the dismissal is upheld during the appeal, dismissal is entered into the student's permanent transcript, along with the student's academic status at the time of dismissal. Outstanding grades of Incomplete (I) at the time of dismissal will remain incomplete.

The student will have the right to appeal the dismissal as outlined in Section 6.9 and must notify the Program Director of the intent to appeal, in writing, within **one week** of receipt of notification of dismissal action.

### 6.8.2 Dismissal for nonacademic reasons

A student also may be dismissed for non-academic reasons that seriously violate the expectations of professional and ethical behavior (section 6.10). After investigation of any allegations, any finding of non-professional conduct will be forwarded to the Program Director to assign a committee for review and action. After its review, this committee may impose appropriate sanctions or penalties, including a recommendation for dismissal for non-academic reasons to the Director. The Director will notify the student, in writing, of the recommendations of the committee. If the committee recommends a dismissal, the student will have the right to appeal the dismissal as outlined in Section 6.9. The request for an appeal of a decision must be made in writing to the Director within one week of the receipt of the notification of the dismissal action.

## 6.9 Appeals of Dismissals

A student who disagrees with the decision for dismissal may appeal that judgment. Within one week of a dismissal, a student can appeal the decision, in writing, to the Director. The Director will assign a Dismissal Appeals Committee. If a formal dismissal appeal is requested by the student, the Committee shall commence deliberations within 10 days after submission of this request. In initiating the formal appeal procedure, the Program Director shall take the following actions:

1. Solicit formal written statements from the student and any participating faculty member, specifying the details of their respective viewpoints, along with any pertinent supporting documents.
2. If necessary, clarify procedures for either or both parties in the preparation of the formal written statements to be presented to the committee.
3. Distribute the written presentations from both parties to the committee.

The committee shall conduct one or more meetings, at which time the committee shall take one of the following actions:

1. May request that one or both parties write a more definitive statement when the language in the original statement is vague and/or ambiguous and the committee cannot make a determination concerning the allegation of unfair treatment compared to the standard applied to the remainder of the class.
2. May decline to hold a hearing because the information presented in the student's statement fails to meet the criteria specified.
3. May decline to hold a hearing on the basis that an appeal is unnecessary to take action.
4. May conduct a hearing with the student present (unless the committee goes into executive session to discuss procedural issues), whereby, the student will be allowed to call witnesses as approved by the committee chair, and the committee members may ask questions of any individuals involved.

At the conclusion of the formal review, the committee shall meet in executive session to deliberate, under the following conditions:

- a. The committee shall limit its concern to the specific issues of unfairness specified in the complaint as detailed in the student's written statement; and
- b. The committee shall reach a final decision (by majority vote of those present) that will either uphold or overturn the original dismissal.

Based on the recommendation of the Dismissal Appeals Committee, the Program Director will make the final decision regarding the appeal. If the dismissal is overturned by the Appeals Committee, the Program Director, together with the Appeals Committee, must make definite recommendations of how the student is to progress. The action of the Program Director is final.

Within 5 class days of the committee's decision, the committee chair shall forward the committee's decision (and written justification) to the student.

## **6.10 Professional and Ethical Student Conduct**

Students in the Graduate School must behave in a courteous and ethical manner at all times. The attitudes and habits developed as a student form the core of future professional behavior. As such, each student will set an example of the highest caliber for those who work with them.

To promote these behaviors within the student body, students will use the principles of honesty, integrity, respect and professionalism as a personal, academic, and professional guide.

**HONESTY:**

- Understand the Cedars-Sinai Graduate Program policies on academic integrity and practice them as a part of my student life.
- Honor personal obligations to be sincere and forthright by dealing fairly and truthfully with others.

**INTEGRITY:**

- Maintain personal beliefs and values despite changing circumstances and challenging environments.
- Respect their own reputation and that of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and the Graduate Program by avoiding unethical behaviors and the circumstances that encourage them.

**RESPECT:**

- Embrace the diverse perspectives and accomplishments of others, knowing that it is the personal and cultural variations among people that enrich us individually and as a society.
- Take pride in Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and Graduate Program by protecting the facilities and their surroundings.

**PROFESSIONALISM:**

- Maintain the highest standards of performance, conduct, and cooperation with fellow students, faculty, staff, and co-workers.
- Perform duties with due diligence and make a continuous effort towards improvement.

Students are expected to perform their duties in a professional manner and abide by all the policies of the Graduate School and Cedars-Sinai. Any conduct that is not in keeping with the ethical or professional standards of Cedars-Sinai is defined as professional misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, actions of academic misconduct that occur in the context of meeting academic requirements (courses and qualifying examinations), scientific misconduct as defined by Cedars-Sinai, violation of Graduate School policies, and acts of a criminal nature.

### 6.10.1 Student Dress Code

The perception of the quality of our student programs is influenced by personal appearance. It is therefore of the utmost importance that each student's personal appearance be professional and consistent with our business atmosphere and the unique aspects of an educational environment within the Medical Center, instilling confidence in our leadership, faculty, patients and the community in which we serve. This policy articulates expectations and guidelines that will meet this objective.

This policy applies to all students studying and performing work at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center ("Cedars-Sinai").



**General Requirements**

Compliance with the Student Dress and Personal Appearance policy is expected at all times. All clothing must be consistent with the community standard for an Academic Medical Center, and not attract undue attention or serve as a distraction to others. It must also be appropriate to the research environment and take into account the expectations of faculty and management.

Hair on the head or face shall be clean and trimmed; controlled in an appropriate manner in order not to interfere with performance. Color and style shall remain conservative. Hats shall not be worn unless required for safety.

Shoes shall be clean and in good repair.

Jewelry and other accessories shall be minimized and may not be worn where safety or health standards would be compromised. No more than two earrings per ear shall be worn. Body piercing anywhere other than the ear shall not be displayed. Accessories, including badge holders with non- CSMC insignias should not be worn. Departmental dress code standards, where they exist, must be observed.

Specifically prohibited are casual, recreational and provocative clothing. Examples of such clothing include, but are not limited to the following:

- Exercise clothes
- Shorts
- Short skirts
- Spaghetti strap or tank tops
- Clothing that exposes bare midriffs or shoulders
- Clothing that may be deemed provocative
- Clothing with unprofessional, offensive or suggestive wordings or images
- Stereo headphones also may not be worn while on duty if it poses a safety issue

**Students Wearing Lab Coats or Working in Patient Care Areas**

Students wearing lab coats or non-uniformed students working in patient care areas are expected to comply with the general requirements indicated above. This includes standards for clothing under lab coats. Lab coats must be clean, neatly pressed and in good repair.

**Religious Attire**

Religious garments may be worn in lieu of business attire, but must be clean, neatly pressed, and in good repair.

### **Shoes**

Shoes are to be clean and polished at all times. Dress or street shoes, closed toe, heel, and sling-back shoes are acceptable footwear. For safety reasons while on campus, all students are prohibited from wearing beach sandals or flip-flops, clogs, platform shoes, and other similar footwear. Exceptions to this policy may be made with the approval of the Graduate Program. However, no exception shall be made that may pose a safety hazard.

### **Grooming Standards**

Excellent grooming standards are to be maintained at all times while on campus. Hair must be neat, clean, and well-trimmed. Hair styles may not be extreme or serve as a distraction to others. Hair nets or scrub caps, for either health or safety reasons, are to be worn when necessary or prescribed by law. Cosmetics are acceptable; however, heavily scented colognes, perfumes and deodorants are to be avoided, particularly in research labs and patient care areas.

Fingernails are to be kept neat in appearance and clean. Nail length should not be so excessive as to cause frequent breaking or possible injury, or serve as a distraction to others. Facial hair is acceptable but must be neat, clean and well-trimmed. Tattoos with slogans, graphics or offensive wording should be covered.

### **6.10.2 Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct may include but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, and facilitating academic dishonesty. Allegations of academic misconduct should be made by faculty to the Program Director. In cases of alleged misconduct, the Director will, within one week, appoint an investigative committee consisting of 2 faculty members to investigate the allegations and report their findings and recommendations. The student has a right to respond to the committee concerning any allegations if he or she chooses.

### **6.10.3 Scientific Misconduct**

Scientific misconduct is defined as “fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other acts that deviate from commonly accepted practices within the scientific community for proposing, conducting or reporting research” (US Public Health Service Regulations).

Allegations of scientific misconduct should be reported to the Program Director who will then follow the policies of Cedars-Sinai (please see Research Compliance and Quality Improvement policies in Policy and Procedure Documents). The findings will be reported back to the Program Director for review.

#### 6.10.4 Violation of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Policies

Graduate students are expected to abide by all Graduate School policies, including Cedars-Sinai Medical Center policies. These policies include those found on the Policy and Procedure Documents on the Cedars-Sinai internal Intranet.

Allegations of violation of any Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Policy by graduate students will follow standard Medical Center processes. The Program Director as well as the GRE Manager will be informed of any allegations involving graduate student violation of Medical Center policy.

If after an investigation an allegation is substantiated, the Director or GRE Manager will inform the student in writing of the investigation outcome. The Director may recommend the matter to a Graduate Program committee if it is sufficiently serious to serve as grounds for dismissal (section 6.7.2).

#### 6.10.5 Fitness for Duty

Students will be required to undergo a Fitness for Duty evaluation if and when a faculty member, supervisor, PI or instructor suspects the student is unable to perform his/her job responsibilities without endangering the health and safety of self or others, and/or if and when the student has the appearance of being under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance (including if and when the student's breath has the odor of alcohol, even if other signs of being under the influence are not present.)

In such cases, the faculty member will discuss his/her concerns and the reason for them with the student prior to requiring the student to take a Fitness for Duty evaluation.

- The student is expected to immediately comply with the request including signing the necessary consent form.
- If the student refuses or fails to immediately comply with the request, he/she will be:
  - Immediately suspended pending investigation
  - Subject to discipline at the discretion of the Program Director
- Subsequent to the Fitness for Duty evaluation, the student may be suspended from the program pending review of the circumstances that led to the request for the Fitness for Duty evaluation and pending results of the evaluation. The Program Director will determine the circumstances under which and when the student may return to the Graduate School. At a minimum, the student will be required to present to the Program Director a clearance from Employee Health Services. However, even with a clearance form, the student may be suspended pending conclusion of the investigation. (If the Fitness for Duty evaluation is conducted by the Emergency Department, the student must return to Employee Health Services for clearance at another time and may not return to the Graduate School until that clearance is obtained).

#### 6.10.6 Jurisdiction

Cedars-Sinai has jurisdiction over student conduct that occurs on Medical Center property, or in connection with official Graduate School functions whether on or off Medical Center property.

Although the Medical Center will not routinely invoke its disciplinary processes over student conduct that occurs off campus except in connection with an official Graduate School function, the Medical Center has discretion to exercise jurisdiction over conduct that occurs off campus and that would violate student conduct and discipline policies or regulations if the conduct had occurred on campus when (1)

the alleged misconduct indicates the student poses a threat to the safety or security of any member(s) of the Medical Center community or (2) the alleged misconduct involves academic work or the forgery, alteration, or misuse of any Medical Center document, record, key, electronic device, or identification.

### 6.10.7 Criminal Acts

The Program Director may recommend review of the status of a graduate student convicted of a criminal offense. If the criminal act is judged to be of a serious nature, the Program Director may forward the case to committee for review and recommendations concerning dismissal (section 6.7.2)

### 6.10.8 Student Grievances

The student is encouraged to seek resolution of complaints and other concerns relating to his/her appointment or responsibilities.

The student is urged to first discuss complaints and similar concerns with his/her mentors, instructors or other faculty members wherever possible and appropriate. Issues can best be resolved at an early stage and every effort should be made to achieve a mutually agreeable solution.

After thorough discussion, if the complaint or concern is not adequately addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the student, the student may present the complaint or concern to the Program Director for the purposes of achieving a mutually agreeable solution.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in situations in which the complaint or concern is related to faculty members and the student believes that a fair resolution cannot be attained by presenting the complaint or concern to these individuals, the student may present the complaint or concern directly to the Program Director.

If the complaint or concern is still not resolved to the reasonable satisfaction of the student after discussions pursuant to the foregoing provisions, the student may present the complaint or concern, in writing, to the Vice-Dean for Graduate Education for the purposes of achieving a mutually agreeable solution.

In addition to the foregoing, in situations where the complaint or concern relates to both the student's mentors, instructors or the Program Director and the student believes that a fair resolution cannot be attained by presenting the complaint or concern to those individuals, the student may present the complaint or concern in writing directly to the Manager of GRE or Academic Human Resources.

**More specifically, if any student is concerned that such student's research or the research performed by such student for his/her mentors or instructors is a potential conflict of interest; such student is encouraged to express such conflict of interest concerns in writing directly to the Program Director.**

An individual may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint. The bureau may be contacted at 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite S-202, Sacramento, CA 95798-0818, (916) 431-6959, [www.bppe.ca.gov](http://www.bppe.ca.gov).

### 6.10.9 Student Travel Award (PhD Program)

Each year the PhD Program will award *up to* 12 Travel Awards for up to a maximum of \$1000 each to those students who are pursuing a PhD degree. All PhD students are encouraged to apply annually. To qualify a student must be presenting a poster, giving a talk/presentation and/or receiving an award.

If chosen to receive a Travel Award it will cover flight, hotel accommodations, and registration/membership fees up to a maximum of \$1000. (Please note – meals, other transportation costs, and hotel incidentals will not be covered)

To qualify for the travel award, students must be in years 2-4 of the graduate program and must be in Good Academic Standing (section 6.5, Good Academic Standing).

To apply for a travel award, students must do the following:

- Complete the Travel Award Application form.
- Write a brief one-page summary stating why the conference/seminar is appropriate for your research, what you will be presenting (award receiving, talk you will be giving, etc.) and approximate costs.
- Turn in the Application, one-page summary to the Graduate School Office no later than 60 days prior to the date of the conference/seminar.

The Graduate School office will inform each student once the application has been reviewed and approved/disapproved. All unapproved travel reimbursements will be denied.

#### **6.10.10 Physicians in Doctoral Research (PDR Track)**

The PhD program offers a PDR Track for MDs enrolled in a specialty fellowship training program to earn a PhD degree in Biomedical and Translational Sciences.

##### **Admission**

Applicants to the PDR track are required to have a Medical Doctor (MD) degree or its equivalent and be accepted into one of the specialty fellowship training programs at Cedars-Sinai. Fellows interested in this track will apply using the standard PhD Program application. Applicants must submit all PhD admissions requirements (section 3.1). Applications are evaluated by the Admissions Committee. The PDR Track Director participates in candidate interviews as well as the Admission Committee.

##### **Student Stipend**

Financial support for the PDR Track fellows is the responsibility of either the mentor laboratory or the fellow's home clinical department. A commitment letter of funding must be provided as part of the application and signed by the fellow's fellowship director.

##### **Coursework**

Applicants for the PDR Track who have completed graduate-level training during medical school (or other education activities) in areas covered by the Cedars-Sinai PhD Program coursework may not need to repeat the coursework as part of their program. Official transcripts from medical school are required. Where these are not available, written testimony that the relevant material has been covered previously must be provided by the applicant and endorsed by the PDR Program director. The decision of which program courses can be excused, and which are still required, will be made on an individual case-by-case basis with consideration of the type and rigor of courses taken before. Final decisions of coursework required must be made and signed by the PDR Program Director.

##### **Dissertation Laboratory and Mentor**

Fellows interested in the PDR track must choose their dissertation lab and mentor before applying to the program (this is quite distinct from the conventional PhD program). It is expected that fellows will explore potential research opportunities either before or during the initial clinical training phase of their fellowship. Application and admission to the PDR Track is distinct from clinical fellowship application and can occur during or after the fellowship application process.

### **Doctoral Committee**

Once accepted into the PDR program, fellows will be required to form their Doctoral Committee following the guidelines and rules in the graduate handbook (section 2.5).

### **Qualifying Examination**

The PDR Track candidates in the PhD Program must complete the Qualifying Examination (QE) to advance to PhD Candidacy. The QE is written and oral defense of the fellow's dissertation research proposal, and both the written proposal and oral defense are evaluated by the fellow's Doctoral Committee. It is expected that the QE will be conducted within the first 10 months in the PDR program.

### **Dissertation:**

Fellows will spend at least 4 years in the laboratory working on their original research project. It is expected that their time and effort will be devoted to their PhD project, though modest time can be set aside for continued clinical training and responsibilities (e.g., continuity clinics, grand rounds, etc.). Within the PDR Track, a submitted first author manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal is a strong indicator of a successful dissertation project. A minimum of four years of participation and research activity is required for graduation. Participation in Journal Club is mandatory. It is the responsibility of the PDR Program Director to formally attest that the PDR student has completed the requirements for graduation in conjunction with the student's Doctoral Committee.

### **Career Progression / Funding:**

A key goal of the PDR Track is to prepare physicians in training as physician-scientists for careers in academic medicine, for which extramural funding is essential to early career development. Graduates of the PDR Track are strongly encouraged to submit career development award applications (e.g. NIH K08, K23, K99/R00, and other federal and society specific fellow-to-faculty transition awards) by the end or soon thereafter of the doctoral program.

## **ARTICLE 7. STUDENT RECORDS**

### **7.1 Maintenance of Student Records**

The Graduate School Office is responsible for maintenance of all official academic records of students. Each degree program maintains a file on each student. Included in a student's file are the original

application form of the student for admission to the program, transcripts of any college records and test scores. Subsequent to the enrollment of the student into the Graduate School, the student file contains enrollment forms, grades, letters of correspondences, narrative summaries rendered by the faculty concerning the student's academic work, letters indicating actions of the any committees pertaining to the student, communications concerning scholarships and/or loans, and other correspondence relating to the student's education. In addition to written material kept in the student files, the Graduate School Office maintains electronic records on general information about each student: courses taken, grades, summary statements of academic actions, and enrollment information. The Graduate School's policy regarding creation and maintenance of student records is based upon practice recommended by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers.

## 7.2 Integrity of Grades

It is institutional policy that the material contained in the student records is confidential; transfer of such information within the school is permitted only for legitimate academic purposes. No office maintaining an education record of students will disclose any personally identifiable information from that record to anyone other than the individual students themselves without the written consent of the student, except as provided below.

- The primary record of students may be disclosed without their written consent to faculty members and administration within each degree program who have a legitimate educational interest in the information.
- The Graduate School reserves the right to forward a student's educational records to another school in which it understands that the student is currently enrolled, or seeks, or intends to enroll, without the written consent of the student.
- The records of students may be disclosed without their written consent to those federal and state government agencies and officials to whom information is specifically required to be reported or disclosed by law.
- The records of students will be disclosed without their written consent as required to comply with a judicial order or subpoena.
- The records of students may be disclosed without their written consent in a health or safety emergency, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
- The following information related to students is considered "directory information": name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and similar information. Legally this information can be disclosed without a student's permission however it is Graduate School policy not to release "directory information" except with the student's written consent.

The Graduate School Office will, for each request (except those from or to faculty members) and for each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records of a student to outside institutions or agencies, maintain a record which indicates the parties who have requested or obtained information and the legitimate interests of these parties. The records of disclosures may be inspected by the student.

If a student feels that the Graduate School is not complying with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, or the regulations issued by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare implementing that Act, he, or she may file a complaint in writing with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
600 Independence Ave., SW I, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

### 7.3 Student Access to Records

A student may examine their records by presenting a request to the Graduate School Office. These records shall be made available for review by the student as promptly as possible. The records shall be examined in the office in which they are kept, under observation of administrative personnel, and shall not be altered, destroyed, or carried away from the office by the student. Material which may relate to more than one individual shall not be made available for direct review, but the student shall be told the information contained in such records which related to him/her.

## ARTICLE 8. RESIDENCY

### 8.1 Leave of Absence (LOA)

A leave of absence may be granted by the Graduate School to graduate students. The rules and limitations of LOA vary depending on the student's stage in their degree program. All LOA requests must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School at least 2 weeks before the proposed start. For PhD student, time spent on the officially approved leave of absence is not counted in the seven-year time limit on degree completion.

For all students, a LOA will be granted only to students in Good Academic Standing. Any student on Good Academic Standing who takes an unapproved LOA that extends 10 working days or more may be subject to dismissal. Any student not on Good Academic Standing who takes an unapproved LOA that extends beyond 10 working days or more may be dismissed from the Graduate School without appeal.

If a student fails to return to their program after being on official leave of absence or leaves the Graduate School without an official leave of absence, the student must apply for readmission to their respective degree program.

This policy does not supersede Family Care and Medical Leave of Absence ("FCML") policy in accordance with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") and the California Family Rights Act ("CFRA") which Cedars-Sinai provides for eligible employees.

### 8.2 Withdrawals

Official withdrawal is required if a student chooses to leave the Graduate School at any time during his/her education.

If, at the time of the withdrawal, the student is not making satisfactory progress towards the degree, or is failing any aspect of the program, a grade of "F" may assigned to the current course(s) and may be kept in the student's permanent record.



Withdrawal from the Graduate School is not equivalent to a formal leave of absence. A student who receives a medical withdrawal may be required to produce a medical clearance before being readmitted.

If a student wishes to withdraw from any degree program, then the following procedure must be followed:

1. The student must notify the Program Director of his/her wish to withdraw.
2. The student must complete and submit the Withdrawal Form, as well as provide a detailed letter as to why the withdrawal is requested, and submit to the Graduate School office.
3. The student must return any property belonging to Cedars-Sinai, if applicable.

The Withdrawal Form will be kept in the student's permanent record. There will be a transcript notation of the withdrawal.

### **8.3 Remote Student Status**

PhD and MHDS students who wish to leave Cedars-Sinai (CS) Graduate Programs with their major advisor and continue their studies as a full-time Cedars-Sinai graduate student may do so by becoming a remote student. A remote student's advisor remains on the student's doctoral committee and must attend each meeting of the doctoral committee and the defense. A local CS advisor must also be appointed to serve as a local contact as needed. The CS advisor must also be a member of the student's doctoral committee. The following procedure must be adhered to:

1. A Remote Student Form must be completed prior to departure.
2. Students on remote status without permission may be subject to dismissal.
3. Before a PhD student can be put on remote status, they must be admitted to candidacy.
4. Remote students are responsible for all requirements expected of other graduate students (i.e. status reports, symposium abstracts, etc.).
5. Remote students and remote advisors are required to meet with their doctoral committee (PhD) every twelve months, or their Preceptor (MHDS) for a pre-determined number of meetings.
6. If traveling to Cedars-Sinai once a year presents financial or logistical problems and if approved by the Program Director, remote faculty advisor, and local faculty advisor at the time of the remote status, a PhD student may be permitted to hold the status report meetings by communicating with committee members over the telephone, or via email, and the doctoral committee progress report can be completed by email.
7. The remote advisor must be physically present at the PhD student's dissertation defense. The required travel to Cedars-Sinai for the student and the remote advisor for at least one thesis committee meeting per year and for the final dissertation defense is the financial responsibility of the remote advisor.

## 8.4 Reinstatement of Admission

Students who withdraw or are dismissed for academic reasons from the Graduate School may be required to reapply for admissions before they are reinstated as a student. A student who is dismissed based on misconduct may be ineligible to reapply. A student who withdraws or is dismissed for medical reasons may be required to produce a medical clearance from Employee Health Services before being readmitted.

## 8.5 Pursuit of Concurrent Degrees (PhD)

Students pursuing the PhD degree are not expected to pursue a concurrent degree while enrolled in the PhD Program. Students cannot, under any circumstances, receive more than one stipend while enrolled in graduate study.

## 8.6 Time Off Policy (PhD)

Students enrolled in the first year of the PhD Program receive a 2-week break between the Fall and Winter trimesters and a 1-week break between the Winter and Summer trimesters. Should a 1<sup>st</sup>-year student need time-off within any trimester, they must obtain *prior* approval from their course director as well as from the mentor of the laboratory in which the student is rotating and notify the Graduate School office. In the event of an illness or injury that results in absence from class or lab, it is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors and mentor as soon as possible to let them know of their absence. For a prolonged absence (more than 1 week), the student must also notify the Graduate School office.

Students who have successfully completed the first-year curriculum do not have designated breaks between trimesters. All time-off/vacations, regardless of length, must be approved *in advance* by the student's PI/mentor. In the event of an illness or injury that results in an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact their mentor as soon as possible. If the requested time-off exceeds 1 week, the Graduate School office must also be notified. If a student needs to request a formal leave of absence for any reason, they should refer to Policy 8.1, Leave of Absence (LOA).

PhD students are paid a yearly stipend and are obligated to commit to a full-time schedule. Students are expected to discuss any absences with their mentor prior to taking time-off. Should any issues arise regarding time-off, students should direct their concerns to the Graduate School Office.

## 8.7 Teach-Out Policy

The decision to close a degree program requires substantial planning and careful consultation with all those affected. Every effort should be made to inform everyone affected as fully as possible about the conditions leading to a decision of such importance, and all available information should be shared. As the immediate interests of current students are most directly affected, their present and future prospects require sensitive and timely attention and involvement. The institution's teach-out policy aims to protect the interest of students.

If the institution decides to close a degree program, one of the following will occur:

- Execute a Teach-Out Plan. The teach-out option occurs when the institution “teaches out” currently enrolled students; no longer permanently admits students to programs and terminates the educational program and the operations of the instructional site.
- Develop and implement a Teach-Out Agreement. The teach-out agreement option occurs when the institution enters into a contract with another institution or organization to teach out the educational programs or program. This will include making arrangements for a new Principal Investigator/Laboratory for those students who require them.

The teach-out plan should make appropriate distinctions between prospective and currently enrolled students. As soon as the decision to terminate a program is made, the institution will provide WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) with the teach out plan for approval, including any teach agreements with other institutions.

-Prospective graduate students are those with active applications awaiting admission decisions to the terminated degree program. As soon as the decision to terminate the program is made, the institution will immediately suspend admission of new students and advise students who have already been accepted into the degree program to complete their training within the teach-out period.

-Graduate students currently enrolled in a terminated degree program will be given the opportunity to complete their degree programs. Program Directors will work with each student to develop a strategy for completion within the teach out period. The graduate degree will be completed in the teach out period.

The Vice Dean for Graduate Research Education whose scope of authority involves degree programs considered for termination shall inform and involve affected students and faculty at the earliest possible stage of consideration. Once the decision to pursue closure of a degree program has been made, the Vice Dean shall forward a proposal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Medical Faculty. The proposal should be developed with the involvement of faculty and students as possible and should outline the:

- 1) Nature of the program
- 2) Reasons for termination
- 3) Number of students currently enrolled
- 4) Progression statistics of students in the program
- 5) Resources used to offer the program
- 6) Financial savings, if any, realized from the termination
- 7) Explanation of how any student enrolled in the program will be helped to complete their degree program
- 8) Explanation of how affected individuals will be informed of the planned termination

The Vice Dean should be available to brief the VP of Academic Affairs, Dean of Medical Faculty, the CEO as well as the WSCUC accreditation liaison of the pending decision. The Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Medical Faculty will develop and coordinate presentations on the termination proposal to the Board of Governors. Once the termination agreement has been approved, the Vice Dean will then notify the WSCUC Accreditation Liaison of the proposal and subsequent teach-out arrangements

for approval. The Vice Dean is responsible for ongoing monitoring and reporting on implementation of teach-out plans.

## **ARTICLE 9. PROGRESS TOWARD THE DEGREE**

### **9.1 Normal Progress to the PhD Degree**

The PhD student must maintain “normal progress toward the degree.” “Normal progress” is moving through the series of steps in the program necessary to obtain a PhD degree at a realistic pace and with the level of performance required of doctoral students. The steps are as follows:

1. Maintain a 3.0 grade point average in all core coursework.
2. Selection of laboratory dissertation mentor and a doctoral committee.
3. Successful completion of both the written and oral portion of the Qualifying Examination by the end of the second year of study.
4. Successful completion of dissertation research, a written dissertation and an oral presentation defending the dissertation.
5. Annual meetings with the doctoral committee.

#### **9.1.1 PhD Doctoral Committee Progress Reports**

Upon selecting a Doctoral Committee, students are required to meet with their Doctoral Committees at least once per calendar year, inclusive of their first meeting that functions as the Qualifying Exam, to maintain their Good Academic Standing. Failure to maintain Good Academic Standing may result in loss of graduate student privileges, including the travel allowance (section 6.7) and the ability to proceed to their dissertation defense.

1. Students are responsible for scheduling and organizing annual meetings with their Doctoral Committee, including reserving space for the meeting (the GRE staff can help with room reservation, if needed). Students will notify GRE staff that the meeting has been scheduled and when. If a student has not arranged for an annual Doctoral Committee meeting, they will be prompted by the Graduate School staff to do so 11-12 months following their last meeting.
2. Should a student fail to meet with his/her Doctoral Committee at least once every 12 months after their first meeting, they may not receive approval for proceeding to their defense (section 10.1, PhD Graduation Requirements).
3. Exceptions to the every 12-month rule can be made if approved jointly by the student’s mentor, Doctoral Committee members, and Program Director.
4. If needed, students are encouraged to hold Doctoral Committee meetings as often as they and their mentor(s) deem necessary. That is, Doctoral Committee meetings can be held more than once per year.
5. Students are encouraged – but not required – to meet often with their individual Doctoral Committee members to provide informal updates on their research progress, career development, publications, etc.
6. If a student fails to meet with their Doctoral Committee within the prescribed time frame, the student and mentor will be notified that they have two (2) months to arrange such a meeting. Failure to do this may result in loss of Good Academic Standing, and the

- consequences that that entails. Good Academic Standing will be reinstated after the Doctoral Committee has met and the Program Director, in consultation with the Doctoral Committee, has deemed the student's progress to be satisfactory.
7. Doctoral Committees should run 1-2 hours and, as reflected in the sections of the Doctoral Committee Meeting Report form, are meant to address and evaluate the student's:
    - Progress with their dissertation research
    - Mastery of their subject and experimental skills
    - Presentation skills
    - Publications
    - Participation in meetings
    - Career development and expectations.
  8. The Program Director will receive and review each Doctoral Committee Progress form soon after it is completed by the Doctoral Committee Chair. If the student is not progressing satisfactorily, the student is required to meet with Program Director and the Doctoral Committee Chair to discuss the required follow-up steps.

### 9.1.2 PhD Final Doctoral Committee Meeting

When the student and the mentor feel that the student's work is sufficiently advanced, a final committee meeting should be scheduled. At this meeting, the student will present their work in its entirety and outline the contents of a proposed dissertation. Doctoral Committees, at their discretion, may request a written outline of the proposed dissertation. At this meeting, special attention should be given to demonstrating the scope and quality of the research, the hypothesis being tested, and the conclusions that have been reached.

The student should have a reasonable expectation that the dissertation will ultimately be approved if the final recommendations of the committee are fulfilled. It is important for the committee to reach an agreement upon the design and implementation procedures of the research. This meeting will be greatly facilitated if the Doctoral Committee has been kept informed of the student's research progress on a regular basis. If the committee agrees that the research phase is complete, the student usually begins to write the dissertation full-time. It should be noted that the writing can begin at any time in the graduate student's career and that bench work can continue during the writing phase.

Once the Doctoral Committee has agreed that the research phase is complete, the chair of the committee should inform the PhD Program Director and the Director for Graduate Research Education and the student should complete the **Notification of Dissertation Examination Intent Form**. ***This form will include the name and contact information of the External Member and must be received by the Graduate Program Office no later than eight (8) weeks prior to the earliest anticipated date of the defense.***

### 9.1.3 Permission to Write

By granting "permission to write," the PhD student's doctoral committee acknowledges that all key experiments have been completed and that a thesis outline was presented and reviewed which described a sufficient body of work to merit a PhD if the dissertation and defense are satisfactorily completed.

A student must be in good academic standing when granted permission to write. "Permission to write" status does not relieve the student from any academic requirements including attendance at seminars, retreats, and other activities required by the Graduate Programs.

### 9.1.4 Master's Degree (BTS) Thesis Meetings

Students pursuing a master's degree are expected to meet with the master's Degree Program Director each month for progress reports. The director, along with the student's mentor, will supervise the written thesis along with the research project chosen by the student.

## 9.2 PhD Degree Completion Time Limit

It is the expectation of the program that PhD students will complete their doctoral degree within 4-5 years from initial registration. A PhD student has a maximum of 7 calendar years from the date of first registration to complete the doctoral degree. Once a student has been enrolled for 6 years (including time for LOA or academic suspension), the student will meet with the Director, Program Director and thesis mentor to discuss the best course of action. An extension of the 7-year time limit can only be granted by the Director for Graduate Research Education.

Those students pursuing a master's degree are expected to complete the degree within the 2-year, lock-step framework.

## 9.3 Credit Requirements

Students are required to complete 40 credits to advance to PhD candidacy and are required to complete a minimum of 64 credits to graduate.

Master's students in the Biomedical and Translational Sciences program are required to complete 40 credits to select their thesis laboratory and thesis project. They are required to complete a minimum of 56 credits to graduate.

Students pursuing a Master's in Health Delivery Science degree are expected to complete a minimum of 33 credits and those students pursuing a Master of Science in Magnetic Resonance in Imaging are expected to complete a minimum of 70 credit hours.

## 9.4 The Qualifying Examination (PhD and MSBTS Programs)

**Purpose:** The Qualifying Examination (QE) assesses if a student is ready to advance to PhD Candidacy and to gauge their potential for successfully completing an independent research project. Successful completion of the QE is required before students can advance to PhD Candidacy. A key goal of the QE is to assess the student's ability to:

- Demonstrate command of their research field
- Think critically and creatively
- Formulate testable, mechanistic hypotheses
- Design a sound, rigorous, well-controlled experimental strategy to test their ideas
- Express themselves clearly, both orally and in writing
- Answer unanticipated questions concerning their research.

**Prerequisites:** To be eligible for the QE, students must;

- Have completed the Core Module Courses.
- Have completed three (3) laboratory rotations.
- Have identified their dissertation lab and mentor.
- Formed their Doctoral Committee.

- Be in Good Academic Standing (see Policy 6.5, Graduate Programs Policy Handbook)

### 9.4.1 Results of the Qualifying Examination

All PhD and MSBTS students will take both the written and oral portions of the Qualifying Examination. Evaluation will consider performance on both portions of the examination.

After the oral exam, the committee will make one of the following recommendations:

- **High Pass:** The student has performed in an exemplary manner in all aspects of the exam.
- **Full Pass:** The student has successfully completed all aspects of the examination.
- **Conditional Pass:** The committee is satisfied with the student's performance in the exam, but significant weaknesses are identified. The student will be required to modify portions of their proposal, such as clarifying details, strengthening aims and approach, or extensive reading in a neglected area. Requested changes must be completed within 2 weeks. Re-examination is not required.
- **Re-examination:** The student has not satisfied the requirements of either the written or oral component of the examination, leading to significant modifications of the proposal. Full re-examination is required and must be completed within 2 months.
- **Fail:** The student has not completed the exam successfully and is not given the option of retaking it.

**Outcome.** After completion of the oral and written component of the examination, the Doctoral Committee members will confer to determine the outcome. Specific feedback will be provided to each student about their performance on the various components of the examination. If students pass the Qualifying Examination, they will be advanced to candidacy. **If a student fails the Qualifying Examination s/he will be dismissed from the program.**

## ARTICLE 10. GRADUATION

### 10.1 PhD Graduation Requirements

A student is required to meet the following criteria prior to receiving approval to graduate:

- A minimum of 64 credit hours
- At least three (3) Doctoral Committee progress reports (unless waived)
- Be in Good Academic Standing

### 10.2 Dissertation Defense (PhD Program)

The student must contact all members of the Doctoral Committee and the External Member to schedule a date for the dissertation defense. **All members of the Doctoral Committee and the External Member**

**must be present during the dissertation defense.** The Graduate Program will send announcements of the final examination to the Doctoral Committee members and to the student.

The student will schedule a room and date in which the defense will be held and notify the Graduate School office. This is a public seminar and the campus community will also be notified of the date, time, place and title of the dissertation defense.

At the final examination, all members of the Doctoral Committee will be given identical copies of the dissertation. The student is expected to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of his/her field of study and to defend the conclusions of the dissertation. There are four (4) outcomes of resulting from the defense of the dissertation:

1. Students can successfully pass the defense with all examination members in approval.
2. Students can conditionally pass the defense, but the mentor's approval is withheld until necessary changes are made to the document as specified by the committee.
3. Students can be told that major revisions need to be incorporated into the dissertation and that the defense meeting is being broken into two (2) parts, with the committee reconvening to assess changes that the student makes.
4. The student fails. Failure would result because of gross incompetence, plagiarism, unethical behavior, or some other major unforeseen situation which in the eyes of the faculty nullify the process and the product of the dissertation. This is a highly unusual circumstance which should come about only in exceptional cases, if all other aspects of the dissertation process have been followed successfully.

### 10.3 The PhD Dissertation

The PhD dissertation represents an authoritative contribution to scientific knowledge and demonstrates that the student has the intellectual and technical ability to conduct an independent and scholarly research project. The PhD dissertation is an academic document submitted by the student to the Graduate Program.

The dissertation shall consist of original scientific research carried out by the student. Collaborations or participation by others and the conduct of the work should be clearly defined. The dissertation shall reach conclusions that are a logical result of the experiments performed. Sufficient experimental details shall be included to allow the work to be reproduced by an individual skilled in the methodology, from the information provided. The dissertation can include information already published by the student, but this fact must be acknowledged by appropriate references, and the text and data presentations must be reformatted to conform to the dissertation style. Any experimental results obtained by others and included in the original publication must either be expunged from the dissertation or attributed by name in footnotes or text citations to the original experimenter. The form of the dissertation shall follow a standard format (section 10.2.1).

All members of the Doctoral Committee are required to complete a **Dissertation Evaluation Form** and indicate whether a student passes, conditionally passes or fails. If a student is required to submit revisions of a dissertation based on a conditional pass, the revisions are due in the amount of time as indicated by a majority vote of the Doctoral Committee members.



The student will receive a copy of the evaluation form used by the Doctoral Committee. This evaluation form will include quantitative and commentary elements.

### **10.3.1 PhD Dissertation Format & Organization**

Detailed instructions for completing the dissertation, its defense, submission and text format are available from the Graduate School Office in the “Dissertation Format Guidelines.” In those instances, when published work is to be incorporated in the dissertation suitable adjustments in style shall be made to all sections of the document into a uniform presentation style, including bibliographic citations.

### **10.3.2 Scheduling the PhD Dissertation Defense**

It is the sole responsibility of the student to arrange the time/date of the dissertation defense. The student is expected to arrange the meeting sufficiently in advance to allow for arrangements to be made for the External Member. Once the defense is scheduled, the student will provide the Graduate School Office with the External Member details so that travel arrangements can be made.

### **10.3.3 Defense of the PhD Dissertation**

Students must submit their written thesis, in pdf form, to the Graduate School Office no later than 30 days after a successful defense.

### **10.3.5 Master’s Degree (BTS) Thesis**

During Year Two, MSBSTM students will work with a graduate advisor to identify individualized research project that would satisfy requirements for the master’s degree. Research projects may involve basic research in a wet-lab environment, computer-based “dry-lab” projects, or independent contribution within ongoing clinical projects.

Students must generate a master’s Thesis, based on their research subject area as well as orally defend this thesis to the student’s program committee. The committee is made up of the student’s mentor, the Program Director, 1 faculty member and 1 external member (from the institution) for specialty input as required.

### **10.3.6 External Member**

The Graduate School will provide lodging and transportation costs for External Members of Doctoral/Thesis Committees. All other costs, including food and entertainment, will be covered by the External Member, or the laboratory associated with the External Member.

## **10.4 Commencement**

Instructions for the annually scheduled graduation ceremony originate from the Office of Public Relations of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.