

The MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences  
**IMMUNOLOGY PROGRAM BYLAWS**

## **Introduction and Mission**

The purposes of the Program in Immunology of the MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) are to provide high-quality, comprehensive education and research training in the field of immunology, allowing graduates to successfully pursue careers as independent investigators in academia, industry, or government and to augment the educational process for individuals pursuing studies in other disciplines by providing training in immunology. The GSBS Program in Immunology is an inter-institutional activity with faculty and laboratories located in the UTHealth McGovern Medical School and School of Dentistry, and the MD Anderson Cancer Center, all committed to excellence in graduate student education and research. The Program recognizes its responsibilities to the individual student to ensure quality education and to provide personnel capable of promoting the highest goals in research and teaching.

## **Program Faculty**

The Graduate Faculty of the Program in Immunology shall be composed of persons qualified by their scholarly, creative works and teaching abilities to supervise and instruct graduate students. The faculty shall be composed of Regular Members, Associate Members, and Distinguished Senior Lecturers, as determined by the GSBS Membership Committee.

### **I. Regular Members**

1. Participate in making Program policy decisions and vote in Program elections.
2. Must hold a faculty appointment as a Regular Member of the GSBS.
3. Are expected to participate actively and significantly in the various teaching and administrative activities of the Program:
  - Supervise graduate students.
  - Are committed to teaching a major ongoing lecture or laboratory in graduate-level immunology courses.
  - Participate in Advisory and Candidacy Exam committees.
  - Participate in immunology-related seminars open to graduate students for credit.
  - Participate in the administrative activities of the Program.
  - May be elected as a Member of the Graduate Faculty in Immunology by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee. The GSBS Faculty Affairs Office will be informed of each new election.

### **II. Associate Members**

1. Must hold a faculty appointment as an Associate Member of the GSBS.
2. Responsibilities include those of Regular Members except for the supervision of PhD student dissertation research. Associate Members may mentor MS students.
3. May vote in Program elections.

### **III. Distinguished Senior Lecturers**

1. Must hold a faculty appointment as a Distinguished Senior Lecturer of the GSBS.
2. Responsibilities include those of Regular Members except that a Distinguished Senior Lecturer would not normally be expected to supervise a PhD student.
3. May vote in Program elections.

### **IV. Review of Current Faculty Members**

1. The Program will review participation by individual faculty members once every five years in conjunction with the faculty member's five-year review by the GSBS Membership Committee.
2. The five-year review by the Program will be done on a schedule determined by the Program. The Program will review each member's contributions or activities, using the GSBS membership criteria as a guideline. Faculty participation reports will be provided by GSBS but they should be augmented by reports/statements of Program-specific activities.
3. The Program will send GSBS Faculty Affairs a list of faculty they suggest are inactive. Inactive faculty will be notified that they are on probation for one year and encouraged to increase their participation. At the end of this time, if there is no increase in activity, the Program may terminate membership. Faculty who are asked to leave the Program may appeal the decision to the GSBS Membership Committee, who will make a recommendation to the Deans. Faculty who are determined to be disengaged are subject to not being reappointed as a GSBS faculty member.
4. The Program will notify GSBS Faculty Affairs of any terminated faculty members.

## **Program Organization**

### **V. Director**

The Director is responsible for organizing all program activities or delegating the organization of specific activities to other faculty, students, and/or staff. The Director must be a Regular Member of the Program Faculty. The Director shall be elected to a two-year term. To preserve the integrity and anonymity of the election process, the Graduate School will conduct the election. GSBS will solicit nominations, including self-nominations, from the Program faculty at-large to serve as Director. Once the slate of candidates has been approved by the Deans' Office, GSBS will conduct the election and report the results to the Program community. The Director shall be elected by a simple majority of the membership of the Program Faculty. He/she may succeed him or herself. There is no limitation on the number of terms a Director may serve. Department Chairs are prohibited from serving as Director due to potential conflicts of interest. The Director's responsibilities will be to:

1. Coordinate the activities of the other Program Committees.
2. Counsel and advise first year GSBS students.
3. Evaluate and monitor the overall progress of each student in the Program.
4. Meet with all the students annually to help maintain student morale and retention.
5. Assist in the coordination of laboratory rotations.
6. Appoint course directors for each of the required Program-specific courses.
7. Organize Program faculty meetings at least semi-annually, and distribute the agenda and minutes in a timely manner.

8. Receive applications for faculty membership in the Program and distribute the applications to the Steering Committee.
9. Represent the interests of the Program faculty and students in the GSBS Program Directors Committee (PDC) and any other appropriate venue.
10. Advise the Program student body of any changes in Program requirements.
11. Grant an exception to Program course requirements or committee composition for an individual student in response to a written request from the student.
12. Approve applications for student membership in the Program.
13. Review and approve student advisory and examination committees and forward these recommendations to the GSBS Academic Standards Committee for review and approval.

## VI. **Co-Director**

The Co-director will carry out the Director's responsibilities in the Director's absence. The Co-director will be elected to a two-year term in the same manner as the Director. To preserve the integrity and anonymity of the election process, the Graduate School will conduct the election. GSBS will solicit nominations, including self-nominations, from the Program faculty at-large. Once the slate of candidates has been approved by the Deans' Office, GSBS will conduct the election and report the results to the Program community. In the event of a vacancy in the Director position, the Co-Director will become the Interim Director until an election is held to fill the Director position. Department Chairs are prohibited from serving as Co-Director due to potential conflicts of interest

## VII. **Committees**

### i. Steering Committee

Because of the large size of faculty, drawn from many departments, the Steering Committee shall formulate policies concerning the academic and fiscal aspects of the Program and present them to the Program Faculty for approval or modification quarterly. The Steering Committee shall be elected by a vote of the Program Faculty.

#### a. **Composition:**

- The Steering Committee shall consist of the Program Director who will also act as Chairman of the Steering Committee, the Program Co-Director, five other members of the Program Faculty representative of each institution identified in Article I, and one post-candidacy student representative from the Immunology Program.
- A yearly election will be conducted by the Program to replace those members of the Steering Committee whose tenure expires. To preserve the integrity and anonymity of the election process, the Graduate School will conduct the election. GSBS will solicit nominations, including self-nominations, from the Program faculty at-large. Once the slate of candidates has been approved by the Deans' Office, GSBS will conduct the election and report the results to the Program community. The term of office for faculty members shall be for three years. Members may be re-elected.
- The student member will be elected by Program students to serve a one-year term on the Steering Committee. GSBS will solicit volunteers from Program

students. To be eligible to serve, students must be in good academic standing. It is required that candidates have completed the candidacy exam. Once the slate of candidates has been approved by the Program Director and the Deans' Office, GSBS will conduct the election and report the results to the program community. The student representative may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

**b. Specific Duties:**

- The Steering Committee shall appoint members to the Bylaws, Admissions, and Curriculum Committees and formulate other committees both ad hoc and permanent as necessary and the Program Director may serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- All committees serve in an advisory capacity to the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee shall receive and evaluate reports of all standing committees and subcommittees, prior to presentation to the entire Program Faculty for approval.
- The Steering Committee shall meet at least quarterly unless otherwise requested by the Program Director. A quorum shall consist of four members in addition to the Chairman.
- The Steering Committee shall aid in obtaining financial and research support of the graduate students.
- At the request of the Program Director, the Steering Committee shall perform any administrative or advisory functions not explicitly delegated to standing committees or subcommittees.

**ii. Curriculum Committee**

The Curriculum Committee shall consist of a Chair, four additional faculty members appointed by the Steering Committee, and a student representative who has entered candidacy for their doctoral degree. All terms will be three years. The Curriculum Committee's function is to:

1. Formulate, review, and revise as necessary the degree requirements of the Program, which will be posted on the Program's website and maintained in the Program's Academic Policies document.
2. Require from each Program course coordinator a copy of the course syllabus.
3. Provide guidance for the number of credit hours in each course offered through the Program, in accordance with GSBS guidelines.
4. Evaluate all courses yearly through discussion with faculty who instructed in the course, faculty who attended the course, and students in the course.
5. Recommend to the faculty which courses should be added or deleted, as the need arises.

**iii. Admissions Committee**

The Admissions Committee will consist of a chairman and at least four additional faculty appointed by the Steering Committee. Members shall serve for three years. Duties include:

1. Evaluate applicants and provide feedback to the GSBS Admissions Committee concerning the acceptance or rejection of applicants.
2. Evaluate new students seeking to join the Program and determine their suitability.
3. Develop and coordinate efforts to recruit students into the Program.

## VIII. **Meetings**

1. Regular Meetings of the Program Faculty will be held at least semi-annually.
2. Special Meetings can be called by the Program Director, Steering Committee or following a petition signed by five members of the Program Faculty.
3. The Program Director will notify the Program Faculty in writing at least one week prior to each meeting, and provide them with a proposed agenda.
4. The Program Director shall send the summary minutes of each meeting to the Program Faculty within one week of the meeting.
5. F. Procedures
6. Rules of Order: The general authority on questions of procedure is Robert's Rules of Order. A quorum is the majority of the faculty.
7. Amendments: An amendment to the Bylaws of the Program in Immunology may be accomplished by two-thirds majority vote, by written ballot, of the faculty after the following procedure has been followed: The proposed amendment is submitted to the Program Director who will, at least two weeks prior to a scheduled meeting, send the proposed amendment to the Program Faculty for consideration.
8. Records: Program records are retained in the office of the Program Director, available for inspection by the GSBS Deans and Program Faculty.

## IX. **Degree Programs**

Any GSBS student in good standing can join the Immunology Program. All students within the Program will be expected to complete all Program and GSBS requirements. Exceptions towards fulfilling the required program courses may be made by the Director, on a case-by-case basis, for students (including MD/PhD students) who have fulfilled the GSBS (or MD/PhD) requirements. It is not required for students to choose a Program with which their mentor is affiliated.

1. GSBS students who elect to perform thesis research in the laboratory of an Immunology Program faculty member can be considered for membership in the Program (termed "Affiliated Students"). If a student joins the lab of a GSBS but non-Immunology Program faculty member and wishes to join the Immunology Program, an arrangement can be made at the Director's discretion in consultation with the Steering Committee. Students in Program faculty laboratories who are not formally in the Program may, by common agreement of the Director, the student, and the student's faculty advisor, participate in Program activities (termed "Participating Students").
2. Acceptance of a student into the Program requires approval by the Director.