

Student Handbook  
Graduate Biomedical Sciences

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## GRADUATE BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAM

**Our Mission.** Our goal is to provide our trainees the opportunity to cultivate exceptional careers in research or related fields. To achieve this goal, we encourage our trainees to take advantage of the considerable resources available, augmenting skills in research, written communication, oral communication, and grasp of the literature.

To aid this development, we have assembled an extensive curriculum and network of exceptional faculty mentors.

This document describes the framework of the Graduate Biomedical Sciences (GBS) training program. More details are available on the GBS web site: [www.uab.edu/gbs](http://www.uab.edu/gbs)

This handbook is not a static document. Policies are reviewed and revised over time, thus trainees are encouraged to be familiar with the current handbook. Questions regarding policies can be directed to GBS leadership (theme directors, theme managers, or the Associate Dean for GBS).

The UAB Graduate School handbook (insert link) sets the *minimum requirements* for all graduate programs on campus. The guidelines set forth herein stretch beyond those described by the Graduate School.

Irrespective of each student's ultimate career goal, it is imperative that he/she take advantage of the considerable resources offered by our research community. Our goal is to provide the opportunities to cultivate excellence, it is the student's responsibility to make use of those resources, reaching for excellence.

## START-UP BASICS

**Set up BlazerID & Email** | <https://idm.uab.edu/bid/reg>  
**BlazerNet** | <https://www.uab.edu/blazernet>  
**Direct Deposit** | <http://www.uab.edu/adminsystems>  
**UAB One Card** | <https://www.uab.edu/onecard/>  
**Student Parking** | <https://www.uab.edu/parking/>

**Blazer ID & Email.** Your Blazer ID is vitally important to you while at UAB. It serves as part of your email address, allows you access to your important personal information like your paystub information, and you use it to register for classes. Setting up a Blazer ID is one of the first things you must do. It opens the portals of UAB to you.

For example, if your UAB email address is jdoe@uab.edu, your Blazer ID is going to be jdoe. The Blazer ID is everything before the @uab.edu. Please keep in mind that you should choose a professional Blazer ID/email. Keep email addresses like “sexyme” for your personal/private email accounts.

To set up your BlazerID and email, go to BlazerID Central, and follow the instructions.  
<https://idm.uab.edu/bid/reg>

**BlazerNET** | <https://www.uab.edu/blazernet>

BlazerNET is your portal to UAB **registration**, transcripts, news and information, and other areas of interest. You log into BlazerNET with your Blazer ID and password.

**UAB ONE CARD** | <https://www.uab.edu/onecard/>

All students must have a ONE Card. Most students get their ONE Card during orientation, but if you arrive at a different time, please contact your theme manager to obtain a form and instructions. You can only get a ONE Card after you have registered for classes.

**Direct Deposit.** UAB does not issue paychecks. Instead, they deposit your earnings directly into your bank account, issuing you a pay stub summary only.

To set up direct deposit information:

- Go to <http://www.uab.edu/adminsystems/>
- Click on Oracle HR & Finance
- Under Administrative Systems Status, click on the link “You may log into the application here”
- Enter your Blazer ID (which is the id you chose MINUS the @uab.edu) and password
- Click on **I Agree**
- Click on **UAB Self Service Applications**
- Click on **Manage Direct Deposit Account**. This is where you enter the pertinent information.

Need more information? Go to [UAB Financial Affairs](#).

**Parking.** Parking information for students is found at <https://www.uab.edu/parking/>. Graduate students can access the commuter student lots if they do not live on campus. In addition, graduate students can access the 9th Avenue deck, 10th Avenue deck, and 5th Avenue deck for a nominal additional fee. All of these facilities' permits are also honored in any commuter lot (Lot 15).

Parking is assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. If demand for deck parking exceeds availability, then a waiting list will be taken for the current academic year only.

After-hours parking is available for certain areas. After-hours is defined as 5 p.m. - 6 a.m. weekdays, and all day weekends. This access is free for any graduate student with a deck permit. For those in commuter or resident student facilities, a \$30 charge per semester applies. Current after-hours locations are:

- University Boulevard Deck
- 5th Avenue Deck
- Lot 16A (Underneath Education Building)

**Blazer Express Bus Service.** Blazer Express ([www.uab.edu/blazerexpress](http://www.uab.edu/blazerexpress)):

- is a campus bus service that picks up and drops off at remote parking lots on campus
- provides a late-night, on-demand van service for UAB students, 9pm-5:30am every day within a large area – from Railroad Park to 14<sup>th</sup> Street to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Street.
- operates a shopping shuttle that will take students from campus to local shopping on Sundays, 2pm-5pm
- has a GPS application available for download to your smartphone that allows you to see where the buses are in real time.

**Blazer Express Routes | All routes Monday-Friday**

Route Schedule	Time Between Buses
<b>Blue Route (<a href="#">see stops</a>)</b>	
5:30am-8:30am	10 minutes
8:30am-7:30pm	12-15 minutes
<b>Silver Route (<a href="#">see stops</a>)</b>	
2:30pm-7:00pm	9 minutes
7:00pm-7:45pm	5 minutes
7:45pm-9:00pm	12-15 minutes
<b>Green Route (<a href="#">see stops</a>)</b>	
7:00am-7:00pm	12-18 minutes
<b>Gold Route (<a href="#">see stops</a>)</b>	
7:00am-5:30pm	15 minutes
<b>Orange Route (<a href="#">see stops</a>)</b>	
7:00pm-12:00midnight	25 minute loops

**Blazer Express Safety Escort**

205.934.8772 | [www.uab.edu/blazerexpress/safety-escort](http://www.uab.edu/blazerexpress/safety-escort)

**Blazer Express Shopping Shuttle**

- Meet at Blazer Circle (between Blazer Hall and Camp Hall) before the 2pm pick up
- Shuttle drops off/picks up at Wal-Mart on Lakeshore Drive and K-Mart on Green Springs Hwy

**Blazer Express GPS Tracker** | [www.uab.edu/blazerexpress/tracker](http://www.uab.edu/blazerexpress/tracker)

## B-ALERT: EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS AT UAB

Register for B-Alert | <https://uab.edu/balert>  
UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline | 205.934.2165

UAB's primary concern during any emergency or severe weather situation is the safety of its students, faculty, staff and visitors. UAB's diverse community requires multiple, overlapping means of communicating with the campus, including direct, live communication from UAB Police officers at the scene of an emergency. Communications plans are reviewed frequently to consider alternatives and enhancements in technology.

During any actual emergency or severe weather situation, this site - <http://www.uab.edu/emergency/> - will be the official source of UAB information. In addition, the UAB Emergency Management Team will use B-ALERT, the university's emergency notification system, to communicate through voice calls, SMS text messages and e-mails to the entire campus all at the same time. B-ALERT also integrates with Facebook and Twitter. **The UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline at 205-934-2165** also will be updated as appropriate to provide official updates on the university's and UAB Hospital's opening and closing status

**To register for B-ALERT** or update your existing information in the system, go to <http://www.uab.edu/balert>. All registration is connected to your BlazerID. **Email:** B-ALERT e-mails will come from the UAB Emergency Management Team address: [UABALERT@uab.edu](mailto:UABALERT@uab.edu). All BlazerID-connected UAB e-mail addresses are automatically included in the system; **you will not be able to opt out of receiving these e-mails**. If there are other e-mail accounts where you would like to receive notifications, register those separately in the system.

**Texts.** Register at least one SMS-capable mobile device with the B-ALERT system. Why? Because message delivery in an emergency is usually quicker via this kind of messaging. Any time you register a new SMS text device, you will receive a message allowing you to opt out of the service. Should you choose to opt out, which is not recommended, update your preferences through the registration form <http://www.uab.edu/balert>. Responding to the message will not complete the opting out process.

Text messages from the system will come to your cell phone or other handheld device from something called a short code; it will be either 23177 or 63079. Voice calls will originate from B-ALERT at 205-975-8000. Store these numbers/codes and program them all as B-ALERT so you will recognize them as the official source of UAB emergency and/or severe weather information.

**Telephone.** Register your cell, office and home phone numbers in order to receive voice messages at all numbers during a crisis situation.

**Social Media.** Follow B-ALERT on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/UABALERT](http://www.facebook.com/UABALERT) and on Twitter under the name @UABALERT: [www.twitter.com/uabalert](http://www.twitter.com/uabalert)

## COURSE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Register in BlazerNet | <https://www.uab.edu/blazernet>

Any changes to your schedule after GBS registration deadline requires theme manager approval.

Registration announcement emails are sent out through BlazerNet. You may also receive notification from your theme manager.

You are responsible for registering for your classes on time, even if you are not on campus. Incomplete or inappropriate registration can affect stipend distribution and result in you having to pay fees. If you need to withdraw from a class or make any changes to your class schedule after you begin the registration process, talk with your Theme Manager first. Failure to do so, may result in you being responsible for tuition payment, late fees, etc.

### How to Register through BlazerNET

- Once logged in to BlazerNET, click on the "Registration" link on the green ribbon.
- On the Registration menu, click the "Add, Drop, or Withdraw from Classes" link.

### If you already know the CRN for your course(s)

- Click on the "Add/Drop Classes" link in the "Registration Tools" channel.
- The Add/Drop worksheet will appear. There will be a row of empty blocks. Type in the 5-digit CRN for your course in any of the blocks. If you are registering for more than one course, tab over to another block and enter in all of the courses at one time. (You do not need to type in the subject or number for the course, only the CRN is required!)
- Click on the *Register* button at the bottom of the screen when complete.

### To look up the Course Reference Number for your course(s)

- Click on the "Look Up Classes" link to search the available courses for the term. You may search for classes with several different criteria, but the only block that must be utilized is the *Subject* block.
- Once the classes are visible, register for the course(s) by clicking on the empty checkbox to the left of the CRN and clicking on the Register button at the bottom of the screen.

### To verify that you have successfully registered

- If you would like a Registration Confirmation, click Registration Confirmation in the "Registration Tools" channel.
- If you would like to see your classes in a schedule format, follow these steps:
- On the Student Resources tab, click on the link "Banner Self-Service."
- Click on *Student and Financial Aid*
- Click on *Registration*
- Click on *Student Detail Schedule* or *Week at a Glance*

### If you receive a Registration Error Message

Please see the list below of common registration errors and solutions:

- **RAC:** A Registration Access Code (RAC) is required for your account. This is a 6-digit number given to you by your advisor.
- **CORQ:** Course has a corequisite. The CRN of the required corequisite should follow the CORQ error message. Please submit the courses simultaneously.

- **PREQ/TEST SCORE:** Course has a prerequisite or test placement requirement. The CRN or title of the required prerequisite should follow the PREQ error message. See your advisor for permission.
- **TIME CONFLICT:** Course has a time conflict with another course already added to your schedule.
- **CLOSED SECTION:** There are no more seats available in the course.
- **NEED INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION:** Permission of the instructor is required to take this course. Please contact instructor for an online override.
- **LEVEL RESTRICTION:** Your classification level is invalid for this course. Contact the department or instructor for online permission.
- **HOLDS:** Holds are on your account which restrict you from registering. Please scroll down until you see a "View Holds" icon. This icon will show your specific holds. Please see the department listed to remove the hold.

## STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES – GENERAL INFORMATION

**Student Health Services** | [www.uab.edu/studenthealth](http://www.uab.edu/studenthealth)

Student Health & Wellness Center  
1714 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

**Student Health** | To schedule an appointment: 205.934.3581

**Counseling** | To schedule an appointment: 205.934.5816

[Medical Clearance](#)

[Mandatory Insurance & Waivers](#)

All students in the graduate biomedical sciences are required to have health insurance. Students may choose to be covered by VIVA UAB or provide their own private insurance. If the student elects to be covered by their private insurance, verification of comparable coverage must be on file with the UAB [Student Health Office](#). Support is available for single coverage health insurance only. Spouse and children are separate and are to be paid for by the graduate student. For additional information regarding health insurance and policy, please contact:

### **What should you do if you get sick?**

If it is a non-emergency, phone or go directly to the UAB Student Health Services Office at the address listed above. The hours of the clinic are Monday – Friday from 8:00 am-5:00 pm (last patient is taken at 4:00 pm). They are closed daily from 12noon-1pm. It is advisable to call in advance for an appointment because this keeps your waiting time to a minimum. Appointed patients will be taken before drop-in patients, unless the drop-in patient is of an emergency nature. There is physician on call 24 hours a day. If you have any emergency after regular clinic hours, please call the Page Operator at 934.3411 and ask for the Student Health physician on call.

## Title IX

**Contact Information** | [Dr. John Jones](#), Hill Student Center, 205.996.0132

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

*“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”* 20 U.S.C. §1681

The United States Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is charged with enforcing compliance with Title IX. For more information on OCR, please visit their website.

### The University's Commitment to Title IX Compliance

**Notice of Nondiscrimination.** In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama at Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of gender in any of its programs or services. The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on gender and expects individuals who live, work, teach, and study within this community to contribute positively to the environment and to refrain from behaviors that threaten the freedom or respect that every member of our community deserves.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be made to the University’s Interim Title IX Coordinator, Dr. John Jones, Hill Student Center, (205) 996-0132, jrjones3@uab.edu, to the Department of Student Affairs.

### What Types of Behavior Does Title IX Cover?

**Gender Discrimination.** Gender discrimination is prohibited in any educational program or activity, including athletics; recruitment, admissions, financial aid and scholarships; course offerings and access; counseling; hiring and retention of employees; and benefits and leave.

- More information on the University’s Nondiscrimination policy

**Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or academic advancement; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance as an employee or student or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

- More information on the University’s harassment policy

**Sexual Harassment Includes Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence.** Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact without the consent of all parties involved to include: a. Sexual intercourse committed by physical force, coercion, threat or intimidation, actual or implied by a person or persons known or unknown to the victim. b. Attempted intercourse, sexual contact, or physical force of a threatening nature expressed or implied that places a person in fear of immediate death or physical injury known or unknown to the victim. c. All other forms of sexual misconduct, which

violates state and/or federal law now or subsequently in effect including, but not limited to, conduct defined as rape, sodomy, sexual abuse or sexual contact and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. A person may be deemed not to have knowingly and voluntarily consented if, at the time of the offense, the person is incapable of giving consent because of mental incapacitation, physical impairment, alcohol or drug consumption, or loss of consciousness.

Title IX protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and employees from discrimination, harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence including discrimination, physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex, sex-stereotyping or failure to conform to stereotypical gender norms.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is committed to providing an environment for employees, students, and campus visitors that is free from illegal harassment based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or veteran status. Likewise the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender in all University activities and programs. Any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault and sexual violence, is a violation of University policy and the Non-Academic Code of Student Conduct. In addition to facing University sanctions, those who engage in violence and sexual misconduct may also be prosecuted criminally.

## FINANCIAL BASICS

GBS Financial Team | [Jasmine Williams](#) | [D. Curtis Jones](#)

**GBS Student Financial Support.** All students accepted into GBS receive an annual stipend and fully paid tuition and fees. The sources of support for students vary, but generally Graduate School Fellowships support the first sixteen months for each student. In subsequent years, students are supported by their advisors' research grants, institutional funds or training grants. All students are encouraged to apply for individual fellowship awards, with the guidance and assistance of their advisors.

See [Fellowships & Awards](#) for additional fellowship information and resources.

Upon successful completion of requirements for admission to candidacy, the GBS student's annual stipend will increase by \$1,000.

**GBS Policy Regarding Stipend Increases for Students Admitted to Candidacy.** For GBS students who are applying for admission to candidacy, the \$1,000 stipend increase will be effective the start of the next pay period following the GBS Financial Associate receiving documentation that the candidacy paperwork has been approved by the Graduate School. **It is the student's responsibility** to forward the "approval" email from the Graduate School to the GBS Financial Associate, Jasmine Williams, at [jabo724@uab.edu](mailto:jabo724@uab.edu).

In order to register for dissertation research credits for the subsequent term, the forms must be processed by the dates posted on the Graduate School web site at <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/deadline-dates#candidac>.

**Tuition Payments, Late Fees and Overpayments Policy.** Graduate students in GBS are awarded a tuition scholarship, which covers in-state tuition and fees until the degree requirements for your theme have been met. As a condition to receiving this tuition scholarship,

- 1) You must register for and successfully complete at least 27 hours of approved graduate credits each year. Any hours taken above 27 semester hours must be approved by your program.
- 2) Courses offered by entities outside of the UAB School of Medicine must be pre-approved by your mentor.
- 3) You must remain in good academic standing. This tuition scholarship may be terminated for students who fail to meet requirements outlined by academic probation.

All coursework must either fit within your theme's training plan or be pre-approved by your research mentor and/or thesis committee. If not, the student will be responsible for the associated tuition/fees and may be subject to non-resident tuition rates.

For both Graduate Student Trainees and Graduate Research Assistants, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Financial Associate and the appropriate Theme Manager concerning an outstanding student accounting balance. **Students are responsible for any late fees incurred on their student account.** Each term, the deadlines for tuition payments are posted on the Academic Calendar, which is available on the UAB website under UAB Quicklinks. It is important that students are aware of these deadlines and that emails about your student account be forwarded appropriately.

If for some reason there is an overpayment on your student account, immediately notify the Financial Associate and the appropriate Theme Manager. Overpayments must be corrected immediately. In cases where the overpayment is not adjusted prior to the payment deadline for the following term, the student will be responsible for repaying the amount of the overpayment to offset a portion of the tuition balance for the current term.

**Tax Information | Understanding the taxes on financial aid to graduate students.** The following information is from: <http://financialaffairs.uab.edu/content.asp?id=343657>.

#### Types of Financial Aid:

##### **1. Scholarships:**

- Scholarships are generally given to graduate students to cover tuition and fees.
- If there is no requirement for service to the university or a third party, a scholarship is not subject to state, local, or federal taxes.
- Most scholarships are applied directly to student fees.
- No W-2 form is issued by UAB.

##### **2. Fellowships\*:**

- Fellowships typically provide a stipend to defray living expenses, tuition and fees.
- If no service is required to receive the fellowship, it is exempt from state and local taxes.
- Any portion of a fellowship in excess of tuition, fees, and required books and equipment is subject to federal income tax.
- UAB does not withhold taxes from fellowships or issue W-2 forms.
- Students are advised to pay quarterly estimated federal taxes.
- \* *Most 1st year GBS students are funded by Graduate School Fellowships or UAB Comprehensive Minority Faculty and Student Fellowships*

##### **3. Assistantships\*:**

- Assistantships are compensation given for work performed.
- The most common forms of assistantships are teaching and research assistantships.
- These awards are not exempt from taxes.
- UAB will deduct taxes from checks and issue a W-2 form at the end of the year.
- \* *Graduate students funded by grants and sources other than individual fellowships and training grants are considered to receive assistantships*

#### What about FICA?

- FICA is the social security tax.
- Fellowships are exempt from FICA.
- Graduate students receiving financial aid are exempt from FICA if they are enrolled in at least 3 credit hours of classes each quarter the exemption is claimed.
- You must enroll on time to be eligible.
- There are no limits on the number of hours worked.

#### What is the Lifetime Learning Tax Credit?

The lifetime learning tax credit benefits graduate students.

- After June 30, 1998, anyone paying tuition will be eligible for a tax credit.
- Students are able to take a tax credit of up to \$10,000 per year (since year 2000).

## Interest on Student Loans

Beginning in 1998, interest paid on student loans will be tax deductible for up to 5 years of interest payments. There are restrictions. The more money you make, the less interest you can deduct. Students will have to itemize deductions to take advantage of this. Lenders will be required to report to students and the IRS if the interest on a student loan exceeds \$600 per year.

## Some Common Fellowship Programs

- Graduate School Fellowships
- UAB Comprehensive Minority Faculty and Student Development Fellowships
- NSF Fellowships
- NIH Fellowships

## Frequently Asked Financial Questions:

### **1. How do I know what kind of financial aid I have?**

**Answer:** You should receive a letter from your department or program director describing the nature of the award. Any time the award changes, the letter should be reissued. If you don't have a letter, ask for one.

### **2. I am paid on my advisor's research grant, but I am just working on my thesis. Why are taxes being deducted?**

**Answer:** You have an assistantship. A research grant is awarded to the university for the purpose of conducting research, not training. Your advisor cannot give you fellowship support from a research grant.

### **3. If I have a fellowship, how do I pay estimated taxes?**

**Answer:** Estimated taxes are due four times per year, starting on April 15th. You can get the forms, [Publ 505 Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p505.pdf) <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p505.pdf> and [Publ 970 Scholarships and Fellowships](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf) <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf>, from the IRS web site-- <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>, as linked above--or from the Graduate School Office, located on the ground floor of the Lister Hill Library (1700 University Boulevard).

### **4. I have a fellowship, but I supplement it by teaching a class. Will any taxes be deducted from my check?**

**Answer:** Taxes will be deducted only from the portion of your funding that is a teaching assistantship. Because this is compensation, it is fully taxable.

### **5. I am on an NIH Training Grant. Is this a fellowship or an assistantship?**

**Answer:** NIH Training Grants (e.g., T32, T35, T90) are treated like fellowships.

## Graduate School Incentive Program to Promote Individual Fellowship Applications

The *Graduate School Incentive Program to Promote Individual Fellowship Applications* will provide \$500 awards to GBS students who submit fellowship applications and \$1000 additional annual stipend support to GBS students who receive a fellowship award. For further detail and

instructions see: <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/incentive-program-for-individual-fellowship-applications>

### Graduate Student Travel

Graduate student travel for professional reasons may apply to trips for the purpose of attending a scientific conference or learning new techniques. With appropriate documentation travel costs can be paid by grant or other sources. The specific documentation required will be determined by the student's status as a *research assistant* (employee policies apply) or as a *trainee/fellow* (i.e., funded by a training grant or individual fellowship).

Documentation requirements for travel reimbursement:

- **Trainees**  
Trainee travel  
<http://sppublic.ad.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-FA-GDL-0000365.aspx>
- **Research Assistants**  
Research Assistants <http://uabfinancial.infomedia.com/content.asp?id=208886>

### International Professional Travel

*From the Office of the Provost:*

All UAB-Related Foreign Travel Requests must be made online through the UAB Forms site at [www.uab.edu/uabforms](http://www.uab.edu/uabforms). **UAB policy requires prior approval through this online request process for all UAB-related foreign travel, including for all students who participate in Study Away programs and/or travel overseas as part of UAB-related activities.**

Students may direct questions to the Office of Study Away at 205.975.6611 or via email to [studyabroad@uab.edu](mailto:studyabroad@uab.edu).

## CAREER PLANNING AND ADVISING

IDP: Individual Development Plan | [www.uab.edu/idp/](http://www.uab.edu/idp/)

NIH has encouraged institutions to develop **Individual Development Plans (IDPs)** for all graduate students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NIH awards. Use of IDPs is to be reported in all progress reports submitted after October 1, 2014, using the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR).

Individual development plans are important tools in career planning. It is required that all GBS students participate in IDP instruction, with each newly matriculating student receiving initial IDP instruction by October 1 of their year of entry. The Graduate School offers IDP instructional sessions that include participant initiation of IDP using the *Science Careers* website tool **myIDP** at <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>. Theme directors may contact the graduate school to schedule a session [gradschool@uab.edu](mailto:gradschool@uab.edu). Individual themes may also establish their own IDP instruction and related requirements. MSTP students will participate in MSTP-organized IDP training rather than GBS theme-related IDP sessions.

Primary responsibility to assure that GBS students in each theme receive IDP instruction resides with the GBS theme director. A record of IDP must be provided to the graduate school by October 1 annually, to be forwarded to and monitored by the UAB Compliance Office. A session sign-in list or screen shots of the myIDP personal information summary page can provide evidence of participation.

The initial IDP information session is scheduled for incoming students during the entering fall semester. Someone from the GBS office will notify first-year students.

## GBS FIRST YEAR CURRICULUM

### Fall Semester, 2016.

All incoming GBS students will take 3 common courses in Basic Biosciences:

- GBS 708: Genetics | August 9-September 19, 2016
- GBS 707: Biochemistry | September 20-October 31, 2016
- GBS 709: Cell | November 1-December 16, 2016

Plus 2 lab rotations:

- GBS 795: Lab Rotation 1 | August 15-October 14, 2016
- GBS 796: Lab Rotation 2 | October 17-December 16, 2016
- Lab rotations for early admits | GBS 796: Lab Rotation 2 | GBS 797: Lab Rotation 3*

### Spring Semester, 2017.

Each student should check with her/his theme manager to discover that theme's plan for the spring modules & the summer module. Here is a list of the projected courses for Spring 2017:

#### Module 1 | January 4-31

- GBS 710-Cell Signaling
- GBS 724-Principles of Human Genetics
- GBS 740a-Intro to Immunology, Pt 1\*
- GBS 750-Nerve Muscle & Bones
- GBS 760-Prokaryotic Gen & Molecular Bio
- GBS 781-Molecular Enzymology

#### Module 2 | February 1-28

- GBS 712-Cell Mol Aspects Dev Bio
- GBS 720-Genomic Structure & Function
- GBS 740b-Intro to Immunology, Pt 2\*
- GBS 751-Heart Lung & Kidney
- GBS 762-Virology
- GBS 783-RNA Biology
- GBSC 729-Cell Neurophys

\*Students enroll in Part 1 and Part 2, receiving 1 grade at the end of Part 2.

#### Module 3 | March 1-28

- GBS 714-Dev Neuro
- GBS 722-Bioinformatics
- GBS 755-Mucosal Immunology
- GBS 752-GI Endo Immune Sys
- GBS 763-Microbial Pathogenesis
- GBS 769-Carcinogenesis
- GBS 782-Mol Genetics

#### Module 4 | March 29-April 25

- GBS 723-Model Sys for Genetic Analysis
- GBS 741-Lymphocyte Bio
- GBS 753-Pharm & Molecular Med
- GBS 768-Communicating Science

GBS 774-Cancer Immunology  
GBS 784-Stem Cell Bio  
GBSC 727-Neuro Sys

GBS 797: Lab Rotation 3 | Jan 9-Mar 10

GBS 794: Lab Rotation 4 | Mar 13-May 12

*\*Lab Rotations for Early Admits | GBS 794: Lab Rotation 4*

### **Summer Semester**

All students are expected to take GBSC 722-Intro Biostats, in addition to one of these modules:

#### Module 5 | May 1-26

GBS 733-Disease of Nervous Sys

GBS 770-Pathobiology of Cancer

GBSC 718-Epigentics

GBSC 726-Sci Comm & Review

NOTE -- Additional course and/or other requirements may be required as specified by their chosen theme. Contact your theme manager for more information.

## GENERAL ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

### Rotation Requirements for first year students:

- a) Research rotations provide an opportunity for each student to experience the research environment in several different labs. These experiences are critical for choosing an appropriate lab/mentor for one's thesis work. Students must complete three rotations in three different labs prior to joining a thesis lab.
- b) The decision to join a lab is by mutual agreement between the student and mentor, with approval by the mentor's chair.
- c) A student may join a lab after two rotations, if the student can document that he/she has extensive research experience prior to joining GBS. To forego the third rotation, the student must have identified a lab to join and discussed the option with his/her theme director. The theme director or theme manager will request permission to waive the third rotation from the Associate Dean for GBS.
- d) The academic year is designed to accommodate 4 rotations within the fall and spring semesters. If a student cannot identify a permanent lab after these four rotations, the student may begin a series of shorter, 4-week rotations designed to rapidly identify a proper mentor:student match. Three additional rotations will be permitted, during the summer semester. If a student cannot identify a suitable lab after 7 total rotations, he/she will be dismissed from the program.

### General academic requirements for first year students:

- e) A working knowledge of the content of the 3 Core topics is expected of all GBS students. A letter grade of "C" or below is considered a failing grade. If a student does not pass any of the three core courses (Fall semester, GBS 707, 708, 709), he/she will be required to retake that course. Upon earning a failing grade, the student will meet with his/her theme director to discuss training resources and academic remediation plans. If a passing grade is not obtained in the second attempt, the student will be dismissed from the GBS program.
- f) Students that earn a "C" or lower in a first-year GBS module course must retake the course. Receiving a "C" in the same course twice (or failing to complete the same course twice) will result in dismissal from the GBS program.
- g) Three letter grades of "C" in any combination of first-year courses or rotations will result in dismissal from the GBS program. Dismissal will be effective at the end of the Spring semester (typically in late April).
- h) A student who wishes to appeal his/her dismissal decision must file a written appeal to the Associate Dean of GBS, who will present the appeal to the UAB Graduate School Leadership Team. If an appeal is granted, a written remediation plan and expectations will be provided. This plan will detail the benchmarks that must be reached and allotted time. Failing to reach the benchmarks indicated will result in dismissal from the program.
- i) Students must achieve a letter grade of B or better in all required first year courses of his/her selected theme before advancing to the qualifying exam in that theme.
- j) Students are required to complete training in statistics and ethics. A Biostatistics course will be offered in the summer term after the first year. GRD 717-Principles of Scientific Integrity (ethics course) is usually taken in the fall of the second year.
- k) Tutoring is available for first year GBS students. If a student needs a tutor, he or she should contact his or her Theme Manager, who should inform the Theme Director and consult regarding a tutor recommendation. The Theme Manager can then connect the student in need to the recommended tutor(s).

### **General requirements for second year and beyond:**

- a) At least 3 advanced courses will be required for students in all GBS themes. Each theme defines what constitutes an advanced course and may display on their website pre-approved advanced courses. If a course is not listed, then the student must contact the Program Manager or Theme Director to see if the course qualifies. Each theme may require more than 3 advanced courses, particularly if the advanced courses taken earn fewer than three credit hours each. One advanced course\* can be an off-site course such as those offered by Cold Spring Harbor, but this must be pre-approved by the Theme Director (or theme curriculum committee) and the mentor. These courses are typically at least one week long and have class/lab times of 40 hours or more. Completion of the course with a grade of “B” or better is required to count toward the advanced courses requirement. The three advanced courses have to be 700 level or above classes with letter grades assigned (not pass/fail) to count toward this requirement. Other courses, such as 500 or 600 level classes, can be taken for graduate credit, but they will not count toward the “three advanced courses” requirement.
- b) Graduate courses offered by other UAB Schools require prior mentor approval and documentation of approval to the theme manager.
- c) The mentor and the student’s thesis committee will decide the appropriateness of all advanced courses taken by each student.
- d) Graduate classes can be taken off-site, such as those for GBS students at Hudson Alpha, with the prior approval of the Theme Director and mentor.
- e) The Graduate School requires that 48 credit hours should be completed prior to admission to candidacy. GBS students taking the standard course load (9 credit hours during the fall, spring and summer semesters) will fulfill this requirement before the end of the second year.
- f) Participation in a journal club is required for all GBS students in both the Fall and Spring semesters until graduation, subsequent to the first year.

**\*Note that individual themes may have additional requirements for their participating students. For details, please consult your theme director or the GBS web site.**

### **Exams and Grading**

Examinations in GBS 707, 708, 709 and selected other GBS courses will be mixed format examinations (essay, short answer, and/or multiple choice). The course instructors who have lectured on the topics to be tested, the heads of the relevant lecture blocks, and the course director will determine the exact composition of each examination.

- a) All examinations will be closed book and will be held for a maximum of 3 hours each. For in-class examinations, the use of dictionaries, calculators, and other electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, pagers, etc.) will be at the discretion of the course director.
- b) Each examination will be graded and returned to the students within 2 weeks. Grades will be determined on the basis of the following criteria: **A:** scores that are > 1 standard deviation (SD) above the class mean; **B:** scores that are +/- 1 SD around the class mean; **C:** scores that are > 1 standard below the mean. Lower grades can be assigned for final scores > 2 standard deviations below the mean. A letter grade of **C** or below is considered a failing grade.
- c) The Honor System is a part of the exam process. The Honor System seeks to establish a fair academic environment and to maintain high standards of ethical and professional conduct. If any student feels these standards are not met, he or she should bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of GBS, who will investigate the matter, potentially convening the GBS Student & Faculty Affairs Committee (SFAC), as described below.
- d) Students who miss an examination will be allowed to make up the test only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. This documentation must be provided immediately

before or after the date of the examination. The decision to administer a make-up examination, and the format of that examination, will be at the discretion of the course master.

### **Temporary Grade Notations**

The temporary notation of “I” may be reported at the discretion of the instructor to indicate that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, is unable to finish all the course requirements. An “I” should never be given to enable a student to raise a deficient grade. This notation should not be used unless there is reasonable certainty that the requirements will be completed during the following semester. The student will have one semester to complete the remaining course requirements. If the student does not complete the remaining course requirements within one semester, the “I” will be changed to an “F.” If the course is offered once per year, the theme may request an extension for the amount of time that the student has to complete the course requirements. Requests for extensions must be approved by the course instructor, graduate program director, and the Graduate School Dean. Requests for extensions should be made well in advance of the semester’s end, in order to avoid the “I” being changed to an “F.”

Please note: Students should not register for the course during the extended period since they are completing the requirements for a course from a prior term.

### **UAB Graduate School Policy on Graduate Student Progress Reviews**

1. The progress of each student enrolled in a graduate degree granting program toward meeting his/her degree requirements must be reviewed on at least an annual basis.
2. The review format and timing of reviews are the prerogative of the program. Progress Reviews may be performed by either the student’s thesis or dissertation committee, by the Program Director, or by the program Executive Committee.
3. A written documentation (usually one page or less) of review group consensus regarding progress made and/or goals met since the previous review, as well as timelines for meeting specific goals during the next review period must be prepared and submitted to the program director who is responsible for maintaining a “progress record” for each student in the program.
4. In the event that progress is considered to be unsatisfactory, or a student is nearing the 5 year (Masters) or 7 year (Doctoral) limit for completing his/her degree requirements, the student’s thesis or dissertation committee, or the program Executive Committee should implement a “Completion Plan.”

### **Completion Plan Template**

A “Completion Plan” should include specific goals and specific deadlines for meeting those goals, as well as prescribed consequences if the goals are not met within the proposed deadline time points. The plan should include a stipulation that the student will meet with his/her committee to review progress at each of the proposed deadline times. It is recommended that the time intervals between proposed committee meetings be no longer than three months. The plan should be incorporated into a written document, signed by the student, by his/her advisor, and by the program director. If it will be necessary to request an extension beyond the 5 or 7 year limit for completion of degree requirements, the plan must be submitted (along with the extension request) to the Graduate School Dean for review and approval.

## UAB GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDELINES AND POLICIES:

### **Responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant or Trainee.**

A fundamental responsibility of the graduate assistant is to work closely with the faculty supervisor in carrying out research activities, while at the same time making good progress toward the completion of the degree program. If the student's assistantship responsibilities and academic program are properly coordinated, these responsibilities will be compatible. The assistant should articulate his or her goals early in the term of appointment and work with the supervisor to achieve them. The graduate assistant is obligated at all times to maintain high ethical standards in academic and nonacademic activities, and to report violations of these to the faculty supervisor. The graduate assistant should keep well informed of departmental, school, and institutional regulations, and follow them consistently. If problems arise in the assistantship assignments, the graduate assistant should seek help first from the faculty supervisor. If problems cannot be resolved, the student should consult the Program Director.

In general, GBS Graduate Students are expected to be available in the periods between academic terms\*. Graduate assistants are entitled to the following short-term leaves:

- A maximum of 15 calendar days (one-half month) paid leave of absence (vacation) per calendar year,
- 3 calendar days paid sick leave of absence per calendar year, and
- Parental leave of absence (with pay) of 30 consecutive days per calendar year upon the birth or adoption of a child. Either or both parents are eligible for parental leave.

These leaves (vacation, sick, parental) do not accrue. All leaves must be requested and require approval by the mentor and graduate program director. With the agreement of the mentor and graduate program director, extended, unpaid, nonemergency absences from campus for periods up to a month may be approved. Extended absences (without pay) for non-academic purposes should be limited. Program policies regarding leaves of absence must apply equitably to all full time students in good standing in the program. Students should consult the Graduate School Policies and Procedures concerning leaves of academic absence. In emergencies, graduate assistants should inform their mentors or program directors as soon as possible about the need for a leave of academic absence. NOTE: Graduate students (Trainees and Assistants) are not eligible for FMLA.

### **\*GBS Policy on Winter Break**

First year students: First year rotation students should not be expected to be present in the lab during the week between the Christmas and New Year's holidays, regardless of whether or not UAB remains open. Rotation schedules and courses are organized to accommodate this break.

Second year students and beyond: All breaks, including winter break, are a matter of individual negotiation to be decided between the student and the student's research mentor.

### **Graduate School Guidelines for Graduate Student Compensation.**

All students accepted into GBS programs receive an annual stipend and fully paid tuition and fees. Single coverage health insurance is available. In compliance with federal law, all students must have health care coverage, either provided by UAB VIVA or by a third party provider. If non-UAB coverage is preferred, the student must provide proof of equitable insurance to UAB student services. The stipend level is reviewed periodically and adjusted, upon recommendation of the Associate Dean of GBS and the Dean of the Graduate School.

A salary cap for UAB Graduate Assistants, Graduate Student Assistants and Graduate Student Trainees has been set in consultation with the Academic Programs Council and has been approved by the Provost's office. The maximum is indexed to equal 90 percent of the current NSF individual fellowship stipend. Conditions for exceptions may exist and relevant information can be found at [Administering Fellowships and Assistantships](#). Students who are supported by extramural fellowships or training grants that provide stipends and additional benefits which exceed the recommended maximum are entitled to receive the full support provided by the extramural award.

Note: Assumption of additional assignments other than Graduate Assistant (06) or Graduate Student Trainee (46) requires prior approval in writing with [the Additional Assignment Request Form](#) by the Graduate School Dean. The Request for Additional Assignment form may be found on the Graduate School website on the [Online Forms](#) page. If a student is already being compensated at the maximum allowed (see above), an additional assignment outside their primary appointment can only be made under special circumstances.

### **Support for Students Needing to Change Labs.**

This policy covers theme students who need to change laboratories due to circumstances out of their control (mentor leaving UAB, mentor illness or death, incompatibility between mentor & student).

- 1) If a student finds him/herself in one of the situations listed above, then the Theme Director, the SOC Chair, and the thesis committee must be notified promptly. These individuals will work with the students to quickly find a new rotation mentor.
- 2) The student will be free to choose a rotation mentor from any GBS Faculty at UAB. Although it will be encouraged for the student to pick a mentor in the same theme, it is not a requirement. If the mentor is not in the student's theme, then this choice and the impact on coursework requirements need to be discussed with the current and future theme director before the rotation will be approved.
- 3) The rotation with the potential new thesis mentor will be one month. If a second rotation is necessary, it will also be one month in length. Thus the maximum total time available for a displaced student to settle in a new thesis lab is 2 months. If the student has not been accepted in a new thesis lab within 2 months of leaving the initial lab, then the student will be terminated from the GBS programs.
  - a. The time taken to find a rotation lab is included in the 2 month period that is the maximum time the student has to find a new thesis lab. Thus, a student who requires 4 weeks to identify a rotation lab may only have time to have 1 rotation before he or she either is accepted for thesis research by a new mentor or is terminated from the GBS programs.
  - b. If the displaced student has not identified a rotation lab within one month of leaving the original thesis research lab, then the student should be terminated.
- 4) The student's stipend during these rotations will be initially covered by the department of the previous mentor.
  - a. If the student chooses a faculty mentor in the same department, then the Chair will decide when the stipend cost is transferred to the new faculty mentor.
  - b. If the student chooses a new faculty mentor in a different department, then the stipend costs for the time of the final determinate rotation (1 month) will be reimbursed to the original department by the new department. These monies can either come from the faculty grants or from departmental accounts.
- 5) There will be no reimbursement of the charge back monies already paid by the original department.
- 6) Permission for more than two 1 month rotations may be given on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the SOC Chair, the original Theme Director, and original Department Chair.

## **GRADUATE SCHOOL INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO PROMOTE INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS**

**Rationale and Goal.** The Graduate School has established an incentive plan designed to encourage more students to apply for individual fellowships. By implementing this incentive plan it is hoped that a significant number of additional individual fellowships will be awarded to UAB predoctoral trainees.

### **Plan Description (GBS Program).**

1. The Graduate School will provide a monetary incentive for GBS students to APPLY FOR individual fellowships funded by extramural agencies or foundations. Graduate students who apply for an individual fellowship (e.g. NSF Individual, NIH NRSA, or other) will be awarded \$500 from the Graduate School through the UAB Financial Aid office as a reward for submitting the application. To qualify for this award, the application must be reviewed prior to submission by the student's program director or mentor, who must provide a written verification to the Graduate School that the application is considered to be competitive. After submission of the grant application, the student will provide a PDF of the application to the Graduate School and the incentive reward will be authorized when the student provides evidence that the application has been received by the granting agency. **The \$500 award is given for first submissions only.**
2. If a GBS student's application is funded, the student will receive an additional financial reward.
  - a. For an NIH NRSA or other grant that provides less than the base stipend currently being offered to all students in that student's program, the student will receive supplementation of the fellowship stipend to an amount equal to the base stipend plus \$1,000 per year for the term that the grant is funded. The supplemental funding will be provided by the Graduate School. If the stipend amount from the external award is equal to or greater than the equivalent of \$1,000 more than the current base stipend in the student's program, the student is entitled to receive the full amount of the stipend. The form used to apply for provision of the supplement from Graduate School resources can be downloaded from the Graduate School web site at:  
<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/images/acrobat/forms/funding/gsincentive.pdf>
  - b. If a student receives an NSF predoctoral fellowship, he/she will receive no supplement to his/her stipend during the three year term of the NSF fellowship. This stipulation is necessary because the NSF stipend of \$30,000 exceeds the current maximum stipend recommended by the Graduate School. After the NSF grant terminates, the student's mentor or department will be responsible for providing the current base stipend in that student's program and the Graduate School will provide the \$1,000 supplement until the student completes his/her degree requirements.

**Eligibility.** This plan is available to students in any graduate program discipline in which extramural individual fellowship funding is available. To be eligible for both the reward for submitting the application and the supplement to a student's stipend, the award must provide more than half the current base stipend in the student's program. Applications for and receipt of travel and other small grants will not be eligible for an incentive award under this program. Additional details for students and faculty concerning the Graduate School-sponsored Fellowship Incentive Plan follow below.

To receive the application incentive (\$500) the following materials are required:

1. A letter from the student's advisor verifying that the advisor reviewed the application and believes that it is competitive.
2. Documentation that the amount of the fellowship provides greater than half of the student's current base stipend.
3. An electronic or hard copy PDF of the application.
4. Verification of receipt of the application by the funding agency.
5. Incentives apply to applications submitted January 2, 2007 or later.

These materials may be submitted to:

- Thomas Harris, Executive Assistant to the Dean, LHL 103, 996-4062, [tharris@uab.edu](mailto:tharris@uab.edu) (Graduate Dean's Office) or to
- Cyndi Ballinger, Graduate School Business Officer, LHL 103, 975-7188, [cknight@uab.edu](mailto:cknight@uab.edu) (Graduate Dean's Office)

If the application is successfully funded, the student should provide a copy of the award notice and the Request for Individual Fellowship Supplement Funding Form to one of the individuals above (Thomas Harris or Cyndi Ballinger in the Graduate School Dean's Office) in order to receive the additional financial reward as described in the Plan Description.

We strongly encourage our graduate students and faculty to participate in this incentive program.

## ACADEMIC ETHICS AND CONDUCT

**GBS Academic Ethics and Conduct Policy and Procedure.** GBS students will be informed of *UAB Academic Ethics and Conduct* guidance contained in the Graduate School Handbook in a mandatory session to occur on the first day of class in the academic year for each new entering class. Students are expected to be and stay familiar with the guidance as well as the UAB Honor Code and will sign a copy of the UAB Honor Code, to be retained in their theme files.

Issues regarding potential ethical infractions must be reported the Theme Director who will communicate with the Associate Dean for GBS. The Associate Dean may convene a GBS Student & Faculty Affairs Committee (SFAC). This committee is assembled *ad hoc* and will consist of two graduate student (peer) representatives, two faculty representatives, and the Associate Dean for GBS will serve as the chair of the committee.

The SFAC will review allegations of violations of academic ethics and Honor Code for any GBS theme student. A faculty member or student, who sees cause to charge a student with academic misconduct, must inform the Theme Director and/or Associate Dean for GBS as soon as practicable, and preferably, within seven (7) calendar days of noting the incident. A failure to report the incident within seven (7) days will not prevent the SFAC from considering the allegation.

A meeting to review the charge will be convened within 7 calendar days. The student will meet with the Committee to respond to the charge or to accept liability. A student who accepts liability will be subject to sanctions for the violation. A student who accepts liability cannot appeal the decision to the Graduate School Appeals Board ("GSAB").

At the meeting, the student may present any information he/she wishes for the SFAC to consider, including presenting any witnesses or witness statements. The student may also have an advisor present to consult with the student. The advisor, however, may not address the SFAC or otherwise participate in the meeting. The student's theme director will attend as a non-voting participant. The meeting may be recorded and the recording will be the property of the University.

The Committee will deliberate and determine the validity and consequences of the allegation and may recommend expulsion or other sanction. Generally, a first violation shall result in the assignment of a failing grade in the assignment or in the course in which the violation occurred, at the discretion of the instructor. A notation on the student's permanent academic record may also be made to indicate that a reduced or failing grade was assigned because of an Academic Misconduct violation (e.g., "F, Academic Misconduct violation, June 15, 2006"), on the judgment of the SFAC. A second violation of the Honor Code shall result in expulsion from the University. No student may graduate until pending allegations of an Academic misconduct violation have been resolved.

The SFAC's decision will be communicated to the student in person, via telephone or UAB email, and theme director within 7 calendar days. The student may have the right to appeal the SFAC's decision to the GSAB as described in the Graduate School Academic Ethics and Conduct Policy, if certain grounds are met as set forth therein. If the SFAC's decision is to dismiss the matter, the decision will not be a part of the student's record.

Allegations of GBS student **research misconduct** will be managed according to [UAB Responsible Conduct of Research](#) policies.

### **Ethical Standards in Research and Other Scholarly Activities.**

#### Proper procedures for reporting concerns about practices or personnel conduct at UAB:

- For most cases, reports should follow the “chain of command”. The immediate supervisor should be first notified unless the problem involves that individual, in which case the next highest supervisor should be notified. Any situation that endangers personnel safety should be reported directly to UAB Police, Occupational Health and Safety (934-2487), Facilities, or others as appropriate with subsequent notification of a supervisor.
- Scientific misconduct, defined as “fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices which seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research” should be reported to the Vice President for Research, who serves as the UAB Scientific Integrity Officer. UAB’s *Policy Concerning the Maintenance of High Ethical Standards in Research and Other Scholarly Activities* can be found at <http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-RA-POL-0000263.aspx> and provides information about the ethical standards expected of UAB faculty and staff.
- Concerns about research or research administration can also be reported directly to the UAB University Compliance Office <http://www.uab.edu/compliance/> or through the hotline maintained by this office. Anonymous reports are accepted.
- Problems related to personnel issues should be reported through the supervisory chain of command unless it is more appropriate to go directly to Human Resource Management Relations 934 -4701.

**Academic Probation.** In the event that expectations/requirements of the GBS program are not met satisfactorily, a student may be placed on academic probation. Probation is not intended to be punitive, rather, the probation system is designed to clearly identify academic issues and provide remediation plans for each issue.

Academic issues should be brought to the attention of the student’s theme director as soon as they are identified. Mentors, course directors, or theme managers can raise issues of concern.

If the theme director agrees that probation is justified, he/she will discuss the issue with the Associate Dean of GBS, and if applicable, fill out a remediation plan.

The remediation plan must clearly articulate the identified issue(s), describe the benchmarks that must be reached to overcome the issue(s), and set a date by which the benchmarks must be achieved. The theme director will discuss the remediation plan, in detail, with the student, and the student must sign the plan during that meeting, if he/she agrees with the plan.

If benchmarks for remediation are not achieved, the student will be dismissed from the program.

If the student does not agree with the benchmarks or wishes to appeal dismissal, he/she can follow the standard GBS grievance policy.

## NON-ACADEMIC CONDUCT

The university is a community of scholars and learners; therefore, all participants are expected to maintain conduct that (1) facilitates the institution's pursuit of its educational objectives, (2) exhibits a regard for the rights of other members of the academic community, and (3) contributes to the maintenance of a healthy learning environment. Through appropriate due process procedures, conduct action will be taken in response to behavior that violates these principles. The office of Non-Academic Student Conduct supports the mission of the university by protecting the rights of all members of the university community and by promoting civility, integrity, responsibility, openness, mutual respect and justice by enforcing community standards. A more detailed description of nonacademic misconduct can be found in the student handbook, [Direction](#). It is the student's responsibility to be fully aware of the policies and procedures described in [Direction](#). The Office of Student Life and the Vice Provost for Student and Faculty Success have the responsibility for coordinating policies and procedures regarding students' nonacademic misconduct.

## GBS GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Although rare, disagreements can arise that may affect a student's progress towards the completion of the degree. The parties involved in such a dispute should make a good faith effort to discuss and resolve the disagreement. The following guidelines may be helpful.

Step 1. Identify the problem; clearly define what happened and what you perceive is needed to resolve the issue.

Step 2. Approach the other person or group involved with the dispute one-on-one. Set up a mutually agreeable time to talk; listen and ask to be listened to; use "I" statements when speaking; avoid assigning blame or leveling accusations.

Step 3. If these steps do not culminate in a resolution, the parties involved with the dispute should agree to approach an impartial third party, a mediator, who will respect confidentiality and with whom the situation can be discussed. The Program Director will suggest such a third party if asked. The mediator may be able to help the parties involved reach a resolution.

Step 4. If no resolution is found then you may submit the disagreement to the Graduate Program for arbitration. Please follow these procedures:

a. Each party in the dispute should submit a written description of the disagreement to the Program Director and the department Chair. Please include a description of the actions taken to resolve the dispute to date and the name of the mediator who was involved.

b. The Graduate Program Director will review the written documents. The Program Director, in consultation with the Program Advisory Committee, will make a determination as to whether or not the disagreement is Program-related and thus appropriate for arbitration at the Program level.

c. If the dispute is found to be Program-related, the Graduate Program Director, together with the Graduate Program Committee, will act as an arbitrator. If the dispute involves the Program Director, Associate Director or any member of the Program Committee, then that individual will be

excused from the deliberations. The Committee may request additional information from the parties involved. The Program Director and the Admissions and Advisory Committee will meet to discuss the problem within 14 calendar days following receipt of the written document or following the receipt of any additional materials. In the event that a quorum of the Committee is not available within this time period, the Committee will meet as soon thereafter as a quorum can be gathered. The Committee may also ask the parties in the dispute to appear before the committee to provide additional information.

d. The result of the Committee's deliberations will be communicated in writing to the parties involved in the dispute within seven (7) calendar days after the meeting.

Step 5. To department Chair for final review of arbitration before proceeding to Appeals Board.

If a party involved in the dispute is not satisfied with the outcome of the arbitration process, an appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School Appeals Board. Please see the Graduate Student Handbook, Graduate School Appeals Board for specific information about the appeals process.

Before a request for review of a grievance is accepted, all normal channels for resolution must have been followed. Requests for review must be submitted in writing with accompanying documents to the Associate Dean for GBS. The written request must specify the grounds for the grievance. The Associate Dean may convene the SFAC, if appropriate.

The SFAC will not review

- Appeal of course grades
- Grievances filed more than 30 calendar days from the date of grieved action or decision

*Initial review of grievance:*

The SFAC will be convened for initial review of the grievance to determine if SFAC consideration of the grievance will be accepted. The SFAC may request additional relevant information from the parties at this time. The determination will be communicated to all parties within 10 calendar days of grievance receipt.

*Determination of grievance:*

If the grievance is accepted for review, the committee will meet to discuss, no more than 10 calendar days following receipt of the grievance or following receipt of additional documents if requested. The SFAC may also request the parties in the dispute to meet with the Committee individually or together to provide additional information. The result of the committee discussion will be communicated in writing to the parties in the dispute no more than 7 calendar days following the meeting.

If a party in the dispute is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance review, an appeal may be submitted to the Graduate School Appeals Board for specific information about consideration and process ([GS Handbook, Graduate School Appeals Board](#)).