



Graduate School of
Biomedical Sciences



Faculty Policies
AY2010/2011

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Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this Handbook, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and/or the University reserves the right to change any information without notice or obligation, in keeping with the policies of the Board of Regents and in conformance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

GRADUATE STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Handbook and Forms

The GSBS Graduate Student Handbook, Department Administrators guide, this handbook and all GSBS forms are on the GSBS Internet Website: <http://www.umassmed.edu/gsbs/index.aspx>

GRADUATE COUNCIL

The Graduate Council is the representative body of the Graduate Faculty and shall advise the Dean in three major areas:

- Credentialing (of student applicants and Graduate Faculty)
- Graduate Curriculum
- School Policy
- These activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Academic Standards
 - Appointments to the Graduate Faculty
 - Student Affairs
 - Curriculum
 - Graduate Admissions

The Council shall also be responsible for:

- Periodically evaluating Graduate School Programs and faculty
- Coordinating activities of Standing Committees of the Council
- Recommending to the Dean the appointment of all Committee chairs and members

The Council shall consist of one voting representative from each of the Graduate School Programs and two voting representatives of the graduate student body. These appointments are subject to approval by the Graduate School Dean. The Dean and Associate Dean shall serve ex-officio.

Each GSBS Program shall nominate two faculty representatives from each Graduate School Program for Graduate Council membership. Faculty members on the Graduate Council shall serve three-year terms, with one-third being replaced annually. Program faculty representatives may attend Graduate Council meetings simultaneously or alternately as needed but each Program may cast only one vote on any single issue.

The Graduate Student Body Committee shall appoint two graduate student members to Graduate Council annually. Both student representatives may vote on any given issue.

The officers of the Graduate Council shall be a Chair and a Chair-Elect. The election of these positions shall be held at the first meeting of the Council for each new school year, based on a majority vote of the Council.

The Chair shall serve for one year (9/1 to 8/31). As elected head of the Graduate Council and as chief representative of the Graduate Faculty, the Chair shall preside at all Council meetings. The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees as necessary and shall be an ex-officio member of all Standing Committees. If for any reason the Chair should vacate office, the Chair-Elect shall become Chair to serve the balance of the year plus the elected term following.

The Chair-Elect shall serve as Vice Chair of the Graduate Council for one year (9/1 to 8/31) and shall become Chair upon the expiration of the Chair's term of office. The Vice Chair shall preside at Council meetings in the absence of the Chair. If for any reason the Chair-Elect should vacate office, a new Chair-Elect/Vice Chair shall be chosen by majority vote of the Council.

Regular meetings shall be held during the academic year, and all meetings shall be conducted in general accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chair, by the Dean, or by petition of 10 or more Graduate Faculty Members.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Graduate Council shall establish and maintain the Standing Committees shown below, which shall be responsible to the Council and advisory to the Dean. Additional Standing Committees may be established as deemed necessary by the Council. The Dean, upon recommendation of the Graduate Council, shall appoint members and Chairs of all Standing Committees. Committee Chairs shall be full voting members. Committee reports shall be made at each Council meeting.

Admissions Committees

These committees review applications to the Graduate School for the relevant division or program and recommend an outcome for each applicant – admissions, wait list, or denial. The committees also review policies and procedures related to applications or admissions process and may recommend modifications.

Committee membership consists of a chair and representatives from the relevant division or program selected by the Graduate Council and approved by the GSBS Dean. Each member serves for one year. The GSBS Dean, the relevant Associate Dean and the GSBS Director of Admissions are ex officio members of each Admissions Committee. The GSBS Dean and the GSBS Director of Admissions act on the committee's recommendations.

Academic Standards Committee

The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) evaluates and makes recommendations on all standards for student admission, academic performance and thesis research. The ASC consists of the GSBS Associate

Dean, each of the GSBS Graduate Program Directors and one member of the GSBC. The Associate Dean is the Chair of this committee. This committee meets at the request of the Dean or the Graduate Council.

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee consists of a Chair and three members selected by the Graduate Council. Each member serves for one year. The committee has responsibilities for approval/denial of requests for new GSBS courses and for the annual evaluation of Advanced Topics Courses.

BBS Core Curriculum Committee

The activities of the BBS Core Curriculum Committee are reported to the Graduate Council by the Dean or by the Associate Dean.

Dean's Advisory Committee

The Dean shall establish an Advisory Committee comprising the Graduate Council Chair or designee and two Full members of the GSBS faculty at large. The committee is responsible for advising the Dean on matters of the Graduate School including but not limited to Honor Code violation, probation, suspensions or terminations of GSBS Students.

This committee will review actions resulting in student dismissal from the GSBS and shall advise the Dean:

1. Whether the points raised by the student warrant reconsideration by the initial review body
2. Whether school policy and standards were followed during the case and
3. Whether the proposed disciplinary action is appropriate. If policy and standards are not followed, the Dean will reject the findings of the initial review committee and find for the student.

Honor Board

The Honor Board shall consist of five student members and three student alternates. Members are appointed to 1 or 2 -year terms by the Graduate Student Body Committee (GSBC). The Honor Board shall be advised by two non-voting faculty : 1) the Associate Dean or his/her designee who shall act as the faculty advisor and serve ex officio and, 2) the Coordinator of the GSBS course Responsible Conduct of Science.

Terms shall be renewable once if the student so wishes and it is approved by the GSBC. The members of the Honor Board shall appoint a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The chair is responsible for calling the meetings and ensuring that proper procedures are followed. The vice-chair serves in the absence of the chair and the secretary is responsible for keeping records of all hearings. All formal motions shall be passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board.

The accused may ask the chair of the Board to replace any member of the Board due to a possible bias or other conflict of interest against the accused. This must be done prior to any hearing and the request must be in writing to the chair with a reason for the removal. The chair's decision to remove any Board member shall be final. An alternate will take the place of the removed individual. Any member of the Board who feels they might have a conflict of interest in any case presented to the Board must remove themselves.

It is the duty of the Honor Board to hear cases presented to it and render their findings to the Dean, based on a clear and convincing standard of proof as to the validity of the charge. The accused has the right to hear all evidence against him/her and to present evidence to refute the charges. The Dean shall examine the evidence and the Honor Board's findings and render a decision. The Honor Board may, at their discretion, make a recommendation for an outcome to the Dean, but the final decision will be made by the Dean.

Convening of the Honor Board

When an Honor Code violation has been reported, the Honor Board is convened at the request of the Graduate School Dean.

Privacy and Honor Board Records

All members of the GSBS Honor Board must sign an agreement stating that they will not disclose any information from hearings or investigations to persons who are not members of the Honor Board or individuals that are part of the appeal process. This includes information from any hearing, the identity of the accused, the reason for the investigation, and the outcome of the hearing. Any individual suspected of disclosing information may be dismissed from the GSBS Honor Board as determined by the remaining members of the Boards or Committee.

The Honor Board file will be kept secured in the Graduate School Office. Records from hearings will be kept in permanently locked file cabinets and will be accessible to the Dean, Associate Dean, and the Honor Board chair only for official business. In the fall of each year, the Honor Board chair will review the files for the purpose of destroying outdated records and updating the files.

An outdated record is defined as one older than six years or the record of a hearing in which only a reprimand was given and the accused has since left the University, and in either case is not otherwise required to be maintained.

Information regarding findings and documents pertaining to disciplinary action may not need to be kept in the student's file following exoneration, but a sealed copy must be kept by the Dean in the event of further honor code violations or future litigation. The Dean and the Honor Board chair may only open records.

The Dean and the Honor Board chair may inform the Graduate Council and the GSBC of all final decisions of the Honor Board, but not ongoing proceedings. The identities of the individuals involved must be protected during these reports.

PROGRAMS OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

The Graduate Faculty may organize interdepartmental or interdisciplinary programs around common teaching and/or research interests. Such programs shall be designated as Programs of the Graduate School and shall comprise those faculty members who share common educational goals and research interests in specific areas. A faculty member may be affiliated with more than one program. The members of each program shall determine operational guidelines, specialized course requirements and standards of academic performance, subject to approval by the Graduate Council and the Dean.

Program activities shall be coordinated by a Graduate Program Director, appointed annually by the Dean upon recommendation of the Program Faculty. The Director shall be responsible for all activities of the program.

Faculty groups may form Graduate Programs by submitting a request through the Dean to the Graduate Council, which will seek advice from its standing committees before making a recommendation to the Dean. The final decision shall rest with the Dean.

Relationship of GSBS Standards to Standards of Individual Programs

The GSBS establishes baseline standards permitting student entry into graduate thesis research. These standards promote and require fundamental skills in the areas of:

- Literature research
- Scientific reasoning
- Data collection and analysis
- Scientific communication

The GSBS BBS Division is an umbrella program and studies in each GSBS program are highly interdisciplinary in nature. We understand that individual programs and disciplines may recognize additional needs or elaborate different mechanisms to evaluate the preparedness of their students for independent bench research. The standards outlined in this document represent core standards and procedures that must be met by all students for entry into graduate thesis research.

Programs may establish additional, program-specific requirements that enhance the student's training within that discipline. Programs may not circumvent the standards or the intent of the standards outlined herein.

GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Each Graduate Program is headed by a Graduate Program Director. This is the faculty member within a GSBS Program who is responsible for coordination of all activities of their Program for the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The Graduate Program Director is appointed annually by the Dean, upon recommendation of the Program faculty.

Responsibilities of the Program Director:

Responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Acting as the contact person for prospective students, faculty, and students for information about the GSBS Program
- Acting as or appointing an advisor for new students entering their Program
- Providing student advisement and counseling including selection of courses, laboratory rotations, Thesis Advisor and Committee members
- Approving both required and elective courses for students specializing in that Program
- Approving a GSBS faculty's affiliation with their Program. Notifying the Graduate School when a GSBS faculty becomes affiliated or is no longer affiliated with their Program.
- Administering and disseminating Program information, requirements, policies and changes in the Program to faculty, students and the Graduate School office
- Assisting the Graduate School with the scheduling of courses to be offered by their Program each academic year including soliciting courses to be offered by their Program each academic year
- Maintaining updated Program brochures
- Carrying out other duties as directed by the Graduate Council and the Dean

GSBS FACULTY

Graduate Faculty Status

Faculty membership in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences must be obtained through an application process, and must be approved by the Graduate Council and the Dean of the GSBS. Faculty members of the Medical School and the Graduate School of Nursing, who are qualified by their scholarly and teaching accomplishments to participate in the education and training of graduate students, are eligible to apply for faculty membership in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Requirements for Membership

To become a member of the Graduate Faculty, an individual must:

- Hold a PhD, MD or equivalent degree from an accredited institution
- Hold a faculty appointment within an academic department of the University of Massachusetts Medical School or Graduate School of Nursing at the level of Assistant Professor or above
- Have an affiliation with one of the sanctioned Graduate School Programs
- Show evidence of continued active research and/or scholarly activity during the past five years with publication(s) in refereed journals

Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty

In order to maintain Graduate Faculty membership, faculty members must be willing to:

- Serve as course coordinator or instructor in core and/or advanced-level graduate courses.
- Participate in the training of graduate students by:
 - Sponsoring laboratory rotations
 - Serving as a Thesis Advisor
 - Serving on Qualifying Exam Committees as a member or chair
 - Serving on Research Advisory Committees as a member or chair
 - Serving on Dissertation Committees as a member or chair
- Contribute to the administration of the Graduate School by:
 - Serving on the Graduate Council
 - Serving on Graduate Council standing or ad hoc committees
 - Serving as a Graduate Director or Student Advisor
 - Serving on the Graduate Admissions Committee
 - Meeting with and/or interview applicants

Special Faculty Membership

In exceptional cases, individuals who are not eligible to be members but who can contribute to Programs of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences may be appointed as Special Members by the Dean upon recommendation of the Graduate Program Director and subject to the approval of the Graduate Council. Such appointments will require the approval of the faculty's departmental chair.

Appointments as Special Members of the Graduate Faculty shall be for three-year terms, renewable upon recommendation of the Graduate Council and approval of the Dean.

The procedure for application for Special Faculty Status is the same as that outlined above except that sponsorship by a Departmental or Program Chair is required.

Obtaining GSBS Program Affiliation

Membership in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences requires affiliation with at least one GSBS Graduate Program. It is part of the process for obtaining Graduate Faculty membership. A faculty may request affiliation with other programs post-approval by contacting the appropriate Graduate Program Director. After affiliation approval, the Graduate Program Director will notify the Graduate School of the affiliation via an email to the Graduate Council secretary.

Obtaining Graduate Faculty Membership

Prior to completion of the Graduate Faculty Membership Application, the faculty needs to become affiliated with at least one Graduate School Program. Contact the Graduate Program Director of the GSBS Program(s) where you would like affiliation. A list of these Programs and Graduate Program Directors may be obtained from the Graduate School office or on the GSBS Internet Website. <http://www.umassmed.edu/gsbs/index.aspx>

Complete a Graduate Faculty Membership Application, obtain all necessary signatures, and submit to the Graduate School office. This form and instructions can be found on the GSBS Internet Website. <http://www.umassmed.edu/gsbs/index.aspx>

Obtaining Graduate Faculty Membership without GSBS Program Affiliation

In unique circumstances, with Graduate Council and the Dean's approval, Special Faculty Membership may be obtained without affiliation with a GSBS Program.

Evaluation and Approval for Graduate Faculty Status

As defined in the Graduate School Governance Document, GSBS faculty shall be appointed by the Graduate School Dean after evaluation and approval of the application by the Graduate Council,

GSBS Program Affiliation Inactivation

The Graduate Program Director will notify the Graduate School via an email to the Graduate Council secretary when a faculty ceases to be affiliated with their program. If a faculty member is no longer affiliated with any GSBS Programs, their GSBS faculty membership will be inactivated unless a request is made to the dean for the faculty to retain special membership. The Graduate School will notify in writing the faculty, the relevant affiliated Program(s) Directors and Faculty Affairs

Faculty Status on Resigning or Retiring from the University

- A faculty member who resigns or retires from the University will be inactivated as a GSBS Faculty member effective the date of the resignation or retirement on the faculty's record in UMMS Faculty Affairs office, unless a request is made to the Dean for the faculty to retain special membership status.
- If the faculty is a Thesis Advisor for any GSBS students, their GSBS faculty membership will be retained until the student graduates or selects another Thesis Advisor. They will be inactivated as of the student's date of graduation or the effective date of the new Thesis Advisor selection.

- If the faculty is serving on a student's active QEC, TRAC or DEC, the student will either select a replacement committee member or petition the Dean to allow the faculty to remain on the committee. If the faculty will remain on the committee, their GSBS faculty membership will be retained until the committee is no longer active. They will be inactivated as of the date that the subsequent committee is formed or, in the case of the DEC, the student's has successfully defended. The faculty will be unable to serve on any the newly formed committee.
- The Graduate School will notify in writing the faculty, the relevant affiliated Program(s) Directors and Faculty Affairs when the faculty is inactivated.

Periodic Review of Graduate Faculty Status

In order to maintain Graduate Faculty Status, individuals must continue to fulfill the criteria stated in the Graduate School Standards. Faculty will be reviewed every five years for evidence of recent successful research or scholarly activity and service to the Graduate School. Individuals who fail to fulfill the criteria will be inactivated as Graduate School Faculty.

GSBS Faculty Membership and Faculty Administration

The Graduate School will notify Faculty Administration when a faculty becomes a member of the Graduate School and when a faculty changes their status as a GSBS faculty member. Faculty Administration will also be notified of the Faculty's GSBS Program affiliations.

GSBS COURSES

Advanced Topics Courses

Advanced topics introduce graduate students to the leading edge content, methodologies and hypotheses of a field of study through lectures, paper presentations, written and oral critiques of scientific articles, grant writing assignments and the use of research methodologies. These topics build on the foundations established by Core Curricula and typically meet for two or more hours each week for one full semester.

These courses are designed to lead the student beyond the foundational material of core curricula into the more specialized material characterizing one or more major foci of the program. Courses may be introductory in nature or may present the student with leading edge developments in the field. Courses may include faculty and student presentations.

First year BBS students are required to take an advanced topic in the spring semester. All GSBS Programs must offer one or more Advanced Topics courses in the spring

Elective Courses

Individual programs often require students to attend seminars which offer students the opportunity to see leading edge research presented by senior research leaders in the field. Seminars typically meet for 1 hour each week and run through fall or spring semesters. Programs may require students to take a Journal Club course. These classes typically discuss research articles germane to a specific field of research.

- Journal Clubs (Research Discussions): Courses take a journal club format in which students read and present a series of selected research articles central to a specific field.
- Seminars: Students attend and contribute to Program-specific research seminars and/or are required to give a seminar on a specific research topic.
- Tutorials: Faculty work individually with a student on specific research topic.

Student Evaluation of Courses

All GSBS Core Curriculum and Advanced Topics courses are subject to student evaluation during, or upon completion of the course. These on-line evaluations, initiated and coordinated by the GSBS, play an essential role in our continuing efforts to enhance the curriculum for subsequent student classes.

In order that we obtain a representative evaluation of each course, it is vital that all students contribute to course evaluations. Student evaluation of the courses in which they are registered is, therefore, mandatory. A student's final grade for a course will not be recorded by the Registrar until which time the student has submitted their on-line, anonymous evaluation of the course. If a student fails to submit their evaluation within 2 weeks of the request for evaluations, their grade will be recorded as Incomplete.

Grading Policy

The Course Coordinator will determine the appropriate grading for a course based on the content, structure and objectives of the course. A justification for the grade will be included in the New Course Proposal which is reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and approved by Graduate Council. All changes to grading for existing courses require review by the Curriculum Committee and approval by Graduate Council.

Letter Grade	GPA Calculation	Explanation
A	4.0	Outstanding performance
A-	3.7	Strong performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3.0	Satisfactory performance

B-	2.7	Less than satisfactory performance
C	2.0	Unsatisfactory performance (Unsatisfactory Grade)
F	0	Failure
Pass (P)	N/A	Satisfactory performance
Marginal Pass (MP)	N/A	Unsatisfactory performance (Unsatisfactory Grade)
Fail (F)	N/A	Failure
I	N/A	See information below regarding incomplete grades
S	N/A	Grade assigned to courses that a student is enrolled in during their final GSBS semester.
W	N/A	See information below regarding Withdrawals

Process: New Course Approval or Course Revision

- All new courses or revisions to existing courses must meet GSBS Curriculum Standards and GSBS Course Grades Standards and be approved by the GSBS Graduate Council.
- The Course Coordinator completes the new course proposal form, obtains approval from the Graduate Program Director(s) of the Program(s) offering the course and submits the form to the Graduate School office.
- The Graduate School office will refer the new course proposal to GSBS Curriculum Committee for review and presentation to the Graduate Council at its next meeting.
- The Chair of the Curriculum Committee will contact the Course Coordinator if any additional information is required.
- After Graduate Council has voted on the new course, the Graduate School office will notify the Course Coordinator of the outcome and will provide the new course information to the Registrar.