

Graduate Program in Toxicology and Cancer Biology

(M.S. and Ph.D.)

Student Handbook

Revised June 2021

The following is intended to serve as a guide for graduate students in the Department of Toxicology and Cancer Biology (DTCB). The Graduate School Bulletin should be consulted for detailed procedures and regulations not discussed in this document.

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Part I

I. University (Graduate School) Academic Standards

A. Responsibilities of Director of Graduate Studies

The **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** reports directly to the Dean of the Graduate School or to that Dean's designee on all matters relating to graduate education in the program. The DGS is responsible to the Dean of the Graduate School for the administration of the specific graduate program, including maintenance of records, administration of graduate program funds, admission of graduate students, any affiliated University Scholars Program, fellowships, program requirement changes and new programs, advising and registration, appointment of advisory and examination committees, and other degree requirements related to the graduate program. Additionally, the DGS serves as the focal point for dissemination of information from the Graduate School.

The DGS serves as program advisor to each student until the student has a Major Advisor. The DGS then recommends that the Major Advisor is appointed as the thesis or dissertation director and appointed as Chair of the Advisory Committee. All student schedules for courses that are a part of the degree curriculum must be endorsed by the student's advisor. The DGS in the student's major program should be consulted concerning course requirements, any deficiencies, the planning of a program, and special regulations. (Graduate Bulletin Page 13, 26).

The **Department Chair** has responsibilities for decisions on financial and resource support, as described below.

Except where otherwise specifically stated, the provisions of this Handbook apply to both M.S. and Ph.D. students.

B. Academic Requirements of Students

Doctoral students must register for a minimum of 9 credit hours each semester to be considered full-time until the semester the student takes the qualifying exam. After the semester the doctoral student takes the qualifying exam they must register for 2 credit hours of TOX 767, post qualifying exam residency credit, to be considered full-time (Graduate Bulletin Page 36). International students must maintain full-time status during enrollment in the program except under specially approved circumstances. The Graduate Bulletin provides additional information on enrollment requirements for graduate research M.S. students.

When students have completed 12 or more semester hours of graduate course work with a cumulative GPA of less than 3.00, they will be placed on "scholastic probation." Students will have one full-time

semester or the equivalent (9 hours) to remove the academic probation by attaining a 3.00 cumulative GPA. If probation is not removed, students will be dismissed from the Graduate School (and hence are dismissed from the graduate program and from Research Assistantship). Students who have been dismissed from the Graduate School for this reason may apply for readmission to the Graduate School and the degree program after two semesters or one semester and the summer term. If they are accepted for readmission by the degree program, readmitted students will have one full-time semester or the equivalent (9 hours) to remove the academic probation by attaining a 3.00 cumulative GPA. Exceptions to this policy can be made only by the Dean of the Graduate School. Students placed on scholastic probation are not eligible for fellowships or tuition scholarships (nor out of state tuition support) and may not sit for doctoral qualifying or final examinations, or master's final examinations (Graduate Bulletin, March 2019, Page 29).

II. Departmental Graduate Program Policies on Graduate Student Admission

A. Direct Admission

For students specifically interested in a Ph.D. in Toxicology and Cancer Biology, direct application and admission to the Toxicology and Cancer Biology doctoral program offers several opportunities. Students directly admitted to the program may select a dissertation mentor from among all Graduate Faculty of the program that includes both core department faculty and faculty whose primary appointment is in other departments and colleges. Together, these faculty offer students directly admitted to the program a full spectrum of research programs related to environmental, agricultural and biomedical toxicology and cancer biology.

For students specifically interested in a M.S. in Toxicology and Cancer Biology, direct application and admission to the Toxicology and Cancer Biology M.S. program is available.

B. Admission Through Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBS) or M.S. in Medical Science

For students who are not certain of their desire for a M.S. or a Ph.D. in Toxicology and Cancer Biology, admission through the IBS program offers the opportunity to consider research programs in one of six departments participating in IBS, including the Department of Toxicology and Cancer Biology (DTCB). For further information about admission to IBS, please visit the IBS website. Transfer from the IBS program to DTCB must be approved by the department Chair and DGS of the DTCB. The Chair and the DGS may consult with the Admission's Committee on specific cases as needed.

Students enrolled in the M.S. in Medical Science program may apply to the Ph.D. program. Consult with the DTCB DGS for more information.

C. Transfer students

Approval. Transfer into the DTCB PhD program from another program other than IBS requires the approval of the Chair, DGS and the Graduate Research Degree Admissions Committee of the DTCB.

Transfer of prior credit towards DTCB Graduate Research Programs. Requests for transfer of credits from other graduate programs must be made to the DGS who will evaluate the applicability of the

prior graduate work to the DTCB program and then forward a request for a waiver to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval.

D. Admission Requirements for M.S. and Ph.D.

Applicants must meet the following requirements for admission to the University of Kentucky Graduate School and the Toxicology and Cancer Biology M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

1. An appropriate degree (e.g., Chemistry, Biological Sciences or other relevant degree) from a college or university that has been accredited by an accrediting body approved by the University of Kentucky.
2. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for doctoral program and 2.75 on a 4.0 scale for Master of Science
3. In certain circumstances students may be encouraged to strengthen their application by submitting their results from the General Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score on the verbal, quantitative and analytical sections.
4. For international applicants, the minimum acceptable TOEFL score is 550 (paper-based), 213 (computer-based), or 79 (internet-based). The minimum IELTS score is 6.5.

Applicants with lesser qualifications will be accepted only if other indices of performance and qualification are outstanding. Examples of appropriate indices include particularly outstanding GPA or GRE scores, or significant academic research experience.

III. Departmental Graduate Program Policies and Procedures on Graduate Student Placement and Funding

A. Philosophy

Each student entering the DTCB M.S. or Ph.D. graduate program will be provided the opportunity to assess how well his/her career interests match those of the existing DTCB graduate program faculty. The selection of the student's "Major Advisor" for the research project is probably the most important decision the graduate student will make during his/her graduate studies. Therefore the following guidelines are meant to clarify the student placement process within the DTCB graduate program, with due consideration of funding availability in the Ph.D. program.

B. Procedures

1. Each first year doctoral student enters the DTCB graduate program without formal assignment to a Major Advisor. This requirement may be waived if a student identifies and is supported by an agreeing Major Advisor when they enroll in the program. This circumstance must be approved by the DTCB graduate research degree program Admissions Committee with input from the department chair.

The DGS advises each entering M.S. student and as the student progresses through the program they choose an advisory committee according to the rules of the Graduate School.

2. The DGS will initially advise the doctoral student during year 1 until an advisor is identified and assigned by July 1 (the first day) of year 2. The responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies will include the following:
 - a) Advise the student about coursework.
 - b) Advise the student to meet with, and schedule by written agreement, 3-4 laboratory rotations with faculty who are members of the DCTB graduate program with apparently compatibility with the general interests of the student. These rotation supervisors may be either core faculty of the DCTB or faculty of other departments and colleges who have an appointment to the DCTB graduate program. Note: The DGS must periodically review and evaluate the student's progress in the first year rotation experience. See also section V.A. below.
 - c) Supervise selection of a Major Advisor. By the end of the first year, the student must have selected an agreeing Major Advisor who will be the responsible immediate supervisor of the student. Failure of the student to select an agreeing Major Advisor will jeopardize the student's financial support for stipend, tuition, insurance and additional fees. Additional rotations beyond the 3-4 or permission to enter the second year without having established a Major Advisor, are at the discretion of the Dept. Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies.
 - d) Perform all other duties assigned by the policies and rules of the University Graduate Faculty or by the Dean of the Graduate School.
 - e) Ensure compliance of practices of the DTCB graduate program with Administrative Regulation AR 5:2., the University Senate Rules, the rules and policies of the Graduate School, and the DTCB department rules.
3. Funding
 - a) Unless otherwise stipulated in writing by the Chair of the DTCB, the DTCB will be responsible for the full stipend (currently \$25,000 per year), health insurance, fees and program tuition support of all first year doctoral students. First year students will be fully supported by the Major Advisor if they select an agreeing Major Advisor upon entrance into the program.
 - b) The Major Advisor will be responsible for providing the following as long as the doctoral student is in good academic standing:
 - An appropriate laboratory environment for the student and full appropriate support for the student's project.
 - Stipend, health insurance, fees and program tuition support for the student for the second year and thereafter.
 - c) As in a) the DTCB will be responsible for financial support of the doctoral student in good academic standing under the unforeseen circumstance that the Major Advisor is unable to provide that financial support. (See also Part II of this Handbook).

- d) Students may be admitted into the DTCB M.S. program without any financial support. However the student must be fully informed of his/her financial responsibilities, including possible payment of out of state tuition.
- e) No student will be admitted to the Ph.D. program without financial support from the DTCB, from his or her home government, or from other scholarships that they bring.

IV. Departmental Graduate Program Policies and Procedures on Graduate Student Performance

- A. The doctoral and MS students and the laboratory rotation supervisor must submit to the DGS the DTCB rotation evaluation form within 7 days of completing the laboratory rotation. See also V. below.
- B. Doctoral students are allowed only once during their degree program for either of the following to happen:
 - (1) a grade lower than a "B" in a credit-bearing activity (class, seminar, or laboratory)
 - or
 - (2) a grade of "Unsatisfactory" in TOX 767.

If either (1) or (2) occurs a second time (in any combination of (1) or (2)) then the student will be considered for termination from the degree program in which the student is enrolled. See also IV.I. below.
- C. A doctoral student receiving a grade of E in a single semester will be considered for termination from the degree program in which the student is enrolled.
- D. Any student remaining on scholastic probation by the Graduate School for two consecutive semesters will be terminated from the degree program in which the student is enrolled.
- E. All post qualifying doctoral students must give a yearly seminar to the department in DTCB seminar course or presentation to the department as part of the TOX 767 residency credit.
- F. Student's Progress File. Each M.S. and doctoral student must submit annually to the DTCB Graduate Program office an updated biosketch. The biosketch must include the following information:
 - Manuscripts in preparation
 - Manuscripts submitted (note whether first or co-first author or other contributing author)
 - Papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (note whether first author or other contributing author)
 - Scientific meeting abstracts (note whether peer reviewed)
 - Scientific meeting oral and/or poster presentations
 - Academic awards

- Any other information concerning scholastic (curricular) and research progress towards the degree that the student wants to include.

The DTCB will retain the updated Biographical Sketch for each student. In addition, contemporaneously updated copies of the student's biographical sketch must be provided to the advisory committee at each meeting.

- G. Doctoral students must have at least one advisory committee meeting each year beginning with the second year. Together, the student and Major Advisor must complete and submit to the DGS the evaluations from each of the committee members using the required DTCB Graduate Program Evaluation Form (see copy of form below). The Major Advisor is responsible for ensuring the timely submission of the evaluation form to the DTCB graduate program office (HSRB 306), and append with it the Biosketch the student submitted for the advisory committee meeting. The submitted documentation will be included in the Student Progress File.

Each year the student will request his/her Graduate Progress Form from the DTCB Graduate Program office which will include the information in IV.F. The form must be updated and returned for input into a computer database. This database will be used to evaluate progress toward the degree, to accurately complete periodic forms submitted to the Graduate School, etc.

Student Progress Files will also be used by the DTCB Education Committee to programmatically evaluate program patterns of student progress.

- H. The DTCB graduate program requires the student to maintain a level of scholastic performance and research productivity that meets standards of the Graduate School and is satisfactory to at least half of the student's Advisory Committee. Failure to meet any of these requirements is grounds for consideration of termination from financial support and/or from the Master of Science or Doctoral program. (See PART II, below).
- I. Assessment of Good Academic Standing for Doctoral Students. The Department of Toxicology and Cancer Biology expects its graduate students to perform above the minimal standards set by the Graduate School, the DTCB program and the university. Specifically:

- 1. Doctoral students are allowed only once during their degree program for either of the following to happen:

- (1) a grade lower than a "B" in a credit-bearing activity (class, seminar, or laboratory)

or

- (2) a grade of "Unsatisfactory" in TOX 767.

If either (1) or (2) occurs a second time (in any combination of (1) or (2)) then the Major Advisor and the Advisory Committee need to consider termination of the student from the degree program in which the student is enrolled. The DGS shall examine the transcript grades for each student at the end of each semester.

A student cannot received a grade of E in any semester.

If a student receives an unsatisfactory progress evaluation report from an Advisory Committee meeting then the student may also receive a course grade of Unsatisfactory if they are enrolled in the residency course TOX 767. (See “Graduate Program Evaluation Form of Doctoral Student”).

The student’s Major Advisor submits the grade for TOX 767. If the Major Advisor submits a grade of Unsatisfactory, then the Major Advisor shall provide to the student (with copy to student file) a written statement describing how the student has not rendered a performance that satisfactorily meets the expectations described in this Handbook.

2. All post-qualifying doctoral students must give an annual seminar or presentation to the Department on their research progress.
3. Each doctoral student’s progress toward the degree will be reviewed (at least) annually by the doctoral advisory committee. Students will be informed in writing of the results of that meeting by the chair of the advisory committee (i.e., the Major Advisor). The advisory committee’s written evaluation of student progress toward the degree will be kept in the Student Progress File maintained by the DTCB graduate program office.
4. If a student receives an unsatisfactory evaluation from their committee meeting, they must schedule a subsequent meeting within approximately 3 months. If they receive another unsatisfactory evaluation they will be considered for termination from the program and /or their Research Assistantship as described in Part II of this document.

J. Assessment of Good Academic Standing (Scholastic and Research) for M.S. Students

M.S. students will be assessed in accordance with the standards of the graduate school.

- K. The opportunity of a student to exercise in the future a “repeat option” for a course (Senate Rule 5.3.2.2) does not delay any of the decisions or consequences described in this Handbook that arise from receiving any particular grade in any particular course.

In all situations in which a student receives notification of termination from the program and/or their Research Assistantship, as described anywhere in this handbook, they may appeal pursuant to the procedures described in Part II.

See also: https://www.uky.edu/regis/sites/www.uky.edu/regis/files/files/ar/priors/ar_5-2_2018_final.pdf

Files Referenced in Section IV

- Student Progress File

Documents Referenced in Section IV

- Biosketch
- Graduate Program Evaluation Form
- Graduate Progress Form

Graduate Program Evaluation Form of Doctoral Student

Committee Member Name:

Date of Previous Advisory Committee Meeting

Date:

Expected Date of Graduation

Student:

Major Advisor:

Individual Development Plan completed or not completed. Y/N

Student Scholastic (curricular) Standing: Please circle Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory:

For each items 1-3, rate and circle the student's skills as excellent, good, needs improvement, or inadequate and include appropriate additional comments.

1. Ability to master and critically analyze literature related to the project.

Rating: excellent, good, needs improvement, or inadequate

Comments:

2. Ability to formulate relevant, testable hypotheses, devise clear experiments for addressing hypotheses, and analyze and interpret data appropriately. Demonstrate adequate understanding of scientific principles and rigor.

Rating: excellent, good, needs improvement, or inadequate

Comments:

3. Ability to orally communicate data and interpretation effectively with scientific peers, answer questions, and communicate ideas.

Rating: excellent, good, needs improvement, or inadequate

Comments:

4. Rating of Overall Student Scholastic and Research Progress – Please circle Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory:

Comments:

5. Summary of Committee Meeting. Each committee member: Summarize your determination of the progress toward the degree of the student in the past year, in accomplishing the goals set at the previous committee meeting. This summary must include identifying positive progress and identifying where progress has not been sufficient.

6. TO BE FILLED OUT BY MAJOR ADVISOR: Summarize the advisory committee's progress goals to be accomplished by the student before next meeting. If the committee has made a finding of "Unsatisfactory" progress toward the degree, this finding must be expressly stated in Item 6. Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (please circle only one)

7. To be submitted as part of the Major Advisor's Evaluation
Student Comments:

Signatures:

Major Advisor -----

Student -----

V. Student Reminder List

A. Laboratory Rotations

Laboratory rotations are designed to familiarize each student with a laboratory environment and scientific focus. During the first year in the program, each student will complete 3 rotations lasting approximately 7-8 weeks each. Each student needs to contact faculty that have an opening and funding to support the student and arrange to meet with them. The first two rotations should be explored as soon as possible after the DTCB student orientation and begin no later than the beginning of the fall semester. A rotation evaluation is completed by the rotation mentor and discussed with the student at the completion of the rotation. Each rotation evaluation must be submitted by email to the DGS and the DTCB office at the completion of the rotation. It is the student's responsibility to notify the DGS when the rotation will be completed and to remind the rotation mentor to submit the evaluation form. The form is included in this document. Students are encouraged to make a final decision by the end of the third rotation. However, upon review by the DGS and the rotation mentors, an additional 4th rotation may be scheduled.

2021-2022 Rotation Schedule

ROTATION	ROTATION DECISION DUE	ROTATION DATES
Fall 1	Monday, August 23	August 23 – October 15
Fall 2	Friday, October 1	October 18 – December 17
Spring 1	Friday, December 17	January 3 – March 4
Spring 2	Friday, February 11	March 7 – May 6

B. Doctoral Degree Candidate Forms

In addition to coursework and research, there are several important issues that must be addressed in order to complete all requirements for the doctoral degree. This will involve the submission of a number of forms to the Graduate School, many at very specific time points. After logging into the student's personal page at the bottom of the screen, each student will be able to complete and submit the required forms on-line. Pressing the "submit" key will transmit the form to the DGS who will review it and forward it to the Graduate School. Each student will receive e-mail notification when the request has been approved.

https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm

C. Formation of Doctoral Advisory Committee

1. Towards the completion of the first year of study, by June or sooner, each student should consider who they would like to have on their advisory committee. Each student discusses this with their Major advisor and even other students. The committee will administer and decide whether the student passes the qualifying exam, provide advice and evaluate the student's progress throughout the program after the first year, and ultimately approve the dissertation and defense. Students may

also decide to ask them to provide references for postdoctoral positions or job applications. Hence, these are important decisions. The advisory committee should be formed no later than August 15, the beginning of the second year.

2. Each student should have a committee meeting before the fall semester of the second year. During this meeting the student needs to begin a discussion of the topic and specific aims page for their mock grant application for the qualifying exam. The student will begin working on this in the TOX 770-002 class during the fall semester
3. Composition of the committee: The committee must have at least 4 faculty which includes the Major Advisor. Three members are required to members of the Graduate Faculty of the Toxicology and Cancer Biology program. One member is required to be outside the department meaning they cannot hold a graduate appointment in the department. If the committee has a total of 4 members, 3 of the 4 members are required to have Full Membership in the Graduate School which usually means they are an Associate or Full Professor. Assistant Professors are usually Associate Members. If two Associate Members of the Graduate School are on the committee then 5 total members are required. All committees have a chair and this is usually the Major Advisor. Also if the Major Advisor is an Assistant Professor (Associate Member), they will need a Co-Chair that is at the level of Associate or Full Professor.

Use the link below to identify graduate faculty associated with the DTCB.

<https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/dgsgradfac/>

4. The Major Advisor and advisory committee should be formally appointed by the Graduate School by August 15, the beginning of the second year of study. This will require completion of the "Doctoral Advisory Committee Request" form. A student should make every effort to maintain the same committee composition throughout his or her tenure as a doctoral student. Should a change be necessary, for example when additional scientific expertise is needed or a committee member leaves the university or retires, a formal request must be made to and approved by the Graduate School. To do this a student must complete a "Doctoral Advisory Committee Modification Request" form which is also available after log in.

D. Committee Meetings

It is required that each committee meeting be documented using the Graduate Program Evaluation Form. Prior to each committee meeting, the student must notify the DGS and department education coordinator by email of the scheduled date of the meeting. After the meeting, each of the committee members will complete an evaluation form, and within 3 days the Major Advisor must collect the forms and submit them and the updated biosketch by email to the departmental office. A copy of the form is included in this document.

E. Scheduling the Qualifying Examination

1. At a minimum, each student must complete the equivalent of two years of residency (36 graduate credit hours) to be eligible to sit for the qualifying examination. The request to schedule the qualifying examination must be submitted by form to the Graduate School a minimum of two weeks in advance of the planned date.

2. During the summer after the second year, each student will be working on revising and finalizing the NIH style grant application that they will submit for the qualifying exam. The guidelines are included in this document. The final version is submitted to each committee member and the DGS on or before September 1. However, in August, each student should submit the request to the Graduate School to schedule their qualifying exam and the student should take the qualifying exam in September. In addition, the Student Forum hosts practice sessions for students to present their proposal and answer questions and each student should participate in these sessions.
3. An oral exam is required by the Graduate School, so the following rules apply to this exam: A request to schedule the Qualifying Examination should be submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. Before scheduling the Qualifying Exam, all requirements for the degree should be completed (except the final exam and dissertation.) Students with "I" grades or "S" grades or "U" grades in credit-bearing courses will not be allowed to sit for the Qualifying Examination until letter grades are assigned for these courses
4. The Qualifying Examination card will be sent electronically to the DGS and the Major Advisor prior to the date of the examination. No exam should commence without a card. All members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee must be present at the oral qualifying examination. The results of the examination must be reported by the DGS to the Graduate School within 10 days of its conclusion. A majority vote is required to pass this examination. If the result is failure, the advisory committee determines the conditions to be met before another examination may be given. The minimum time between examinations is four months. A second examination must be taken within one year after taking the first examination; a third examination is not permitted. If a student fails the qualifying examination on the first attempt, the Advisory Committee may not be changed prior to re-examination without approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Students are admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree after they have successfully completed the Qualifying Examination; the date is noted on the transcript.
5. All students passing the Qualifying Exam need to register for 2 credits of TOX 767 every Fall and Spring semester until they graduate, starting with the Fall semester in which they take the qualifying exam (typically the beginning of their third year). This qualifies as being "full-time" for those students who need to maintain this status (e.g. international students and those students receiving certain scholarships or fellowships).
6. All degree requirements for the doctorate must be completed within five years following the semester or summer session in which the candidate successfully completes the qualifying examination. Requests to the Graduate School for extensions in the program can be submitted with approval of the DGS.

F. Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Doctoral Examination (NOTIF)

A student is eligible to sit for the final doctoral examination after completion of two semesters of post-qualifying residency. In order to provide sufficient time for the Graduate School to identify an outside examiner, the student must submit the NOTIF a minimum of eight weeks prior to the anticipated defense date. To prevent multiple submissions of the NOTIF, this step should not be completed until a complete draft of the dissertation has been submitted to the student's committee chair (Major Advisor) for review. As part of the process of identifying an outside reviewer, either the student or the Major

Advisor can contact candidates to determine their availability for the exam and include their names in the NOTIF.

G. Publication

Because of the recognized importance of publications as a measure of a successful graduate career and or the ability of the student to compete for future positions, the department expects that students have at least one first-authored, peer-reviewed research paper published or accepted for publication before the student can submit the Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Doctoral Examination form. Requests for exceptions to this policy by the student or the student's Major Advisor should be brought to the attention of the DGS, who after consulting with the student, the student's Major Advisor, and the members of the student's dissertation committee, will recommend whether or not to allow the requested exception. The DGS will copy the recommendation to the student, the student's Major Advisor, and the members of the student's dissertation committee. The dissertation committee will then make the final decision about the requested exception.

H. Request for Final Doctoral Examination

A student must submit a "Request for Final Examination" to the Graduate School a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the examination. This submission generates an exam form that is sent by email to the DGS and the Major Advisor. The outside examiner should be provided with a final copy of the dissertation at this time. This submission generates an exam form that is sent by email to the DGS and the Major Advisor. It is imperative that this form be taken to the exam and signed at the completion of the exam indicating whether the student has passed or failed.

Following the appointment of the Outside Examiner, the final examination date may be set by submitting the Request for Final Examination at least two weeks before the scheduled date for the Final Exam. The Graduate School will send announcements of the examination to each committee member and to the student. Doctoral final examinations may only be scheduled when classes are in session (fall and spring semesters, 12-week summer session). Requests for exceptions to this policy should be submitted by the DGS to the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School. Examination and degree conferral deadlines can be found in the University Calendar.

The DGS approves the Request for Final Examination. The student should submit identical, final drafts of their dissertation to each of their committee members, including the outside examiner appointed by the Graduate Dean, at least two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date. If members of the committee judge that the dissertation needs further revision before the defense, the exam can be rescheduled.

I. Graduate School Procedures for Conducting the Final Examination

The following are Graduate School procedures for conducting the final examination:

At the outset of the Examination, the DGS or committee chair should verify that the Examination Card has been brought to the examination room. If this is not the case, the committee chair or DGS must call the Senior Associate Dean's office at the Graduate School (257.7126) to determine if the examination may proceed. The Examination may not begin until all voting members of the committee are present (these names are listed on the examination card). One or more members of a master's or doctoral committee may participate remotely in an Examination if a video-conference connection can be established (this option does not apply to the Outside Examiner assigned to final doctoral defenses). The

DGS should identify the committee members participating in this fashion on the qualifying or final examination request form. Under exceptional circumstances, the remote participation option may also be extended to the student.

An Examination may be cancelled prior to its official start for substantive reason with no permanent consequences for the student. The student has not failed the examination in this case because it was never officially begun. Substantive reasons can include a missing committee member, a sudden difficulty in the candidate's personal life that may affect performance, or a (late) opinion on the part of one or more committee members, for example that the dissertation is not ready to defend. In such cases, the committee may hold an open or closed discussion to review the issues at hand and reach a decision on whether to hold the examination or not. Furthermore, the candidate does have the right to cancel the examination prior to its start. If the examination is cancelled, it must be formally re-scheduled with the Graduate School in the standard fashion. A minimum two-week interval is required for re-scheduling the examination.

Once the examination has begun, it must be carried through until its end. A formal vote must be taken and recorded on the examination card, along with the signatures of all (voting) members. There are only two outcomes possible; Pass by majority vote, or Fail. The examination may not be suspended for an extended period to permit the candidate to correct deficiencies, and subsequently re-convened. The only suspensions permitted are short ones to permit the candidate or committee members to refresh themselves.

If an emergency situation should arise during the course of an examination, the committee chair or DGS should immediately call the Graduate School (257.4905 or 257.1759) to seek guidance.

It is not unusual for the committee to stipulate changes that need to be made to the examination copy of the Dissertation before it can be submitted to the Graduate School. The student's Major Advisor is responsible for ensuring that these changes are made. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they are made within 60 days after the completion of the exam.

J. Submission of Dissertation

1. The student has 60 days from the date of the exam to receive approval of the final version of the dissertation from the Graduate School. Failure to obtain approval of the dissertation from the Graduate School within 60 days of the exam may result in the student having to be re-examined.
2. Once the Graduate School notifies the student of acceptance of the dissertation within the 60 day window, the student will be removed from research assistantship payroll since this is mandated.
3. The specific formatting requirements for the dissertation are at the following link:
<http://gradschool.uky.edu/thesis-dissertation-preparation>
4. These instructions include the ETD Approval Form for Thesis or Dissertation that needs to be submitted with the final copy of the dissertation. It is advised that the final copy of the dissertation be submitted well in advance of the 60 day period noted above. It is not unusual for the Graduate School to return a Dissertation for reformatting. This form also includes an option to "embargo" the Dissertation. This option prevents public release of the Dissertation for up to two years in the event

that the Dissertation contains sensitive intellectual property. ETD submission and embargo procedures are described in the attachment to the ETD approval form.

K. Request for Graduation

The semester calendar lists the last day to apply for graduation and submit a request through the MYUK portal. These deadlines are early in each semester. If a student misses the deadline, they will graduate the following semester. Students will receive a document from the Graduate School when the Graduate School accepts the final dissertation indicating that the student has fulfilled all degree requirements which can be used to transfer to the next career phase if the student has not formally received the actual degree. For example, if a student defends in November but does not formally graduate until the following May, they can use this document to indicate their completion of the doctoral program. The links below relate to scheduling graduation:

<http://gradschool.uky.edu/calendar>

<http://www.uky.edu/graduate/>

<http://www.uky.edu/Commencement/>

VI. Additional Important Information

A. Holiday & Leave Policy

The University of Kentucky recognizes certain holidays by closing of all departments and offices except where continuous service is essential. Students are eligible to receive these holidays. When required to work on a University holiday, time off shall be granted and taken on another scheduled working day within one week of the holiday.

Students are entitled to a maximum of 10 days of vacation each fiscal year (June 30 – July 31). Students are required to work during periods when University offices are open but classes are not being held unless vacation leave is approved. Vacation days will expire on June 30th each year and a new allocation begins July 1st. The Absence Record Form must be completed and sent to toxandcancerbio@uky.edu for tracking of approved leave.

B. Sponsored Student Travel

Before making any travel arrangements or registering for a conference, an Absence Record Form must be completed and sent to toxandcancerbio@uky.edu. The department will advise on how to make travel arrangements based on if the student holds an Assistantship or Fellowship.

After returning from travel status, receipts must be submitted for reimbursement as soon as possible to ensure compliance with applicable University and federal regulations.

It is required that each student contact the DTCCB Office prior to booking flights/hotel. A UK Travel Vendor must be used and proper use of a procard must be followed. Instructions and a form are included in this document.

C. Graduate Student Academic Staff Forms (GSAS)

The GSAS Research Assistant appointment form is submitted prior to the beginning of each semester. Each student will receive an email notification that it has been submitted by the DGS and they must follow the link and approve the submission in order for it to be transmitted to the Graduate School. Failure to approve the submission can influence receipt of the stipend and tuition waver.

D. Leave

Decisions concerning leave with, or without, Research Assistantship stipend will be determined in accordance with the Graduate Bulletin.

PART II

Research assistants will maintain satisfactory academic standing (Section IV.I). If their academic progress toward the degree is unsatisfactory (Section IV.I, J), their assistantships may not be renewed (AR 5:2.IV.F) and the student will be considered for termination from the program (Section IV.I.4; Section IX). After four years in the DTCB and/or IBS doctoral program), status in the program and renewal of research assistantships will be reviewed on an annual basis.

At the beginning of the fifth doctoral year and at the beginning of each year thereafter, the Major Advisor, the Chair of the DTCB and the DGS will review student academic progress towards graduation (Section IX). This review must be completed at the beginning of the fifth doctoral year, regardless of the timing of any committee meeting the previous year held pursuant to Section IV.I.J. The written evaluation will be provided to the student, copied to the Advisory Committee and retained in the student's progress file. This review of progress toward the degree will also be a basis for the advisory committee's recommendation concerning continuation or renewal of a research assistantship (Sections VII, VIII)

VII. Procedures for Terminating a Graduate Student from a Current Research Assistantship

A. Conditions of Doctoral Research Assistantship

When the faculty member elects to become the Major Advisor of a doctoral student (typically commencing the start of the student's second program year), the faculty member will receive and sign a Memo of Understanding as follows:

The Major Advisor accepts the responsibility of guaranteeing funding for the doctoral student, provided the student remains in good academic standing (Section IV.I) Unless otherwise stipulated in writing by the Chair of the DTCB, the DTCB will be responsible for financial support of the doctoral student under the unforeseen circumstance that the Major Advisor is unable to provide that financial support. The funding guarantee includes:

- 1) Tuition for coursework required for the completion of the degree, as determined by the student's doctoral program and advisory committee,
- 2) Stipend (\$25,000 for 12 months as of AY19-20),
- 3) Applicable mandatory and student health fees,
- 4) Health insurance, and
- 5) Other costs (supplies, etc relevant to their training)

The doctoral student is expected to complete all requirements for the doctoral degree by the end of the fifth year of enrollment in the DTCB or IBS program. Each doctoral research assistant is expected to understand that they must remain in good academic standing for continuation in the program and continued research assistantship support, under the conditions prescribed in this handbook. Each doctoral student must sign a form indicating that they have understood the Student Handbook.

C. Termination of Research Assistantship

Educational units may terminate a doctoral graduate student from their research assistantship position during a research assistantship funding period if the unit receives relevant information that indicates the student should be terminated from their position (AR 5:2.E).

1. **Not in Academic Good Standing.** Financial support is academically guaranteed only to doctoral students that remain in good academic standing in the program as outlined in this handbook. A student's academic performance in course work and in laboratory investigation is monitored periodically, under procedures and criteria described in Section IV. If a student receives an unsatisfactory evaluation from their committee meeting, they must schedule a subsequent meeting within approximately 3 months. If they receive another unsatisfactory evaluation by the committee, they will be considered for termination from the program (Section IX) and /or their Research Assistantship (Section VII, VIII), as described here in Part II of this document. If a student's academic standing is found to be unsatisfactory after this second committee meeting, financial support to that student can be terminated with an advance notice of 14 days. The final decision to terminate the research assistantship position will be made by the department chair, upon concurrence by the Major Advisor, majority of the Advisory Committee, and the DGS. This decision can be appealed by the student per section IV and VII.D below.
2. **Other Circumstances.** In contrast to the above concern of academic standing, in the circumstance that a determination has been made that the student has committed neglect of university duty, or in the circumstance that other relevant information has been received by the DTCB, the student is subject to notification of immediate termination. This decision can be appealed by the student per section IV and VII.D below.

D. Appeal

If the student believes that the unit's decision to terminate the research assistantship is in error, the student may appeal the ruling to the Graduate Council within 15 days of the notice of termination. A delegated subcommittee of at least five (5) members of the Graduate Council will consider the appeal, request further information from the student or the educational unit if necessary, and issue a written response to the student within 45 days of the appeal being filed (AR 5:2.E). If the student believes that their appointment has been terminated as a violation of established procedure or a violation of academic freedom, the student may file a complaint with the Senate Advisory Committee on Privilege and Tenure, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 1.4.4.2. of the University Senate Rules (AR 5:2.E).

VIII. Procedures for Nonrenewal a Graduate Student to a Research Assistantship in the Doctoral Program

A. Nonrenewal of Research Assistantship

Research assistantship policies described here in Section VIII apply to students who have not graduated from the doctoral program after five years. Section VIII applies also to ungraduated transfer students who are at a point equivalent to five years in the doctoral program.

1. Not in Academic Good Standing

The procedures and criteria for determination of academic standing described in Section VII.C.1 also apply here. A decision not to renew a research assistantship, or to rescind notice of renewal, under this provision can be appealed by the student per section IV and VIII.C below.

2. Other Circumstances. In contrast to the above concern of academic standing, in the circumstance that a determination has been made that the student has committed neglect of university duty, or in the circumstance that other relevant information has been received by the DTCB, the student is subject to notification of nonrenewal or rescission of notice of renewal. This decision can be appealed by the student per section IV and VIII.C below.

If the Research Assistantship will not be renewed in the coming academic year, the Research assistant will be notified by March 1. An educational unit may rescind a renewal appointment after the March 1 deadline if the unit subsequently receives additional relevant information that indicates the graduate student should not have research assistantship position renewed.

Decisions not to renew a graduate student's research assistantship position or rescission of a notice of renewal, must include consideration of progress information recorded from the advisory committee meetings (IV. above). The final decision to not renew the research assistantship position will be made by the Chair of DTCB upon concurrence by the Major Advisor, majority of the Advisory Committee, and the DGS. This decision can be appealed by the student per section IV and VIII.C

C. Appeal

If a research assistant is not reappointed or the renewal notice is rescinded, and believes that the unit's decision to not reappoint or decision to rescind is in error, then the graduate student may appeal the ruling to the Graduate Council within 15 days of the notice of non-reappointment. A delegated subcommittee of at least five (5) members of the Graduate Council will consider the appeal, request further information from the student or the educational unit if necessary, and issue a written response to the student within 45 days of the appeal being filed (AR 5.2:V.C, D). If the student believes that their appointment has been terminated as a violation of established procedure or a violation of academic freedom, the student may file a complaint with the Senate Advisory Committee on Privilege and Tenure, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 1.4.4.2. of the University Senate Rules (AR 5:2.E).

IX. Procedures for Terminating Graduate Students from the M.S. or Doctoral Programs

Circumstances under which termination from the program may occur.

- A. Termination from the M.S. or Ph.D. program is automatic and the DGS will provide the student with written notice of the action if the student:
 - 1. Is on scholastic probation for two consecutive semesters, or
 - 2. Fails the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination after the second attempt, or
 - 3. Fails the Ph.D. Final Examination after the second attempt, or
 - 4. The student submits to the DGS and the Major Advisor a written notice of withdrawal from the DTCB M.S. or Ph.D. programs
- B. Termination from the Ph.D. Program for Reason of No Agreeing Major Advisor.

It is by mutual agreement with the Major Advisor that a graduate student conducts his or her research under the immediate academic supervision of and in the laboratory of the Major Advisor. If during the course of a graduate student's program, the student wishes to change to a different Major Advisor but continue in the DTCB degree program or the Major Advisor wants to resign being the Major Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies must be notified. If the student is judged to be in good academic standing, the Chair and DGS will support the student to secure a sponsoring DTCB laboratory over a period of no more than two months. The student has no more than two weeks to identify a rotating mentor which could include a previous rotation mentor and then the student will have six weeks to carry out the laboratory rotation. If the student does not identify a new agreeing Major Advisor within this 2 month period, the student is considered for termination from the program and the Research Assistantship. The decision to terminate from the program and the assistantship will be made by the department chair, in consultation with the DGS. A termination decision can be appealed by the student per section IX.D.

- C. Termination for Reason of Not in Good Academic Standing

A student's Advisory Committee may recommend termination from the program in which the student is enrolled (1) at any time prior to the Qualifying Examination, (2) after the student has failed to pass one Qualifying Examination, or (3) after the Qualifying Examination has been passed. Consideration REF by

the Advisory Committee to develop a termination recommendation must include consideration of progress information recorded from the advisory committee meetings (Section IV.I, J. above), and must have offered the student opportunity to submit a contemporaneously updated biosketch. An Advisory Committee recommendation to terminate the student from the program must include a statement that the Advisory Committee considered the appropriateness of alternatives other than termination from the program. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies with a copy to the student. This letter must clearly state the reasons for the committee's recommendation. In cases where the student's Advisory Committee recommends termination after the qualifying examination has been passed, the Graduate Faculty in that program will meet to make a vote on the recommendation. When the Graduate Faculty of that program concurs and the student dissents, the student will have an opportunity to meet with the Graduate Faculty of the program, after which a second vote will be taken and a final recommendation will be made, through the DGS, to the Dean of the Graduate School.

D. Appeal

According to Senate Rule 6.1.3, students "have the right to receive a fair and just academic evaluation of their performance in a program. In addition to the student's overall academic record, evaluation may include the assessment of such activities as research and/or laboratory performance, qualifying examinations, professional board examinations, studio work or performance activities, behavior in professional situations, or interviews to determine continuation in a program. The program faculty and/or relevant administrative officer must inform the student as to which activities will be included in the academic assessment no later than the beginning of the activity to be evaluated." "Evaluations determined by anything other than a good faith judgment based on explicit statements of the above standards are improper."

If the student believes that their academic dismissal from the M.S. or Ph.D. program is a violation of student rights as prescribed in the University Senate Rules 6.1.3, the student may file a complaint with the Ombud.

X. Tuition

Students are guaranteed payment of tuition related to their doctoral programs subject to the following conditions:

- A. The coursework for which the student has registered has been approved by the chair of their Advisory Committee and the DGS of their program.
- B. The student is in good academic standing as outlined in this handbook. Students who have been notified by the Graduate School that they are officially on academic probation will be responsible for payment of in-state and out-of-state tuition charges while they remain on probation. Once they have raised their GPA to the required 3.0 to regain good academic standing, payment of any future tuition charges will be covered by their Major Advisor and/or program, subject to condition A.
- C. Tuition costs during the first 4 semesters prior to the qualifying exam and the two credit hours of TOX 767 will be covered by the department or the Major Advisor. Costs associated with additional coursework will be the responsibility of the student or, when the additional coursework is

recommended by the students Advisory Committee for their research then the student's Major Advisor will be responsible.

XI. References

Administrative Regulation 5:2

http://www.uky.edu/regs/sites/www.uky.edu.regs/files/files/ar/priors/ar_5-2_2018_final.pdf

Graduate Bulletin

Graduate School Director of Graduate Studies Manual

http://gradschool.uky.edu/sites/gradschool.uky.edu/files/FacultyStaff/DGS_Manual_2017-18.pdf

Department of Toxicology and Cancer Biology Rules

https://toxicology.med.uky.edu/sites/default/files/tox-department_rules_of_procedure_0.pdf