GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Program in Neuroscience
Florida State University
(last updated: July 24, 2025)

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NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY

The Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience provides comprehensive training of graduate students in this exciting discipline that probes the function of the brain and nervous system. Neuroscience combines the resources of many traditional disciplines such as anatomy, biology, biomedicine, chemistry, nutrition, physiology, psychology, and behavioral science to look at all aspects of neural function. The goal of the FSU Program in Neuroscience is to transform students into first-rate scholars prepared for neuroscience research and teaching positions in academic settings or applied careers in industry or government. Through mentored research experience supplemented with formal and informal instruction, students obtain a broad appreciation of the field of neuroscience with expertise in an area of specialization; an ability to formulate and test hypotheses that advance our knowledge of the nervous system; an understanding of ethical and moral standards in the conduct of research; and training in effective communication in written and oral form.

Faculty members of the interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience have their primary appointments in one of four departments in two colleges: In the College of Arts and Sciences, the departments of Biological Science, Psychology and Mathematics and in the College of Medicine, the department of Biomedical Science. These faculty members come together in the Program in Neuroscience for collegial interaction and research collaborations, and to provide classroom instruction and research mentoring for students studying for the Ph.D. in Neuroscience. Students must meet the admission requirements for the Program in Neuroscience and be accepted into a home department, generally the department of their initial advisor/major professor. The degree program is governed by the specific requirements for the Ph.D. in Neuroscience administered by the Program in Neuroscience, as explained in this document, and by the general degree requirements of The Florida State University. Advice on interpretation of these requirements is generally available from a student's doctoral supervisory committee, from the graduate office of the student's home department or from the Director of the Program.

Formal courses required for all students are kept to a minimum to allow flexibility in assembling a program of coursework and research compatible with the highest standards of scholarship and best suited to the student's research goals. Despite this flexibility, there are timelines that have to be observed. Students should take control of their careers at FSU using careful time management, looking forward to each goal and "planning backwards" to determine where to start and what route to take in order to arrive at that goal at the appropriate time.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Applicants are generally required to meet minimal criteria of 3.0 undergraduate grade point average (upper division work. In addition, the faculty evaluate three current letters of recommendation from individuals who are able to assess the applicant's academic and research potential. Foreign students, in addition to the above, also must meet University minimum standards for English proficiency (e.g., TOEFL or DUOLINGO exam). The Program ordinarily does not accept a student without a faculty sponsor or sponsors willing to serve as the initial advisor(s). More details on the admission process are available from the Program in Neuroscience website at **http://www.neuro.fsu.edu**.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

1. Summary of Degree Program

The Ph.D. in Neuroscience is a research-intensive degree for which the main effort will be an independent research project that makes a scholarly contribution to scientific knowledge in the discipline. The minimum degree requirements include completion of required and elective coursework, various additional requirements specified below, and the writing and defense of a dissertation.

Degree requirements may be modified from time to time by vote of full members of the Program in Neuroscience, on the recommendation of the Director and Executive Committee, or in accordance with university regulations. With approval of the supervisory committee, students may elect to complete their degrees under the rules in place at the time they enter the degree program or any subsequent complete set of rules.

Students entering the Program in Neuroscience are admitted into a doctoral- track. However, students have the option, with approval of the major professor and supervisory committee, to obtain a Master's degree in their respective home departments. Each student's progress toward the Ph.D. degree will be assessed each year by their supervisory committee. Each stage of a student's progress to the degree is documented by memos or letters sent to the student's home department as specified in the relevant sections below. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all documents reach the appropriate destinations.

Students entering the Program in Neuroscience are expected to know and follow the accepted practices of good scientists including respect for intellectual property, full and honest reporting of experimental results, and careful attention to the welfare of human subjects and experimental animals. These and other concerns are discussed in a required course taken in the first semester.

2. Time Limits for Degree

The Ph.D. degree must be completed within 5 years of successfully completing the Preliminary Exam and being advanced to Doctoral Candidacy (normally by the fall semester of the student's third year).

3. Major Professor

By the beginning of the Spring semester of the first year, students should choose a major professor to become the chair of the student's supervisory committee mentoring the student's progress in the program. In most cases the initial advisor/sponsor is also the major professor, but this is not required.

With mutual agreement between the student and another faculty member, and the director, a new major professor may be chosen. The Program will make every effort to arrange funding where the transfer to a new lab is seen to be in the student's best interest, but the former source of funds may not be transferable (e.g., if from an individual faculty research grant). To remain in the program, all students must have a major professor. Transfer to a new major professor must be completed with one academic semester.

4. Supervisory Committee and Committee Meetings

(i) Committee Composition – Initial Committee

Students enter the Program under the sponsorship of an initial advisor whose area of research matches the student's interest. This matching process allows students to start hands-on research in their area of interest but does not obligate them to continue in the same lab for their dissertation research. An initial three-member supervisory committee guides students as they choose a research project. It is normally expanded to form the full five-member committee, but an entirely new committee could be formed if appropriate. The initial three-member supervisory committee also has the correct membership to be a Master's Degree committee if the student and the committee agree that the experience of completing a MS degree (in the student's home department) would be an advantage.

The initial 3-member supervisory committee is comprised of:

- Initial faculty sponsor acting as major professor: Neuroscience member.
- A second Neuroscience member.
- Non-Neuroscience member from the student's home department.

The initial committee should be chosen in consultation with the major professor and established by the end of the Spring semester in the student's first year. When committee membership is agreed by all members, a memo is sent to the Graduate Office of the student's home department and a copy is sent to the Neuroscience Office. The student is responsible for ensuring that this memo is sent, as well as completing the necessary paperwork in the home department, if a master's degree is sought.

(ii) Committee Composition – Full Doctoral Supervisory Committee

The doctoral supervisory committee provides advice and guidance, and monitors the student's progress to the degree and graduation. The committee has the responsibility for ensuring that the work conforms to the standards for scholarly research at FSU, that the student meets all the other requirements for the degree, and that the student is fairly treated by all. Any personal or financial relationships that could create a perception of bias or conflict of interest must be avoided. The University Graduate Faculty Representative will ultimately make a written report to the Dean of Graduate Studies that this responsibility has been met and that the dissertation defense was properly conducted. Within the constraints of the required make-up of the committee, members are chosen for their expertise in the student's field of research. Committee members are, thus, qualified to evaluate the work and to give useful advice on avoiding pitfalls so that the completed work is of the highest possible quality.

The doctoral supervisory committee is comprised of:

- Major Professor - NS member and (normally) a member of the student's home department.
- University Graduate Faculty Representative – Tenured faculty member, NOT a member of the student's home department and NOT a member of the Program in Neuroscience.
- Member of the student's home department, NOT a member of the Program in Neuroscience.
- Neuroscience member who is NOT a member of the student's home department. (could be the major professor if not a member of the student's home department).
- Neuroscience member from any department.

All members except the University Representative are selected as experts qualified to give advice on and/or to evaluate the student's dissertation topic. Additional members beyond the five specified may be included but are not required. All voting members must have Graduate Faculty Status at FSU (see below). The Major Professor and a minimum of two other members must have current approval to

direct doctoral dissertations in Neuroscience. Departments may prefer that a majority of committee members be from the student's home department. If there is a conflict with the guidelines, students should consult the Neuroscience Director.

FSU Faculty (regular or courtesy) with approval to direct doctoral dissertations only in degree programs other than Neuroscience cannot be major professor for the Neuroscience degree but may be co-major professor with a Neuroscience member approved to direct Neuroscience doctoral degrees. Faculty without an FSU appointment (regular or courtesy) cannot be voting members of a Neuroscience supervisory committee. Temporary Graduate Faculty Status may be requested from the Dean of Graduate Studies specifically to allow an FSU faculty member without such status, or a non- FSU faculty member, to be a voting member of the committee. Non-FSU faculty must receive the appropriate courtesy appointment before requesting this one-time Graduate Faculty Status.

The full five-member committee should be established before the preliminary exam and by the end of the Spring semester in the student's second year, or by the end of the first semester after completing a MS degree. A memo from the major professor indicating committee membership and initialed by each committee member is sent to the Graduate Office of the student's home department with a copy sent to the Neuroscience Office. The student is responsible for ensuring that this memo is sent and for completing all necessary paperwork in the home department.

(iii) Committee Meetings

Each graduate student must meet with her/his supervisory committee at least once per year. The purpose of this meeting is to review the student's academic progress in research or in formulating a suitable research project. It is an opportunity for the committee to contribute advice and offers of technical/theoretical assistance as well as constructive criticism. The content of the meeting is determined by the major professor and the committee, but it is the responsibility of the student to make sure the meeting takes place in a timely manner. A face-to-face meeting is required.

A component of the annual committee meeting will be the annual graduate student review (see below). Students should check with their committee members well in advance of any required committee meetings or examinations to make sure that everybody will be available to participate. Committee members may be out of town or on sabbatical for one or both semesters of the academic year. It is often difficult to arrange an exam or defense during the summer because of the unavailability of committee members who may be off-campus during this time.

5. Curriculum Tracks

Students are expected to follow one of the two curriculum tracks, a Neuroscience Track for students using laboratory animal subjects and a Cognitive Neuroscience/Human Imaging Track for students using human subjects. A student may request approval from the supervisory committee to take an elective that does not appear on the approved list of electives (see Appendix I). The final decision will be made by the Director. Students requesting waiver of requirements on the basis of courses taken at another institution must provide sufficient evidence on the substitute-course content and level. Any decision on substitution of a required course will not create a precedent for other students.

6. Required and Elective Coursework

The minimal courseload is 9 credit-hours each semester for each of the three semesters: Fall, Spring and Summer. Some of these required hours each semester will normally be devoted to research in the

student's home laboratory.

Four core graduate neuroscience courses are required for all students. Responsible Conduct of Research (Fall, first year), Neuroscience Methods (Spring, first year), Summer Seminar (Summer, first year), and Research Design & Analysis I or Quantitative Methods (generally Fall, second year). Students also complete several advanced electives (minimum of 17 letter-graded hours). When course loads allow, all students should also register each Fall and Spring for Neuroscience Colloquium., which features nationally and internationally known neuroscientists discussing their latest research findings. A list of graduate courses available to Neuroscience students is provided in Appendix I.

An individual National Research Service Award (NRSA), from a federal funding agency such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is recognized as a significant achievement both for the student and for the Program. Eligible students are strongly encouraged to apply for these awards. Students should consider submitting an application in the fall semester of their third year. Well-prepared students could submit earlier. To support efforts in preparing an NRSA application, students are encouraged to enroll in the program's grant writing course (offered annually) and attend a special workshop on preparation of an NRSA application (provided annually through the FSU Biology department).

Students are expected to make good progress in completing the program's required and elective coursework. If a student's GPA drops below a 3.0, they are placed on academic probation. Students on initial probation (1st semester of probation) have one semester to bring their cumulative GPA up to 3.0. If the student does not reach a cumulative 3.0 by the end of that term, he/she will be dismissed from the University.

7. Program of Studies

The university requires that a Program of Study be prepared, to include a complete plan of courses to be taken. The plan for future courses to be taken while a graduate student at FSU, should be compiled in consultation with the major professor, starting with a list of upper level undergraduate courses and graduate courses already taken. The completed Program of Studies should be approved and signed by each member of the supervisory committee and sent to the Graduate Office of the student's home department. A copy of the signed Program of Studies should be provided to the Program Office.

The University's residence requirement is (*University Bulletin, Graduate Edition)*: "After having finished thirty (30) semester hours of graduate work or being awarded the master's degree, the student must be continuously enrolled on The Florida State University Tallahassee campus for a minimum of twenty-four (24) graduate semester hours of credit in any period of 12 consecutive months"

8. Required Laboratory Work Outside the Home Laboratory

Students must complete a one-semester DIS laboratory course with one Neuroscience faculty member outside the lab of the student's advisor. Selection of a program of study beyond the introductory courses, or alteration in the sequence of courses, should be made in consultation with the major professor and the supervisory committee. The committee may also require a student deficient in some field essential to the student's chosen research project to take one or more courses in that field.

9. Summer Seminar

The Neuroscience Summer Seminar series provides an opportunity for students to practice assembling and presenting a body of scientific research, an essential skill for scholars in any field. All students are

expected to make one or more presentations in the Summer Seminar series (see Seminar requirement).

10. Required Research Presentations

All students must make at least two formal research presentations in addition to a presentation in the Neuroscience Summer Seminar (and the doctoral dissertation-defense seminar). At least one of these presentations must be at a local, national or international meeting. A poster presentation at a regional, national or international meeting may be substituted, but only if the student is first author. The purpose of the requirement is to ensure that students have an opportunity to assemble and present scientific data and receive feedback on content, organization and presentation. The supervisory committee is responsible for determining that the presentation is acceptable to satisfy the requirement and that the student has received adequate feedback. Presentations in the Neuroscience Seminar (Baker Seminar or summer seminar) will be evaluated by the instructor of record, who will communicate with the supervisory committee.

11. Preliminary Exam

This comprehensive exam provides evidence of scholarly competence before admission as candidate for the Neuroscience Ph.D. degree (see timetable). Generally, written questions are submitted to the major professor by each committee member to be answered by the student in writing. The University Representative on the committee may simply serve as a reader and is not required to pose a separate question. The committee decides the question format. The committee member who set the question evaluates the written answer, but all questions and answers should be available to the committee, generally one week prior to the oral exam. The student is further evaluated by the full committee in the oral examination. The content of the oral exam is open but should concentrate on clarification of written answers plus general questions relevant to the student's chosen research area. Generally, the oral exam should follow completion of the written exam by no more than two weeks. The entire process should be completed within one semester's length.

There are four possible outcomes:

- Pass,
- Conditional pass, requiring additional work and approval by the committee (the additional work should generally be completed within 60 days),
- Fail with the opportunity to retake the exam (normally within one semester, with, generally, only one opportunity to retake the exam),
- Fail with dismissal from the Ph.D. program (completion of a terminal MS may be recommended).

Students who do not complete the preliminary exam by the end of their fourth year are considered to have made "unsatisfactory progress" unless there are special extenuating circumstances (as determined by vote of the supervisory committee) and must pass the exam by the end of the next semester.

The outcome of the exam is reported in writing to the graduate office of the student's home department and the office of the student's Academic Dean. If the student retakes the exam, the written report must indicate that the student either passed or failed. When the student passes the exam, notice must be sent to the University Registrar, on an official Admission to Candidacy form. The student is responsible for ensuring these notices are sent.

12. Proposal

The Ph.D. proposal should take the form of a research-grant proposal in NIH or NSF format. Its purpose is to enable the student to plot a course to the completion of a significant research project; to identify the experiments and resources necessary, the methods of analysis, anticipated results, the resolution of possible pitfalls and the time required.

The student must meet with the supervisory committee and defend the proposal. On acceptance of the proposal by the committee, an approval form signed by all committee members is submitted to the Graduate Office of the student's home department, with a copy to the Neuroscience Office. Students are reminded that animal care and human subjects research requires preapproval by the ACUC and/or IRB, respectively. A copy of the approval form will be required as an appendix to the dissertation. Students must be named in any approved protocol that covers research that the student intends to include as a part of their dissertation.

13. Dissertation Defense and Seminar

The dissertation must be completed on some topic connected with the student's major field of study. To be acceptable it must be an achievement in original research constituting a significant contribution to knowledge and represent a substantial scholarly effort on the part of the student" (FSU Graduate Bulletin). Graduate students are not permitted to have undergraduates, graduates or technical staff conduct any part of their dissertation research for them other than the repetition of routine tasks, the principles and practice of which the graduate student has already mastered. The dissertation may be written as a single work or as several individual chapters intended to be, or actually, independent manuscripts. The Graduate School requires that in the latter case the thesis/dissertation must include an overall Introduction and an overall Conclusions section.

The Dissertation Defense for neuroscience doctoral students consists of a public seminar presenting information from the dissertation followed by an oral examination, which is administered by the candidate's supervisory committee. The major professor is responsible for deciding when and where the student should defend the dissertation and should preside at the examination. University policy demands that all committee members be present for the dissertation defense. The use of distance technology (e.g., Zoom) is allowable to meet this requirement.

Students should consult the most recent deadlines (see FSU Graduate Bulletin: http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/grad_degree.html). A preliminary draft of the dissertation must be submitted electronically and to each member of the supervisory committee at least four weeks before the date of the oral examination. At least two weeks before the date of the examination, the student or major professor must submit an announcement of the dissertation title and the date and place of the examination to their home department and Neuroscience office.

The result of the defense and oral examination: passed, failed or to be re-examined must be certified in writing via a memo signed by all members of the oral examining committee, to the Academic Dean of the student's home department, with copies to the graduate office of the student's home department. Following any re-examination a follow-up written report must indicate that the student either passed or failed. The student is responsible for adhering to all FSU regulations with respect to graduation and dissertation format and publication. Students should contact the FSU Office of Graduate Studies *before* the term in which they expect to defend their dissertation.

Dissertation work should be of a high scholarly standard suitable for publication in peer-reviewed

scientific journals. However, the requirement for publication of the dissertation is satisfied by deposit of the dissertation in the University Libraries System, via the FSU Office of Graduate Studies. The student agrees to this form of publication as a condition of undertaking a doctoral program.

14. Timeline for Degree Completion

Annual Student Review: Every fall or spring semester (follow home department policy).
Coursework: Complete by spring semester of year 3.
Preliminary Exam: Complete be end of year 3.
Doctoral Proposal: Complete be end of fourth year.
Dissertation hours: Complete a minimum of 24 credit hours prior to graduation.
Dissertation Defense: Complete within 2 years of proposal defense.

A checklist for program requirements is provided in Appendix II. Note that each student is responsible for ensuring that their departmental graduate office receives the appropriate memos marking her/his progress in the degree program.

ANNUAL REVIEW and SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of the Scholarly Engagement requirement is to ensure that students are active participants in the scholarly community. To meet the Scholarly Engagement requirement, doctoral students should interact with faculty and peers in ways that may include enrolling in courses; attending seminars, symposia, and conferences; engaging in collaborative study, research, and outreach beyond the university campus; and utilizing the library, laboratories, and other facilities provided by the University. The goal is to prepare students to be scholars who can independently acquire, evaluate, and extend knowledge, as well as develop themselves as effective communicators and disseminators of knowledge.

Each graduate student's progress in the Neuroscience Ph.D. degree track is reviewed annually to ensure that students make timely progress toward the degree. The major portion of this review will take place in the annual committee meeting, but participating departments may institute additional procedures. Students prepare a report containing a summary of activities and research conducted over the previous year, plus a description of plans for the upcoming year. This document and a copy of the student's updated Curriculum Checklist (see Appendix II) should be approved by the major professor and sent (by the student) to all members of the supervisory committee before the review meeting. Following the review, a written evaluation for each student is approved by the supervisory committee, reviewed by the student, and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator of their home department. The evaluation should indicate whether progress has been satisfactory (with reasons, if not satisfactory), and indicate any areas of concern. A recommendation that a certain degree requirement be met ASAP is not necessarily an "area for concern" unless the student fails to comply. Unsatisfactory progress or other concerns will be referred to the Program Director and/or Graduate Training Committee for corrective action. For students who are formal candidates for the Ph.D., that is, those who have passed the preliminary examination and whose Admission to Candidacy form has been certified by the Office of University Registrar, the University requires an annual written evaluation of the student's progress from the supervisory committee.

The following is provided as a guideline to the meaning of "satisfactory progress." Progress is expected on both course work and research. Students on academic probation (GPA less than 3.0) or who make two grades of C or lower on Neuroscience required/core courses are not necessarily evaluated as making "unsatisfactory progress" if considerable research achievements have been made, but these students' performance is definitely an area for concern. Too little research progress even when grades

are high is also an area for concern when students are beyond the second year. Too little achievement in both coursework and research is always unsatisfactory. An evaluation of "unsatisfactory progress" or two evaluations of "progress a matter for concern" could be cause for dismissal from the program. A student receiving such an evaluation should consult with their major professor and supervisory committee within 2 weeks of the evaluation, for advice on how to improve. A written plan for improvement should be prepared by the student within 30 days and approved by the major professor and supervisory committee, who will monitor adherence to the plan. Copies should be sent to the program's Graduate Training Committee and director. This document will be available for the next annual review, and progress in completing the plan will be considered in determining the next evaluation. Evaluations can be appealed to the director.

Any decision by the supervisory committee that a student should not continue in the Ph.D. degree due to sustained unsatisfactory progress is reviewed by the program's Graduate Training Committee. The Graduate Training Committee can recommend that the decision be reconsidered, but cannot overrule a unanimous decision by the supervisory committee. In the event the supervisory committee is not unanimous, the student has the option of finding another committee (and/or major professor) that would be prepared to support the student's continuation in the Program. If the supervisory committee's final decision involves dismissal or continuation to a terminal MS degree only, this is indicated in the annual evaluation report. An extra copy of the report is supplied to the student and should be signed by the student and major professor and returned to the Neuroscience Office. If the student decides to drop out of the Ph.D. track, no formal decision by the committee on the student's suitability for doctoral studies is required. The decision to drop a student from the Neuroscience Ph.D. track may be appealed to the Neuroscience Director, who will consult with the supervisory committee, the training committee and other Neuroscience faculty before making a final decision. This decision has no necessary direct effect on any *departmental* decision to continue the student in a *departmental* doctorate or master's degree track.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

15. Stipends

The Program in Neuroscience, together with the student's home department, makes every effort to support all students in good standing with adequate stipends and full payment or waiver of tuition. Support comes from:

- Institutional NRSA (National Research Service Award) Training Grants (Federal funds)
  Individual NRSA Fellowships (Federal funds)
- Neuroscience Fellowships (State funds)
- University Fellowships (State funds)
- Teaching or Departmental Assistantships (State funds)
  Individual faculty research grants (various sources).

The funds available and the rules governing these sources vary. The Program strongly encourages and assists eligible students to apply for individual NRSA support as early in their careers as possible.

NRSA training grant awards: Stipend levels are set by the federal government and adjusted periodically. These awards also pay health insurance, partial tuition and student fees, and some research and travel expenses. Appointments to institutional training grants are decided by the director(s) of the grant and a committee of faculty on the basis of academic performance and potential. Individual predoctoral NRSA awards are highly competitive awards to an individual student on the basis of a detailed training and research proposal submitted and reviewed by the specific

funding agency in NIH. NRSA training grant eligibility is limited to US citizens or permanent residents.

Neuroscience Fellowships: Funds for these awards come from the Program in Neuroscience general budget. Stipend levels are set by the Program in Neuroscience Director in consultation with faculty on the basis of academic performance and potential. Recipients also receive a annual travel allowance.

University Fellowships: University Fellowships are awarded on a University-wide competitive basis following application by departments or programs. There are no research or travel funds set aside for awardees, but they are eligible for travel funds available to all students.

Teaching Assistantships: These are awarded by the student's home department in exchange for teaching or other duties. Their availability depends on the departmental budget and the number of students to be supported. The stipend level is set by the department and may vary across departments participating in the Program in Neuroscience. To be eligible for a teaching assistantship, students are required to complete the Essential Policies & Practices Training for TAs (https://teaching.fsu.edu/required-training/) and any additional departmental training requirements.

Research Assistantships: These appointments are made at the discretion of individual faculty members to qualified students in exchange for work on an externally funded research grant. The research work performed is generally the student's dissertation work. University rules require that a student's tuition be paid from the same source as the student's stipend. Research grant funds can be used only in accordance with the original terms of the grant and some grants may not allow student support or tuition expenditures.

Matriculation waivers: Students with a graduate assistantship for at least 10 hours per week are eligible for matriculation waivers. Students receiving matriculation waivers must be registered as full-time students (9 credit hours during the fall, spring, and summer semesters). Matriculation waivers provide a waiver of tuition fees only. Students are still responsible for the remaining student activity and related fees.

Continued support is dependent on good academic standing and satisfactory progress. Students supported for three years on traineeship or fellowship support are expected to have made sufficient research progress to have a publication submitted or ready for submission by the end of the third year. This criterion will be considered in decisions on continued support beyond the third year.

Students on academic probation (GPA below 3.0) are not eligible for support on training grants except in exceptional circumstances. Students receiving two grades of C or lower on required or core Neuroscience courses, even if maintaining a 3.0 GPA, will also be ineligible for traineeship/fellowship support for at least the subsequent semester. Students receiving an evaluation of "unsatisfactory progress" or two successive evaluations of "concern" are ineligible for traineeship/fellowship support for at least the subsequent semester and/or until their progress is considered satisfactory upon completion of the plan for improvement.

Students supported on FSU institutional assistantships have certain rights under the FSU UFF- GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement, including an annual employment evaluation, separate from the annual academic evaluation.

16. Travel Funds

The Program may have a small pool of funds to assist graduate student travel to scientific meetings in

order to present research conducted at FSU. The student must be first author on the presentation and must make strenuous efforts to obtain funding from other sources including the major professor, the home department and the Congress of Graduate Students (COGS). In most cases Neuroscience funds will not cover the entire cost of the trip.

MISCELLANEOUS

17. Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC)

The six-member GSAC is mandated by Program in Neuroscience by-laws to provide two-way communication between the Program and graduate students. Members are elected annually by graduate students in the Program (except that a minority-group member may be additionally appointed by the Director). The GSAC polls students and makes recommendations to the director and faculty on courses, degree requirements and all aspects of graduate student life and reports back to students. The GSAC selects one of its members to be the student member of the Program in Neuroscience Training Committee. The GSAC is specifically designated to communicate the concerns of individual students or groups of students, who wish to remain anonymous, to the Director or other appropriate faculty member(s). Inappropriate behavior or treatment of a student or students by any member of the university community are examples of legitimate concerns that might warrant anonymous reporting (and resolution). See also dispute resolution and appeals, above.

By courtesy of the Neuroscience Graduate Students Association (NGSA), and for simplicity, the student elections for NGSA officers and for GSAC committee members are traditionally combined. The NGSA officers serve as GSAC members, which facilitates the two-way communication that GSAC is intended to provide. However, NGSA is an independent student organization. It is only in their capacity as GSAC members that its officers have any specific obligations to the Program. NGSA officers and members have provided outstanding community service in outreach to local K-12 schools and the general community, with assistance from the Program and the N. Florida Chapter of SfN.

18. Policy for Dismissal of a Graduate Student for Reasons Other than GPA (approved by the Office of Faculty Development & Advancement , November, 2024)

The University reserves the right to dismiss graduate students and terminate their enrollment in an academic program based on a number of different criteria, beyond that of GPA alone. Oversight is provided by The Graduate School, Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, and Office of the Registrar. Additional details on the steps involved in the process are available for faculty and administrators from the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement and for graduate students at the Graduate School.

Dismissed students will not be permitted to register for further graduate study, including registering as non-degree students, in the degree program or college from which they had enrollment terminated.

Graduate students who have been dismissed from one degree program may seek admission to another degree program but will not be readmitted or allowed to add the dismissed degree program back as a second major or degree. This includes seeking admission into a different degree program that shared a joint pathway with the dismissed degree program.

Program terminations (dismissal for a reason other than GPA) are generally identified by the faculty with support from the Department Chair (or unit head) in the department/unit or single-unit college level and

may occur for a number of different reasons.

As specified by university policy, Graduate policy, or within the unit's Graduate Student Handbook, reasons may include but are not limited to:

- Inability to conduct independent research in a fashion appropriate with the accepted norms of a discipline.
- Inability to function within a team environment to the extent that it negatively affects the learning, practice and/or research of fellow graduate students.
- Behavior that does not meet the professional standards of a discipline (typically clinical, social work or school settings, but also including Motion Picture Arts, internship work, etc.).
- Failure to meet artistic or creative performance standards.
- Failure to be approved for an Extension of Time (EOT).
- Failure to complete important degree milestone requirements within a reasonable period of time.
- Inability to pass the doctoral diagnostic exam, preliminary exam for admission to candidacy in, etc.
- Failure to complete the doctoral degree or make timely progress towards the research or writing of their treatise or dissertation.
- Failure to complete the master's degree or make timely progress towards the research or writing of their thesis, or the production of their thesis-equivalent creative project.

In addition, please note that suspension or expulsion from the university may result if a student is found responsible in a formal Academic Honor Policy (AHP) hearing for an egregious AHP violation, or as an outcome from a Student Conduct Code charge for which a student is found responsible.

Graduate program handbooks **must** provide information about failure to meet specific milestone or behavioral requirements. Students who are dismissed for reasons other than grades may follow the General Academic Appeals Process if they have evidence that academic regulations and procedures have been improperly applied.

(i) Steps for Dismissal of a Graduate Student for Reasons other than GPA

Step 1: Identification

A graduate student identified by the faculty or unit leadership in their academic program, department, or single-unit college as:

Category 1: Failing to make adequate progress in the academic degree program and/or failing to meet the professional standards of the discipline.

- Proceed to Step 2.

Category 2: Failing to meet university or program requirements for continuation in the academic degree program.

- Skip Step 2. Proceed to Step 3.

Step 2: Remediation Plan

If the reason for the dismissal of the graduate student falls into Category 1 (see above), then the

graduate student must meet with their major professor/faculty advisor and Department Chair (or unit head) to develop a detailed remediation plan for improvement.

- The unit should provide a written remediation plan and/or written academic communication to the graduate student containing specific information about improvement(s) needed to avoid dismissal.
- The remediation plan and/or academic communication should be developed by the major professor/faculty advisor and Department Chair (or unit head) for the individual graduate student and be shared with the graduate student in writing. (For doctoral students, the annual evaluation is one opportunity to document unsatisfactory progress, yet a special review may be conducted at any time.) NOTE: The remediation plan should include a reasonable timeline for the graduate student to meet the goals and objectives of the remediation plan. The length of time for remediation is dependent on the situation and is up to the program to decide and justify.
- The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office) **must** be notified of the situation, the deficiencies, and the remediation plan prior to communication with the graduate student.

*If the reason for the dismissal of the graduate student falls into Category 2 (see above), then the Department Chair (or unit head) can move directly to Step 3 (see below).

Step 3: Consultation with Academic Dean's Office

If the graduate student fails to resolve/remediate the specified and documented deficiency within a reasonable timeframe, as noted in Step 2 (see above), or falls into Category 2, then the department or single-unit college may initiate a program dismissal. If the program chooses to terminate the academic progress of the graduate student, then the following steps must be completed **prior** to notifying the graduate student of the termination and sending the graduate student a dismissal letter.

The Department Chair (or unit head) must first consult with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the college (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office) regarding their intent to dismiss. The discussion should include the unit's graduate handbook language, the remediation steps taken (if Category 1), the graduate student's efforts to date to resolve or address the deficiencies, and the grounds for the program termination.

Step 4: Dean's Office Consultation with the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement to Discuss Potential Program Dismissal

The Associate Academic Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office) should contact the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (Dr. Amy Guerette-aguerette@fsu.edu) and setup a consultation to discuss the program's intention to move forward with the dismissal (for reasons other than GPA) of a graduate student from a degree program.

If all parties agree that program dismissal should proceed, the Department Chair (or unit head) should use the appropriate Dismissal Letter Template found on pages 7-10.

Step 5: Draft Dismissal Letter

A specific dismissal letter template **must** be followed and is provided below (see pages 7-10), At a minimum, the dismissal letter must specify the following information.

- The process followed to notify the graduate student of their deficiencies and the opportunity and guidance that was provided to allow them an opportunity to rectify those deficiencies.
- The termination reasons,
- Benchmarks missed,
- The fact that dismissal from the degree program constitutes dismissal from the University (unless formally admitted to another graduate degree program prior to dismissal).
- Clear information about the method and timing of the graduate student's separation from the degree program and University.
- An academic hold will be placed on registration to prevent future registration. Any future registration will be cancelled.
- If applicable, outline possible alternatives offered and agreed upon by the graduate student, e.g., conferral of a lower-degree level (see Step 3D below).
- Timeline to complete specific coursework for the given semester, if any. For example, the letter needs to clearly articulate to the graduate student that the courses in which they are currently enrolled need to be completed by the dismissal date in order to earn credit for them.
- Notification of the right to appeal and information about how to do so, and
- A deadline for any appeal submittal to the Associate Academic Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office). *See "General Academic Appeals Process" for more information.

During the consultation with the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement and/or writing of the dismissal letter, there can be a discussion about the possibility of providing the graduate student with alternative opportunities. *This is not required, and it is at the unit's discretion to offer.

Under certain extenuating circumstances during the dismissal process of a graduate student, the Department Chair (or unit head), or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office) may offer the graduate student with the opportunity to change their degree program type or level **within** the same degree program (i.e., MA to MS, MFA to MS, PhD to EdS, PhD to MA/MS, etc.). The student must accept a conferral of an alternate degree or degree level.

Prior to considering and offering this opportunity to the graduate student, the Department Chair (or unit head), or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office) **must** first evaluate the following:

- Whether the graduate student already possesses the lower level of the degree, as the University prohibits the awarding of more than one degree from the same CIP Code. *There can be no appeal to this requirement.
- The Department Chair (or unit head) must clearly explain to the graduate student in writing that if the lower level of the degree is awarded, then:
- The graduate student can facilitate a Change of Major Request into a different degree program (if accepted by the other program).
- All coursework leading up to that degree is considered final and credits used towards the alternate degree cannot be used towards a future graduate degree.

Step 6: Approval of Dismissal Letter

Once the dismissal letter has been written and finalized by the Department Chair (or unit head) and reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent

individual in the Dean's Office), it should be sent for final approval to the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (Dr. Amy Guerette- aguerette@fsu.edu).

Step 7: Sending the Dismissal Letter to the Graduate Student

After final approval has been granted from the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, the written dismissal letter must be sent to the graduate student who is being dismissed, as well as several offices for record-keeping. The dismissal letter must be sent from the Department Chair (or unit head) to the graduate student. If a single-unit college, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office) should send the dismissal letter to the graduate student. The following individuals must be copied (i.e., cc:ed) on the dismissal letter:

- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or designated equivalent individual in the Dean's Office),
- Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (Dr. Amy Guerette- aguerette@fsu.edu)
- Office of the University Registrar (Dr. Kimberly Barber- kabarber@fsu.edu),
- The Graduate School (Mr. James Beck- jpbeck@fsu.edu)

19. Dispute Resolution and Appeals

Substantive disagreements on interpretation or application of degree requirements or other rules should generally be brought first to the next higher authority for resolution. Thus, disagreements between student and major professor should be brought to the full supervisory committee, one of whose reasons for existence is to assure a fair treatment for the student in accordance with FSU policies. All unresolved disputes of any kind may be appealed to the Program in Neuroscience Director, who will seek advice from the Neuroscience Training Committee and other Program faculty. Many elements of the Neuroscience degree requirements are also University requirements. Disagreements on interpretation of University degree requirements may be appealed first to the Program in Neuroscience Director. If not satisfied, the student may then appeal to the Academic Dean of the student's home department, and then the Dean of Graduate Studies. See also GSAC, below.

APPENDIX I - Curriculum

Core curriculum: Students should follow one of two curriculum tracks: a Neuroscience Track for students using laboratory animal subjects and a Cognitive Neuroscience/Human Imaging Track for students using human subjects.

Students will follow one of the two tracks, but deviations in the recommended course sequence are permitted if approved by the student's supervisory committee. Specific courses listed in each track are considered foundational and electives are used to reach the **minimum requirement of 22 letter-graded credit hours** from the courses on the approved curriculum list below (substitutions may be considered if approved by the student's supervisory committee and the Program Director).

*Required course for all Neuroscience graduate students.

Neuroscience Track (recommended course sequence)

Fa Yr1 PCB 5845 Cell & Molecular Neuroscience (4 h) or *PSY 6919 Research Design & Analysis 1 (3 h)
*PSB 5077 Responsible Conduct of Research (2 h; S/U graded)

Sp Yr1 PSB 5230C Vertebrate Neuroanatomy (4 h)
PSB 5341 Systems & Behavioral Neuroscience (3 h)
*PSB 5057 Neuroscience Methods (2 h)

Su Yr1 *PSB 6933 Summer Seminar (2 h; S/U graded)

Fa Yr2 PCB 5845 Cell & Molecular Neuroscience (4 h) or PSY 6919 Research Design & Analysis 1 (3 h)
Elective (3 h)

Sp Yr2 Elective (3 h)

Cognitive Neuroscience/Human Imaging Track (recommended course sequence)

Fa Yr1 PSY 5916 Intro. to fMRI (3 h) or PSY 5916 MATLAB (3 h) or PSY 5916 Translational EEG Res. (3 h)
*PSY 6919 Research Design & Analysis I (3 h)
*PSB 5077 Responsible Conduct of Research (2 h; S/U graded)

Sp Yr1 PSB 5230C Neuroanatomy (4h) or PSB 6048 Affective Neurosci. (3h) or EXP 5406 Neurobio of L&M (3h)
*PSB 5057 Neuroscience Methods (2 h)

Su Yr1 *PSB 6933 Summer Seminar (2 h; S/U graded)

Fa Yr2 PSY 5916 Intro. to fMRI (3 h) or PSY 5916 MATLAB (3 h) or PSY 5916 Translational EEG Res. (3 h)
Elective (3 h)

Sp Yr2 PSB 5230C Neuroanatomy (4h) or PSB 6048 Affective Neurosci (3h) or EXP 5406 Neurobio. of L&M (3h)
Elective (3 h)

List of Approved Courses (additional courses may be added following approval by the Graduate Training Committee)

Core Courses (offered every year; all students must take these courses)

PSB 5057 Responsible Conduct of Research (S/U; fall)
PSY 6919 Research Design & Analysis I or BSC 5936 Quantitative Methods (3 h; fall)
PSB 5057 Neuroscience Methods (2 h; spring)
PSB 6933 Seminar in Neuroscience: Summer Seminar (S/U; summer)

Course Electives (offered every year)

PCB 5845 Cell & Molecular Neuroscience (Fall; 4 h)
PCB 5525 Molecular Biology (Fall; 3 h)
PSB 5341 Systems & Behavioral Neuroscience (Spring; 3 h)
PSB 5230C Vertebrate Neuroanatomy (Spring; 4 h)
PCB 5137 Advanced Cell Biology (Spring; 3 h)
PSY 6919 Research Design & Analysis II (Spring; 3 h)

Course Electives (typically offered every other year)

BMS 5525 Bioregulation (3 h)
EXP 6609 Working Memory and Cognitive Control (3 h)
PSB 6048 Affective Neuroscience (3 h)
PSY 5916 Introduction to fMRI (3 h)
PSY 5916 MATLAB (3 h)

Course Electives (typically offered every 3rd year)

BMS 5700 Developmental Neuroscience (3 h)
BSC 5936 Neuroepigenetics (3 h)
PCB 5786 Membrane Biophysics (3 h)
EXP 5406 Neurobiology of Learning & Memory (3 h)
EXP 5717 Animal Psychophysics (3 h)
GMS 5095 Modeling Human Diseases (3 h)
MAP 5932 Computational Neuroscience (3 h)
PCB 5795 Sensory Physiology (3 h)
PSB 5347 Molecular Neuropharmacology (3 h)
PSB 6059 Behavioral Neuroendocrinology (3 h)
PSB 6059 Neurobiology of Social Behavior (3 h)
PSY 5916 Translational EEG Research (3 h)

Professional Development Opportunities (the letter-graded courses below do not count toward the 22-credit hour minimum).

GMS 6001 Tools of the Trade (3 h; letter graded)
PSB 6920 Neuroscience Colloquium (1 h; S/U)
PSB 6993 Seminar in Neuroscience - Baker lunch (1 h; S/U)
PSY 6919 Grant writing (2 h; letter graded)
PSY 6945 Teaching Psychology Practicum (3 h; letter-graded)
Conference Presentation
Departmental Presentation
Teaching Assistantships
Workshops/Presentations on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

APPENDIX II – Curriculum Checklist

I. Required Courses (List the semester and year completed.)

_____ PSB 5077 Responsible Conduct of Research (S/U graded)
_____ PSY 6919 Research Design and Analysis I (3 h) or BSC 5936 Quantitative Methods (3 h)
_____ PSB 5057 Neuroscience Methods: Molecules to Behavior (2 h)
_____ PSB 6933 Seminar in Neuroscience: First-year Summer Seminar (S/U graded)

II. Elective Courses (Minimum of 17 letter-graded hours are required. List the semester and year completed. Additional elective courses may be approved by your Doctoral Supervisory Committee.

_____ BMS 5700 Developmental Neuroscience (3 h)
_____ BMS 5525 Bioregulation (4 h)
_____ BSC 5936 Neuroepigenetics (3 h)
_____ EXP 5406 Neurobiology of Learning and Memory (3 h)
_____ EXP 5717 Animal Psychophysics (3 h)
_____ EXP 6609 Working Memory and Cognitive Control (3 h)
_____ GMS 5095 Modeling Human Disease (3 h)
_____ MAP 5932 Introduction to Computational Neuroscience (3 h)
_____ PCB 5845 Cell and Molecular Neuroscience (4 h)
_____ PCB 5137 Advanced Cell Biology (3 h)
_____ PCB 5525 Molecular Biology (3 h)
_____ PCB 5595 Advanced Molecular Biology (3 h)
_____ PCB 5747 Mammalian Physiology (3 h)
_____ PCB 5786 Membrane Biophysics (3 h)
_____ PCB 5795 Sensory Physiology (3 h)
_____ PSB 5230C Vertebrate Neuroanatomy (4 h)
_____ PSB 5341 Systems and Behavioral Neuroscience (3 h)
_____ PSB 5347 Molecular Neuropharmacology (3 h)
_____ PSB 6048 Affective Neuroscience (3 h)
_____ PSB 6059 Behavioral Neuroendocrinology (3 h)
_____ PSB 6059 Neurobiology of Social Behavior (3 h)
_____ PSY 5916 Introduction to fMRI (3 h)
_____ PSY 5916 MATLAB (3 h)
_____ PSY 6919 Research Design and Analysis II (3 h)
_____ _____

III. Laboratory Experience

Students are required to gain some research experience (equivalent to a 3 h DIS) outside of their home lab. This may be in the form of a DIS or similar research experience (e.g., immersive workshop), and must be approved by the student's committee. List the topic, directing professor (if applicable) and the semester/year completed.

1. _____

IV. Presentation Requirement

Students must give at least 2 formal presentations (oral or poster). At least one of these presentations must be delivered to an audience outside of FSU. List the semester/year and venue for each presentation.

1. _____

2._____

V. Research Courses (list the semester and year completed)

_____ PSY 6656 Preliminary Exam Preparation (minimum of 3 credit hours; NS/PSY students only)
_____ BSC 8964 / IHS 8960 / PSY 8964 Preliminary Doctoral Exam (0 credit hours)
_____ IHS 5503 Proposal Development (1 h; NS/BMS students only)
_____ BSC 6980 / IHS 6980 / PSY 6980 Dissertation* (minimum of 24 credit hours)
_____ BSC 8985 / IHS 8970 / PSY 8985 Dissertation Defense** (0 credit hours)

*Students must register for at least 2 credit hours of Dissertation in the semester of graduation.
**Students must be registered for Dissertation Defense in the semester in which the manuscript is defended. If the manuscript clearance deadline is not met for that semester, graduation will be deferred to the following semester.

VI. Research Elective Courses (used to bring your course schedule to 9 credit hours per semester)

Students may take the following courses to maintain full-time enrollment status. These courses may be repeated.

PSB 6920 Neuroscience Colloquium (1 h/semester; S/U)
PSB 6933 Seminar in Neuroscience (1 h/semester; S/U)
BMS 5905 Directed Independent Study in Biomedical Sciences (1-9 h/semester; S/U)
BSC 5900 Individual Research Study (3 -9 h/semester; S/U)
PSY 5900 Individual Research Study (3-9 h/semester; letter-graded)
PSY 5908 Directed Individual Study (1-9 h/semester; S/U)
BMS 6936 Seminar in Biomedical Sciences (1 h/semester; S/U)

APPENDIX III - Dual Compensation

The stipend provided to graduate students is intended to facilitate study, educational progress, and research. Additional unrelated outside employment may reduce a student's role in contributing to the graduate program and could also be construed as indicating a lack of commitment to a student's training.

However, it is recognized that special extenuating circumstances may occur, and provisions for them are given in the following categorization:

1. Half-time (or less) graduate teaching assistants (TAs) and research assistants (RAs). Such a student finding it necessary to obtain supplementary, outside employment must report their intention to seek outside employment to their major professor, other supervisory committee members, and the Program in Neuroscience Director.
2. Graduate training grant and fellowship recipients (domestic and foreign): Some fellowships include funds for payment of all fees, others pay some but not all fees, and some pay no fees. There may be funds available to provide a supplement equivalent to the fee waivers available to other graduate assistants. A copy of the award letter or fellowship appointment indicating the distribution of external funds will be needed to determine eligibility for internal supplemental funds. Nevertheless, any fellowship recipient finding it necessary to obtain supplementary, outside employment must report their intention to seek outside employment to their major professor, other supervisory committee members, and the Program in Neuroscience Director.

Graduate studies should be engaged as a full-time endeavor. Students who are supported on a qualifying assistantship are expected to be fully engaged with their studies. Additional employment or activity, especially outside the Department, is discouraged to ensure timely completion of one’s degree. Requests for additional or outside employment or activity will be evaluated for conflicts of interest in accordance with the GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Approval of supplemental work and compensation does not excuse a student from meeting the timelines specified in Section 14 (above).