MD/PhD Program

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
and
The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

2014

Revised July 2014
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UT MD/PHD PROGRAM AT HOUSTON
Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Information for New MD/PhD Students
The University of Texas MD/PhD Program at Houston is a joint Program through The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSC-H) and M. D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC). Final acceptance into the Program is contingent upon students successfully completing all Medical School admissions requirements and other courses of study/degrees outlined in a student’s application. Once enrolled, students are expected to maintain satisfactory performance in both the Medical School and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) components of the Program and to fulfill all requirements for both degrees.

Admission Offer and Financial Support
Admission to the MD/PhD Program carries significant financial support that is not available to students pursuing only a MD degree and the decision to enter the Program should be given careful consideration. Financial support includes a stipend/salary and school tuition/fees. Receipt of the stipend/salary requires no service other than degree-related academic activities. Students enrolled in Medical School receive a stipend from the MD/PhD Program. Students enrolled as full-time GSBS students for their dissertation research receive a salary from their research advisor, and are employees (Graduate Research Assistants) at the institution of their advisor. These two sources of support are never paid concurrently (overlap), and additional information about them is provided below. Financial support is discontinued if students must repeat coursework or take a leave of absence.

- Medical student support/fellowships – When enrolled in Medical School, MD/PhD students receive annual $29,000 stipends that are paid bi-monthly through direct deposit. The Direct Deposit Form is available on the GSBS website and should be turned in to Elisabet Lau at the GSBS Offices (6767 Bertner, BSRB S3.8420) Elisabet.Lau@uth.tmc.edu or 713-500-8801. Stipends may be considered taxable income by the Federal government. UTHSC-H does not withhold taxes, and information about reporting fellowship income is available through the IRS website http://www.irs.gov and in IRS Publication 970 Tax Benefits for Education.

- Students may opt to enroll in the student health insurance plan as provided by the medical school. This plan will be paid for by the MD/PhD Program and enrollment must be timely. If you do not elect this insurance, you must provide proof of coverage and submit a waiver prior to class registration to avoid automatic fees and/or registration hold. http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/info/Student_InsForm.html

- Graduate student support – Once enrolled full-time in GSBS for dissertation research, (not during tutorials) students become a Graduate Research Assistant of whichever institution their research mentor works for--either UTHSC-H or MDACC. At that time, the research advisor is responsible for paying the salary and school tuition/fees for the student and this remains in effect until re-entrance into medical school. GRA salary levels are established through the GSBS (annual rate is $29,000 as of 2012). Students are also eligible for health insurance as student employees. Be sure to carry coverage until the
first day of coverage begins with your employee policy. There are very specific requirements to successful transition described on page 4.

First Summer Session Prior to Medical School

New MD/PhD students receive a packet of registration materials from the Medical School Admissions office (https://med.uth.edu/admissions/). **You must submit up-to-date immunization records and complete any other pre-registration activities including a background check on time or a hold(s) will be placed on your registration. Please see appendix A for contact information to clear holds.**

New students register online using the myUTH system (https://my.uth.tmc.edu/psp/myuth/MYUTH/ENTP/h/?tab=UT_EP_NVT_SIGNON). It is important to register on time to avoid any late fees. Late fees are not paid by the Program and become the student’s responsibility. New students should also provide the MD/PhD Program Manager their start date and local contact information as early as possible so the information can be entered in the payroll system. Approximately 24 hrs after registering online, students can call the IT Help Desk (713 500-4848) to have their UTHSC-H email account set-up. **Students also need to obtain an ID badge through the UTHSC-H Bursar’s Office (713 500-3088),** (https://inside.uthouston.edu/finance/bursars/id-badges.htm).

New MD/PhD students begin Graduate School studies the summer before the first year of Medical School. There are two sessions in the summer semester that are each six weeks in length. The first one typically begins in late May. Students enroll in one research tutorial during each six week summer session. These can be one 12-week tutorial with one faculty, or two 6-week tutorials with two different faculty. The GSBS website maintains a faculty database to help identify faculty members doing research in areas of interest to students (http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/faculty/faculty-directory/). MD/PhD Program Directors and advisors can also give students valuable guidance about suitable labs for tutorials prior to your first summer session. Please feel free to contact them and/or our current students for advice. If you register for a full summer, you must register for Topics in Molecular Medicine and either one full or two half summer research tutorials, 6 credits minimum. Registration for the full summer session opens in late April. If you will attend the second summer session ONLY, you will register for a 6-week research tutorial and the second half of summer Topics in Molecular Medicine class, 3 credits minimum. Registration for the second summer session opens early in June each year.

New students must enroll in the Topics in Molecular Medicine course GS21 1611 and Tutorial Rotation (course varies by PI name) under #GS00 0514. Topics in Molecular Medicine begins the first Wednesday of the summer semester (actual date varies), continues through the majority of summer, and is required every semester for MD/PhD students during the first two years of Medical School and throughout dissertation work. **Attendance is required and no unexcused absences are permitted.** You are expected to attend every session – permission to be excused from Topics class will not be approved for studying, lab experiments that run over, classes that run longer than scheduled, or due to public transportation schedules. Your MD/PhD Program Advisor must be copied on every request to be excused from class and the Executive Committee
will assign remedial course work to make up any incomplete grades. A failing grade will result in programmatic stipend support being withdrawn in your 4th year of Medical School.

Fulltime Summer students also have the option of taking other required courses to meet the GSBS requirements

Critical Thinking in Science (summer only) course #GS21 1061
Ethics course #GS21 0051
Research in Biomedical Sciences course #GS00 0520

These courses are required for all MD/PhD students and it is preferable to have them completed prior to MS3. A new Biomedical Statistics course is in development and will be required as well.

Note: The GSBS requires that students complete three lab tutorials with three different faculty members. MD/PhD students are allowed to work in a single lab in the summer so they have sufficient time to get experience in an individual lab, but this experience will count as two rotations. Students must however work in at least two different labs in the summer sessions preceding and following the first of Medical School. MD/PhD students can request an additional rotation following the second or third year of Medical School if they have not yet identified a lab/advisor for their dissertation research.

**New MD/PhD Student Checklist**

The following is intended to be a helpful checklist for new MD/PhD students and supplement the information available from the Medical School and Graduate School.

- Make sure the MD/PhD Program Manager has current contact information - This information (i.e. home address, home phone, cell phone, lab information) is important for keeping students informed about Programmatic issues and for payroll purposes.

- Register for Topics in Molecular Medicine Course - Register for the Topics in Molecular Medicine course every semester (summers too) except your third and fourth year of Medical School when clerkship schedules typically conflict with the GSBS course.

- Meet with your MD/PhD Program Advisor at least once a year in March. Students are responsible for completing an IDP and Milestones Agreement Form each year (forms will be provided before advising sessions are due) prior to scheduling this meeting and must obtain their advisor’s signature on each when the advising session is completed. Please schedule the meeting well in advance as faculty members’ schedules are busy. Students are responsible for getting the signed forms to the MD/PhD Program Manager’s office by April 1st each year. Advisors may send a supplemental report on the student’s progress as well.

- Always register on time - There is a monetary penalty for registering late, and the MD/PhD Program does not cover this cost. Registration schedules/deadlines are available online ([https://my.uth.tmc.edu/psp/myuth/MYUTH/ENTP/h/?tab=UT_EP_NVT_SIGNON](https://my.uth.tmc.edu/psp/myuth/MYUTH/ENTP/h/?tab=UT_EP_NVT_SIGNON)).
• Refer to this guide, ask questions, and stay informed about individual requirements for the Medical School and Graduate School. Each maintains websites that list school resources and help students keep track of and comply with program requirements.

**MD/PhD Student Advisors**

All MD/PhD students are assigned Program advisors from either UTHSC-H or MDACC to provide them specific guidance throughout their dual-degree training. Students meet with their advisors at least once a year in March to discuss their academic progress, complete an IDP and Milestones Agreement Form, and other program-related issues. Based on this meeting, advisors provide the MD/PhD Committee a summary of the students' progress, and the MD/PhD Program in turn provides the Medical School Associate Dean for Student Affairs an annual report on the status of MD/PhD students.

**Entering the MD/PhD Program after Matriculation into Medical School or the GSBS**

In some cases, students may join the MD/PhD Program after matriculation into the Medical School or GSBS (GSBS students may apply after completing one year of Graduate school and Medical students may apply after completing one or two years of Medical School). These students are not required to “make up” the Topics in Molecular Medicine sessions not attended during their first/second years as Medical/GSBS students and research tutorials previously completed by GSBS students apply toward their MD/PhD graduation requirements.

**International MD/PhD Students**

All new International students in the MD/PhD Program must check in with the UTHSC-H International Office upon arrival at School (713 500-4472, http://www.uth.tmc.edu/intlaffairs).

**Transition from Medical School to Graduate School**

There are very specific administrative requirements for transitioning from medical student to graduate student (student employee) and procrastination could delay your paycheck, start date, access to buildings, and more. Please do not procrastinate and alert me whenever you encounter a roadblock.

**Academic Requirements to Transition from Medical to Graduate School**

The MD/PhD Program is structured to ensure students have a strong foundation of clinical knowledge to enrich/inform their dissertation research. It is also designed to help students successfully complete the MD/PhD Program in a reasonable period of time. Therefore, before MD/PhD students transition from being full-time Medical students to full-time GSBS students, they must:

- Complete the third year of Medical School
- Be in good academic standing at the Medical School
- Pass USMLE Step 1 (effective May 1, 2007) and
- Take USMLE Step 2

Exceptions to the above requirements must be approved in writing by the Director of the MD/PhD Program. Students who have permission from the Director to begin their dissertation research prior to completing the third year of Medical School are exempt from the requirement to take USMLE Step 2 before the transitioning to the GSBS.
Administrative Changes to Transition from Medical to Graduate School

MD/PhD students should also be aware of administrative processes/changes associated with transitioning from full-time Medical to full-time Graduate student status, and these issues are discussed below.

- **MD/PhD student employee status at their research advisor’s institution** – MD/PhD students who are full-time GSBS students are student employees (Graduate Research Assistants/GRA) at the institution where they conduct research. Research advisors pay the GRA salary, school tuition/fees, and employee health insurance. **MD/PhD stipends for Medical students end August 31st so the change in status to GRA should be effective September 1st.** The GSBS Financial Affairs Office (Elisabet Lau @ 713-500-8801) assists students in changing payroll information/student status so students should provide the Office information about their research advisor to avoid a break in pay. Students must also be sure research advisors submit Sponsorship Authorization Forms to authorize payment of student tuition/fees. **Students who will enter a lab at MDACC must complete additional processes and should meet with Carol Helton.**

  (http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/policies/policies/tuition-sponsorship.htm)  
  (https://secureweb.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/cardiff/teleform/eforms10/gsbs_sponsor_form.pdf)

- **Maintaining student status in the summer transition** – Receipt of the MD/PhD Program stipend requires maintaining status as a full-time student. MD/PhD students should register for GSBS classes for the second summer session since the Medical School Spring semester ends in June and the transition to student employee status begins in September. Students can register for a Tutorial Rotation if they have not completed the three required GSBS tutorials or for Research in Biomedical Sciences, but MUST register for Topics in Molecular Medicine (second summer session).

- **Environmental Health and Safety Training** – Students must complete environmental health and safety training before working in a lab with hazardous chemicals, infectious agents, and/or radiation, and the level of training required is determined by the type of research being done. Students may take a Laboratory Safety Course for GSBS Students that fulfills training requirements at both UTHSC-H and MDACC, or they can take courses offered by individual institutions. The eight-hour GSBS course is held at the GSBS from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. the first two Tuesdays and Thursdays every Fall semester (http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/orientation/labsafetycourse/). Students who do not take the GSBS training should contact individual institutions about institution specific training (Bruce Brown for UTHSC-H at 713 500-8103 or John Metyko for MDACC at 713 563-1724).

- **New employee orientation/sign-up** – Students must complete pre-employment paperwork, sign up for orientation (held Mondays), and determine the waiting period for employee health insurance **before** they begin work on September 1st. Students working at UTHSC-H contact Human Resources (713-500-3185 or HR_Assistant@uth.tmc.edu). **IMPORTANT--students working at MDACC should contact Carol Helton at least 8 weeks**
prior to joining an MDACC lab (CHelton@mdanderson.org). Students must maintain their student/other health insurance during the waiting period until employee health insurance is effective so they do not have a break in coverage.

- **Change in health insurance** – GRAs receive employee health insurance so they do not need to continue student health insurance once they become student employees. However, to waive student health insurance fees, GRAs must submit a waiver online to show proof of current insurance coverage once each academic year (before the twelfth day of Fall/Spring classes @ http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/info/Student_InsForm.html). Students must maintain either student health insurance or their own policy until the initial waiting period for employee insurance is completed. Call Auxiliary Enterprises if you need to purchase temporary coverage (713 500-8400).

**Graduate School Training for MD/PhD Students**

MD/PhD students earn their PhD through the GSBS and conduct their research with GSBS faculty members from UTHSC-H or MDACC. General milestones for earning the PhD are outlined in Table 1, and discussed in more detail online in GSBS Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines for Students (http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/policies/index.htm). General steps include: completing required GSBS coursework, affiliating with a PhD Program within 6 months of entering a lab, and additional courses required by disciplinary Programs or a student’s Advisory Committee; passing oral candidacy exams; and writing/defending a dissertation on the student's original research. MD/PhD students fulfill the written candidacy exam requirement by passing USMLE Step 1. (Students affiliated with a program requiring an off-topic exam must get approval from the program to take an on-topic exam.)

There are also issues unique to MD/PhD students enrolled as full-time GSBS students, and some of these issues are highlighted below.

- **Topics in Molecular Medicine** – MD/PhD students enrolled as full-time GSBS students must register for Topics in Molecular Medicine every semester. **Attendance is required and no unexcused absences are permitted.** You are expected to attend every session – permission to be excused from Topics class will not be approved for studying, routine lab experiments that run over, classes that run longer than scheduled, or due to public transportation schedules. Your MD/PhD Program Advisor must be copied on every request to be excused from class and the Executive Committee will assign remedial course work to make up any incomplete grades. A failing grade will result in programmatic stipend support being withdrawn in your 4th year of Medical School.

- **Publications** - MD/PhD students are required to have a first author manuscript on their dissertation research **submitted** prior to defending and **published** in a peer-reviewed journal (or in press) prior to graduation.

- **Maintaining/Extending clinical skills** - Students are required to maintain/extend their clinical knowledge/skills by “shadowing” a clinical faculty member in the clinic/hospital on a limited schedule (e.g. half day a week or twice a month) for one year while enrolled as full-time GSBS students. For conducting this work, the Medical School offers one month of credit for clinical elective time in your MS4 year. You must complete a Special Project Form in advance (see Steve Jones in Student Affairs) and these clinical activities
during the PhD training must be approved by the student’s PhD advisor, MD/PhD Program Director, and Medical School Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The MD/PhD leadership is available to help students identify clinical mentors with clinical/research interests related to students’ goals. [https://gsbs.uth.edu/files/mdphd/special_project_form_2013_fields.pdf]

- **Fourth Year Medical School elective credit for PhD research** - MD/PhD students receive two months of fourth-year elective credit for their GSBS research. This credit is contingent upon (1) completing the GSBS requirements for the PhD prior to being awarded a MD degree, and (2) completing the lab portion of the PhD within four years. Again, students must submit a Special Project Form with the appropriate approvals to the Medical School Office of Student Affairs and get advance written approval for the clinic rotation [https://gsbs.uth.edu/files/mdphd/special_project_form_2013_fields.pdf]

### TABLE 1. TIMELINE FOR EARNING A PHD THROUGH THE MD/PHD PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Complete three GSBS research tutorials</td>
<td>Complete in summer preceding and following MS year 1</td>
<td>Consult MD/PhD Directors, Advisor, students, and GSBS tutorial database about labs (<a href="http://www.uth.tmc.edu/netcenter/search/gsbs_tutorial_search.html">http://www.uth.tmc.edu/netcenter/search/gsbs_tutorial_search.html</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete GSBS Ethics course</td>
<td>Complete first fall semester as full-time GSBS student</td>
<td>Pass 1 hr course Ethical Dimensions of the Biomedical Sciences (GS21 0051) <a href="http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/course-listing/">http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/course-listing/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Complete Quantitative course</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Course is in development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Complete Critical Thinking course</td>
<td>Complete by end of 2nd MS year</td>
<td>Pass Critical Thinking in Science GS21 1061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Select PhD Mentor/Advisor</td>
<td>Select after 2 years in MD/PhD Program</td>
<td>Consult GSBS guidelines on choosing advisors and mentors <a href="http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/policies/policies/faculty-advisors.htm">http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/policies/policies/faculty-advisors.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6. Select GSBS Advisory Committee | Select within 3 months of transition from MD to PhD coursework | Follow GSBS guidelines and submit associated Form to Office of Academic Affairs (http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/current_forms.htm)  
Include at least one member of MD/PhD Committee (http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/faculty/mpd.html)  
Request approval of GSBS Academic Standards Committee |
| 7. Meet with Advisory Committee | Meet at least every 6 months | **First meeting** - provide CV, coursework to date, summary of research goals, methods, preliminary data  
**Subsequent meetings** - provide summary of research progress/plans |
<p>| 8. Petition for PhD Candidacy | Petition within 2 years as full-time GSBS student | Submit Form Petition for PhD Candidacy Examination to Office of Academic Affairs (must complete required coursework prior to petitioning) (<a href="http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/current_forms.htm">http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/current_forms.htm</a>) |
| 9. Pass written PhD candidacy exam | Take after MS year 2 | Take/pass USMLE Step 1 in lieu of written candidacy exam (students in disciplinary PhD Programs may have to pass a discipline specific written exam) |
| 10. Pass oral PhD candidacy exam | Pass within 3 months of Petition approval | Pass oral candidacy exam. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Select Supervisory Committee</th>
<th>Select within 3 months of passing candidacy exam</th>
<th>Membership must include at least one member of the MD/PhD Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Meet with Supervisory Committee</td>
<td>Meet at least every 6 months</td>
<td>Meet with Committee at least every 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Submit 1st author publication</td>
<td>Before defense</td>
<td>1st author publication on research project must be submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Petition for dissertation defense</td>
<td>Petition within 3 years of advancing to PhD candidacy</td>
<td>Submit GSBS Form Petition for the Defense of the MS Thesis or PhD Dissertation with one page abstract to Office of Academic Affairs at least two weeks prior to exam (<a href="http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/current_forms.htm">http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/current_forms.htm</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Defend PhD dissertation</td>
<td>Defend within 3 months of approval of petition</td>
<td>Present research seminar followed by meeting with Advisory Committee (<a href="http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/gradguide/gradstep.html#defend">http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/gradguide/gradstep.html#defend</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Submit PhD dissertation</td>
<td>Submit After defense</td>
<td>Submit one original, unbound copy to Office of Academic Affairs for approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Published 1st author</td>
<td>Before PhD graduation</td>
<td>1st author publication must be published in peer-reviewed journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Submit Exit Forms</td>
<td>Submit After defense</td>
<td>Complete/submit exits forms (forms available from GSBS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are expected to complete the PhD component of the MD/PhD Program within four years of becoming a full-time GSBS student, and advisors should inform the MD/PhD Program Director when students complete their research and begin writing their dissertation. Students who do not expect to finish in four years must submit a letter to the GSBS Academic Standards Committee explaining the delay. The Committee/Dean determine if students are granted an additional year to complete the PhD. If extenuating circumstances prohibit completion in five years, the student and advisor may petition the GSBS Academic Standards Committee for a further extension.

**Transition from Graduate School to Medical School**

MD/PhD students are expected to successfully complete the GSBS requirements for the PhD before returning to Medical School to complete their training. However, students who have completed the majority of their laboratory experiments and are beginning to write their dissertation may re-matriculate to Medical School with the approval of their PhD research Advisor and the MD/PhD Program Director. Students must document their approval in writing by requesting their signature on the Approval to Return to Medical School Form. The MD/PhD Program Director or Co-Director may want to meet with the student’s Supervisory Committee meeting to discuss the student’s readiness to re-enter Medical School. The Director considers the student’s progress and the likelihood he/she will be able to submit and defend the dissertation while completing Medical School. Students must submit the completed Forms to the Medical School Office of Student Affairs (to the attention of Steve Jones), and also provide the GSBS Office of Academic Affairs and the MD/PhD Program Manager copies of completed Forms. Students should submit the Forms as early as possible in the Spring because 3rd/4th year Medical School rotations are scheduled from March – May, and students submitting their Forms close to the start date of the 3rd/4th year are less likely to get the rotations/electives they request.
MD/PhD students receive two months of 4th year elective credit for their GSBS research so this time may be used to write/defend the dissertation and prepare/submit an article for publication in a peer reviewed journal. However, the credit is contingent upon completing the GSBS requirements for the PhD prior to being awarded a MD degree. Therefore, prior to re-enrolling, students must sign/submit the Form Requirements for Receiving Medical School Elective Credit for PhD Research to the Medical School Office of Student Affairs and the MD/PhD Program Manager. The Form acknowledges the student has been informed that receipt of two months of fourth-year elective credit for PhD research is contingent upon successfully completing all GSBS degree requirements for the PhD prior to being awarded the MD degree. Students who do not meet this requirement must complete two months of clinical electives to receive their MD degree. The student may also be responsible for any costs incurred by taking additional coursework.

Finally, students should inform the Program Manager of the date they plan to return to Medical School because the Medical School stipend is funded by the MD/PhD Program instead of the PhD Advisor. The Graduate School completes the paperwork to ensure there is no break in funding so students must confirm the return date with Elisabet Lau (Elisabet.Lau@uth.tmc.edu). Students who finish their PhD prior to the start of Medical School must work with their Advisor to ensure he/she will continue to provide them funding until the MD/PhD Program again begins to pay the Medical School stipend. Most students continue in their Advisor's lab as a Post Doctoral Fellow if they complete the PhD prior to the start date of Medical School. MD/PhD students in Medical School also must have either Student Health Insurance or provide Auxiliary Enterprises proof of insurance to avoid being billed for health insurance.

**Withdrawal from the MD/PhD Program**

If, at any time following admission to the MD/PhD Program, a student decides to pursue either the MD or PhD degree alone, he/she must withdraw from the MD/PhD Program, and the financial support from the Program will be discontinued. Students should notify the MD/PhD Program Director in writing of their plans to withdraw. Students interested in continuing to pursue either the MD or PhD degree alone must request/receive permission from the appropriate school to remain enrolled. Approval to remain enrolled in a single program may be withheld for academic reasons and/or for reasons unrelated to academic performance (e.g. budget considerations, class size).

**Dismissal from the MD/PhD Program**

MD/PhD students whose academic performance in either the Medical School or GSBS is unsatisfactory may be dismissed from the MD/PhD Program. Students who are dismissed must petition the Medical School or GSBS to remain in an individual degree program at either school. Conditions or circumstances that may be sufficient cause for dismissal of a student from the MD/PhD Program include:

- Having poor academic performance in the first two years of Medical School (2 or more grades of F, or 3 or more MP grades and 1 grade of F in the first two years is considered poor academic performance); or
- Being placed on academic probation and failing to resolve academic deficiencies in the manner and in the time prescribed by the MD/PhD Director; or
• Failing USMLE Step 1 two times; or
• Being dismissed from the GSBS (http://gsbs.uth.tmc.edu/policies/dismissal.html), or
• Being dismissed from the Medical School (http://med.uth.tmc.edu/students-current/policies.htm).

Support for MD/PhD Students Attending Conferences to Present Research

The GSBS provides financial support to help defray the costs of attending scientific meetings. These awards are applied for and approved by the GSBS Student Affairs Office.

• M.S. & pre-candidacy Ph.D. students -- $350
• Post-candidacy Ph.D. students -- $500

The Student Affairs Office considers the following criteria when reviewing a request for travel funds:

1. The student has completed the Application for Student Travel Award and has submitted the Application and additional required materials at least four weeks before requested travel date.
2. For applications to attend a meeting, the student must be first-author of a presentation (talk or poster) at a regional, national or international meeting.* The research that the student present must be research performed as a UT-GSBS at Houston student. A student who has performed research prior to joining the schools as a student may not use that research as the basis for the travel.
3. For applications to attend a workshop or course, the student must present the invitation to attend plus documentation that the invitation to attend was the result of some competitive review of the student's application.
4. The student must be in good academic standing.
5. The student must not have received a travel award during the current academic year.

*Students are encouraged to submit the Travel Award Application as soon as possible, even if acceptance of abstract is pending. Air fare and/or registration fees can be prepaid upon acceptance of abstract. Please note that in order to receive the money awarded, the student must give accurate departure/return dates and times to GSBS before leaving on the trip, and the student must bring original receipts and a copy of the cover of the event’s brochure to GSBS after the trip.

In some cases, a student’s dissertation advisor may have funding and be willing to support a student's participation in an additional meeting to present research from the advisor’s lab.

MD/PhD Student Committee Service

MD/PhD students may have an opportunity to serve as student representatives on the UT-Houston Medical School Curriculum Committee, the MD/PhD Program Admissions Committee, Social Committee and/or the Communications Committee. Two to four MD/PhD student representatives serve on each of these Committees for a one year term, and students in the Program elect new representatives each year.

MD/PhD Alumni
The MD/PhD Program’s success is measured by the accomplishments of its graduates. Therefore, it is important for alumni to update the Program periodically about their professional accomplishments, and to be sure the Program has current contact information. Data on alumni accomplishments enhance the Program’s ability to recruit new students and secure funding to support the Program and future students.
APPENDIX A.
USEFUL LINKS

Clearing holds

Immunizations-  
https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/student-information/required-immunizations.htm

Residency Status-  
https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/student-information/policy-for-texas-resident-tuition.htm

Student Health Insurance –  
https://www.uth.edu/registrar/current-students/student-information/health-insurance.htm

Identity Management Hold (IDM)-  
Alfred.M.Valladolid@uth.tmc.edu

ID Badge -  
https://inside.uthouston.edu/finance/bursars/id-badges.htm

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
- Academic Affairs – (713) 500-9871, Bunny Perez (Lourdes.V.Perez@uth.tmc.edu)
- Financial Affairs – (713) 500-8801, Elisabet Lau (Elisabet.Lau@uth.tmc.edu)
- MDACC Special Requirements – (713) 745-5257, Carol Helton (Chelton@mdanderson.org)
- GSBS Forms -  
http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/current-students/academics/forms/index.htm

UTHSC-H Administration
- Registrar – (713) 500-3361, registrar@uth.tmc.edu 
or Brenda Powers (Brenda.B.Powers@uth.tmc.edu)
- Bursar – (713) 500-3088, bursar@uth.tmc.edu 
or Sue Langgard (Sue.Langgard@uth.tmc.edu)
- Student Health Insurance Waiver/Proof of Insurance – (713) 500-8400 or 
http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/info/Student_InsForm.html
- Human Resources New Employee Orientation/Sign-Up – (713) 500-3165
- Environmental Health and Safety Training – (713) 500-5858, Stephen David (stephen.david@ut.tmc.edu)
- International Office – (713) 500-3176(  
http://www.uth.tmc.edu/intlaffairs/)

MDACC Administration
- Environmental Health and Safety Training – (713) 563-3785, Larcia Clark
- Training Alumni and Affairs Office - (713) 745-5257, Carol Helton (Chelton@mdanderson.org) 
Or (713) 563-8916, Marius Reyes

UTHSC-H Medical School
- Student Affairs - (713) 500-5170, Pat Caver (Patricia.E.Caver@uth.tmc.edu)
- Admissions – (713) 500-5118, Cynthia R. Garcia (Cynthia.R.Garcia@uth.tmc.edu)
- Current Student Information -  
http://med.uth.tmc.edu/current_students.htm
Guidelines for Dissertation Advisors for MD/PhD Students

MD/PhD students may conduct their research with GSBS faculty members from UTHSC-H or MDACC, and students funded through the Cullen Fellowship also have the option of working with faculty at Baylor College of Medicine. General requirements for earning a PhD through the MD/PhD Program are summarized below.

- **Coursework** – MD/PhD students must complete courses required for all GSBS students (three research tutorials, one quantitative course, ethics course) and any additional courses required by disciplinary programs or a student’s Advisory Committee. They must also take *Topics in Molecular Medicine* every semester when enrolled as a full-time GSBS student. This course introduces students to contemporary topics in biomedical and translational research, and it meets every Wednesday from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

- **Candidacy exams** - MD/PhD students must pass written and oral candidacy exams. MD/PhD students not affiliated with a disciplinary PhD Program fulfill the written candidacy exam requirement by passing USMLE Step 1.

- **Dissertation and defense** - MD/PhD students must meet GSBS requirements for writing and defending their dissertation.

- **Publications** - MD/PhD students are expected to have a first author manuscript on their dissertation research “in-press” or published prior to their defense.

- **Maintaining/extending clinical skills** - Students are encouraged to maintain/extend clinical knowledge/skills by “shadowing” a clinical faculty member in the clinic/hospital on a limited schedule (e.g. half day a week or twice a month) while enrolled as full-time GSBS students. This participation in clinical activities must be approved by the student’s PhD advisor, MD/PhD Program Director, and Medical School Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

- **GSBS Advisory and Supervisory Committees** - At least one member of the MD/PhD Program Committee should serve on these Committees. This allows the Program to monitor the progress of MD/PhD students during their laboratory training.

- **Re-matriculation to Medical School** – MD/PhD students who have completed the majority of their laboratory experiments and are beginning to write their dissertation may re-matriculate to Medical School with the approval of their PhD research Advisor and the MD/PhD Program Director. Students submit their request in writing to the MD/PhD Program Director, and invite the Director or Co-Director to a Supervisory Committee meeting to discuss the student’s readiness to re-enter Medical School.

- **Fourth Year Medical School elective credits for PhD research** - MD/PhD students receive two months of 4th-year elective credit for their GSBS research. This credit is contingent upon completing the GSBS requirements for the PhD prior to being awarded a MD degree, and upon completing the laboratory portion for the PhD within four years. In some instances, students who participate in a clinic on a weekly basis for one or more years while conducting their dissertation research may be granted an additional month of elective credit in their 4th year of medical school. See above-Maintaining clinical skills.
**APPENDIX C.**

**Forms**

Special Project Form  
Approval to Return to Medical School  
Requirements for Receiving Medical School Elective Credit for PhD Research  
Direct Deposit  
GSBS Sponsorship Authorization  
Individual Development Plan  
MD/PhD Milestones Agreement Form