

Summary of Graduate Program Best Practices

Graduate students who understand the requirements and expectations of their program of study and who receive clear guidelines and progress feedback have a better chance of meeting these expectations in a timely matter.

An essential means of formal communication between a department and its graduate students is the department's graduate handbook.

With this in mind, the Graduate Council has asked the office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to conduct a thorough analysis of current department handbooks and identify best practices.

The following is a summary of our analysis—of both Rice departments as well as practices from peers institutions and guidelines from the Council of Graduate Schools.

It is organized by theme. For each, we explain the situation and complication. Then we make a recommendation and provide examples of successful practices that might help departments decide how they want to address the issue.

1. Reference to other documents

Situation: Departmental handbooks aren't the only documents regulating the life of graduate students at Rice.

Complication: There is not a central place where students can learn all the regulations that they need to comply with.

Recommendation: Ensure that all departmental handbooks include the following: "In addition to being in agreement with the regulation stated in this departmental handbook, students must also be in agreement with the [General Announcements](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#)."

In case there is conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over department-wide regulations, which take precedence over research group-wide regulations.

In doubt, students should seek help first at the department level (graduate coordinator, director of graduate studies, advisor, and/or department chair) and then at the central administration level (office of graduate and postdoctoral studies)."

Clearly State Program Requirements

2. Publish Degree Timeline

Situation: While students might progress at different speed towards the completion of their degree—especially in research programs—it is usually possible to publish a default degree timeline communicating to them when they are expected to reach milestones. These expectations help students continuously gauge their progress and prepare in a timely manner for critical events, such as their qualifying exam.

Complication: Some programs don't publish a default degree timeline.

Recommendation: Ensure that each program has a default degree timeline that includes at least—and, ideally, all—of the following: completion of coursework, qualifying/comprehensive exams, candidacy, progress reviews, initiation of TA duties, and thesis defense. [Include comprehensive list of milestones, if applicable]

Examples:

Biochemistry and Cell Biology provides a timeline for the first three years in their PhD programs indicating when students are expected to start their TA duties, when they are to take their qualifying exams, and when they are to receive progress reviews.

History details how many course credits students are expected to register per year, when they should form their thesis committee, and when they should file their petition for candidacy.

To learn more: Appendix A shows these timelines.

3. Publish Course Requirements

Situation: The General Announcements sets the University-wide requirements for programs, such as the minimum number of credits necessary to obtain a specific degree. Programs usually have additional specific course requirements.

Complication: Sometimes, a graduate handbook doesn't list a program's requirements or lists an outdated or otherwise wrong list of requirements.

Recommendation: Ensure that the handbook provides the required course or suggested course list as well as elective list for each area of study. Programs with no required courses should provide course advising to assist students with course selection

Examples:

Biochemistry and Cell Biology publishes a list of background course for students who need to make up deficits as well as a list of required and elective courses.

Sociology provides a list of required courses along with a breakdown of the sequence in which they should be taken.

Philosophy and Math offer individual course advising for first and second year students.

To learn more: Appendix B shows these examples.

4. Publish information on first-year course advising.

Situation: First-year students enter with various undergraduate backgrounds; some might have undergraduate deficiencies that must be made up early on.

Complication: Sometimes entering graduate students do not receive course advising to ensure they enroll in courses which are appropriate for their background as well as future area of study.

Recommendations: Establish and publish in the handbook a method for advising entering first year students on their course selection.

Examples:

Biochemistry and Cell Biology requires all first year students meet with the Graduate Advisory Committee each semester prior to course registration.

English assigns each entering student a Program Advisory Committee to review their background and prepare a plan of study.

Computational and Applied Math assigns each incoming graduate student with a faculty monitor to discuss curriculum choices.

To learn more: Appendix C details these example.

5. Publish detailed requirements/procedures for Qualifying Exams.

Situation: The general announcements state that upon entry to the program, the graduate programs must provide students with detailed requirements, deadlines and other program policies, including taking a qualifying exam. The students are then required to meet the program and university requirements in their program of education.

Complication: Some students receive only vague information on the requirements and procedures for qualifying exams. As a result, students may fail to properly prepare and/or the exam might not be standardized across the department. This may lead students to fail to meet the expectations of the program.

Recommendation: Publish detailed departmental requirements and procedures for qualifying exams...

Examples:

Chemistry and Biochemistry & Cell Biology provide details on formats and expectations for each type of exam (written and oral). They also publish a rubric for the exams in their handbook.

Sociology details the requirements for demonstrating expertise on the comprehensive exams in their handbook.

History's handbook states that students should meet individually with the examiner to receive study materials and expectations for the exam.

To learn more: Appendix D details these examples.

6. Publish details on requirements for thesis proposal/prospectus.

Situation: In some departments, students are required to write a thesis proposal or prospectus prior to achieving candidacy.

Complication: Most graduate students have little or no experience with research proposal writing prior to entering graduate school and, if not appropriately guided, might do so poorly.

Recommendation: Provide information on proper format, content and length of the thesis proposal. Ideally the department would provide a proposal writing course to teach proper technique for this type of writing.

Examples:

Bio-Engineering publishes minimum content for the proposal document.

Religion publishes the prospectus requirements.

Biochemistry & Cell Biology offers a proposal writing course which is required of all 1st year students.

History offers a prospectus seminar which is required for all 3rd year students.

To learn more: Appendix E details these examples.

7. Publish requirements to achieve candidacy

Situation: Ph.D. students must be approved for candidacy before the beginning of the ninth semester of their residency at Rice; master's students before the beginning of the fifth semester. The Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies provides incoming students with their candidacy deadlines upon arrival to the program. However, the requirements to achieve candidacy are department specific.

Complication: Students are sometimes unaware of departmental candidacy requirements prior to the deadlines, which often results in the need to file for extensions.

Recommendation: Publish all departmental requirements to achieve candidacy, including course work, exams, defenses, seminar attendance, and TA/grader duties.

Examples:

CAAM: Advancing to PhD candidacy requires:

- satisfactory performance on two Qualifying Examinations 1) Analysis and Linear Algebra and 2) Computational Methods,
- completion and defense of a Master's Thesis with the grade "satisfactory, PhD" given by the Master's Thesis Committee,
- completion and defense of a PhD proposal, and
- completion of required course work.

EEB: Advancement to Candidacy:

- All course and University requirements
- A written dissertation project proposal of 8 single-spaced pages
- An oral candidacy exam must be taken by the end of the 5th semester, which includes:
 - a) a talk presenting the student's research plan;
 - b) questions from and discussion with the committee on the student's research plan;
 - c) questions from the committee on general knowledge of ecology and evolutionary biology at the level of an introductory ecology or evolution course.

Peer Examples:

UC Berkeley- <http://psychology.berkeley.edu/students/graduate-program/degree-requirements-advancement-candidacy>

Duke- http://www.nicholas.duke.edu/people/students/doctoral_handbook.pdf

Northwestern- <http://www.statistics.northwestern.edu/graduate/course-requirements.html>

Tracking Progress

8. Publish a mechanism for progress reviews and written assessments for first-year students.

Situation: The General Announcements state that graduate programs must establish mechanisms for tracking, reviewing, and documenting academic progress of graduate students on an ongoing basis and must provide graduate students a written assessment of their academic progress at least annually.

Complication: First year students usually do not have a thesis committee and/or thesis advisor to provide feedback on their early progress in the program.

Recommendation: Provide and publish a mechanism for departmental progress review and written feedback for the first year of study.

Examples:

Computational and Applied Math assigns a faculty member monitor to each student to monitor progress. Additionally each first year student meets with the Graduate Committee Chair to discuss progress.

Art History requires copies of all papers, oral report evaluations and written exams be placed in the student's file for review by the Director of Graduate Studies. The advisor and DGS meet with the student discuss his or her progress in the program.

To learn more: Appendix F details these examples.

9. Publish a mechanism for annual progress reviews and written assessments of all students.

Situation: The General Announcements state that, although a student's supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student's academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program and requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program.

Complication: Some departments do not have a protocol for conducting progress reviews or supplying feedback to the student, thereby(?) leaving the annual review of the student solely to the student's advisor. Written documentation of the assessment and feedback are often lacking in this situation.

Recommendation: Design and publish a mechanism for annual progress reviews and written assessments for all students. Document reviews by keeping copies of written assessments in the student file.

Examples:

Biochemistry & Cell Biology and Chemistry utilize their thesis committee meetings for annual progress reviews.

Civil Engineering has an annual review of all students conducted by the Graduate Studies committee.

Linguistics and Philosophy faculty meet as a whole to annually review the progress of their students.

To learn more: Appendix G details these examples.

10. Publish a minimal mechanism for regular thesis committees meetings.

Situation: The General Announcements state that, although a student's supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student's academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program and requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program.

Complication: Some graduate programs only require the student to meet with their committee during the qualifying exams and/or thesis defenses therefore the student's only source for guidance and advice on project is their advisor. Also the final defense committee is unfamiliar with the student's research interest and related work prior to the defense.

Recommendation: Design and publish a minimal mechanism for regular thesis committee meetings.

Examples:

Sociology requires all students who have achieved candidacy to meet annually with their Key committee members to examine his or her research progress. The committee then provides the student with a written evaluation.

Biochemistry & Cell Biology requires students to schedule an annual committee review beginning in the 3rd year.

Bio-Engineering requires all PhD students to submit a semiannual progress report to their committee.

To learn more: Appendix H details these examples.

11. Publish departmental definition of satisfactory progress.

Situation: To remain in good standing and receive stipend support, graduate students are required to make satisfactory progress in their program.

Complication: Satisfactory progress in the program is department specific. Some students do not have a clear understanding of what is expected for satisfactory progress in their program.

Recommendation: Publish a clear definition of the department's conditions for satisfactory progress.

Example:

Bioengineering clearly defines satisfactory progress with a bullet list of conditions that must be met.

Philosophy publishes sufficient conditions for satisfactory progress by semester.

To learn more: Appendix I details these examples.

12. Publish a protocol to assist students not making adequate progress.

Situation: When a student is judged not to be making adequate academic progress, he or she must be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal and given clear information about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students similarly situated in the program. If the student does not meet the stated requirements within the time frame specified, he or she will be dismissed by the graduate program.

Complication: While a student may be told their research is not up to expectations, they may not be given details on the expectations for improvements or deadlines to meet the expectations.

Recommendation: Design and publish a protocol to assist students not making adequate progress. The protocol should require a written plan with goals and deadlines. Consequences of not meeting these goals should be clearly stated.

Examples:

Math students deemed as not making satisfactory progress receive notice in writing from the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee. This notice includes information how and by when the deficit should be made up.

Anthropology's Directory of Graduate Studies meets with students judged not making satisfactory progress in order to devise a plan.

To learn more: Appendix J details these examples.

13. Publish a departmental policy for graduate student vacation time.

Situation: In order to avoid burnout, all graduate students need reasonable time away from their research/studies.

Complication: Since graduate students are not employees, they do not receive official benefit time. Therefore the HR policies for time off do not apply to graduate students.

Recommendations: Establish and publish a written policy for time off for graduate students. Clearly define consequences for unscheduled time off.

Example:

Bioengineering allows first year students the same holidays as undergraduates. Advanced students are given two weeks paid vacation per year as well as staff holidays.

Bioengineering also publishes clear consequences for unscheduled time off.

Several peer universities, Princeton, Caltech and Duke, have published policies for graduate student time off.

To learn more: Appendix K details these examples.

14. Publish written guidelines for reduction or termination of financial support

Situation: The termination of financial support to a graduate student, while not equivalent to dismissal, is a serious action that could deprive students of their financial ability to continue graduate studies.

Complication: Students are unaware of the department's policies for continued financial support and therefore assume their support will continue as long as they are in the program.

Recommendation: Publish written guidelines for reduction or termination of financial support. At the very least, the handbook should point to the GA guidelines for Termination of Financial Support.

Example:

Civil Engineering states that when a student is placed on probation, the advisor may reduce or suspend financial support.

CEVE: Reduction and termination of financial support. Active participation in required research activities is a basic condition for continued financial support. When a graduate student is placed on probationary status due to inadequate academic progress, the research advisor may decide to reduce or suspend the financial support to the student. Student who are absent from required research activities for continuous two weeks without permission and without mitigating circumstances may be subject to termination of financial support. In addition, they will be judged to be not making adequate academic progress. Thus, if absences have to occur, they must be prearranged with the student's advisor, except for medical and family emergencies, in which cases timely notification is required.

Peer Examples:

Clemson- http://www.grad.clemson.edu/ga_faq.php#atClemson

Marquette- http://www.marquette.edu/grad/finaid_rules-assist-guidelines.shtml

Brown- <http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/internal-funding-appointments>

Conflict Resolution

15. Publish a policy on advisor/research group change

Situation: Occasionally issues or incompatibilities arise between a student and advisor/research group member that cannot be resolved.

Complication: Students with irreconcilable differences are unaware of their options and may unnecessarily drop out of the program or remain in an unhealthy situation.

Recommendation: Establish and publish a departmental policy for advisor/research group changes.

Examples:

Chemistry publishes conditions which prompt a change in labs/advisors. All changes require the approval of the Committee on Advisor Change whose responsibilities are clearly outlined in the handbook.

Electrical and Computer Engineering publishes guidelines for advisor change and requires the approval of the ECE graduate committee.

To learn more: Appendix L details these examples.

16. Publish guidelines for academic probation and dismissals

Situation: General Announcements contains conditions and guidelines for Academic Probation and Dismissals.

Complication: Some departments have stricter conditions for generating academic probation and dismissal. Upon entering the program students should be aware of all conditions which can trigger probation or dismissal.

Recommendation: Publish conditions and guidelines for probation and dismissals. If the department abides solely by the General Announcements guidelines, the GA guidelines should be published or referenced in the handbook.

Examples:

Bioengineering outlines the departmental guidelines and conditions for probation and dismissal in their handbook.

Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science publishes the General Announcements guidelines in their handbook.

Linguistics publishes a link to the General Announcements Petitions and Appeals information.

To learn more: Appendix M details these examples.

17. Publish guidelines for petitions and appeals

Situation: Graduate Students may petition for exceptions to academic requirements, regulations and judgments.

Complications: Students are often unaware of the procedures and timelines for filing petitions and appeals.

Recommendation: Publish or reference the General Announcement guidelines for Petitions and Appeals in the student handbook.

Examples:

Anthropology and Computational & Applied Math publish the departmental process for petitions and appeals in their handbook.

Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science publishes the General Announcements guidelines in their handbook.

Linguistics publishes a link to the General Announcements Petitions and Appeals information.

To learn more: Appendix N details these examples.

18. Publish guidelines for grievances and problem resolution

Situation: General Announcements contains procedures and guidelines for handling grievances and problem resolution.

Complication: Students are often unaware of the appropriate procedure for filing a grievance or resolving problems within their program. Therefore the student may escalate the problem to an inappropriate level or even worse, do nothing until the problem has escalated out of control.

Recommendation: Publish or reference the General Announcement guidelines for Grievances and problem resolution in the departmental handbook. The members of the standing committee for grievances/conflict resolution should also be published.

Examples:

Biochemistry & Cell Biology, History and Philosophy publish the departmental grievance process in their handbook.

Bioengineering provides a link to guidelines for grievances and problem resolution in their handbook.

Computational and Applied Math publishes the General Announcements grievance information in their handbook.

To learn more: Appendix O details these examples.

Other Good Practices

19. Publish a departmental minimum cumulative GPA and/or minimum course grade accepted for degree credit.

Situation: Per the GA, graduate students must maintain a 2.33 GPA to remain in good standing. To graduate, a 2.67 GPA in courses counted toward the graduate degree is required.

Complication: In most programs, a C is considered a failing grade. While departments often view a student with a GPA below 3.0 as not making adequate progress, those who haven't established written policies on grades must default to the GA guidelines.

Recommendation: Establish and publish a departmental minimum cumulative GPA for adequate progress and to remain in good standing; or establish a policy which excludes courses with a grade below B- (2.67) from counting for credit towards the degree.

Examples:

Biochemistry, Computational & Applied Math, Civil & Environmental Engineering and Anthropology require a minimum 3.0 to remain in good standing.

Bioengineering, English, Philosophy and Computer Science have higher minimum requirements.

Bioengineering, Chemistry, Linguistics and Civil & Environmental Engineering require a grade of B- or higher for a course to count for degree credit.

Several peer universities, MIT, Stanford, Duke and University of Texas, have published policies for minimum GPAs at 3.0 or above.

To learn more: Appendix P details these examples.

20. Provide students with regular opportunities to formally present research.

Situation: PhD thesis defenses as well as job interviews often rely on a student's formal presentation of their thesis research as a judgment tool. The ability to formally present research and answer questions improves with practice.

Complication: In many cases, the student's only opportunity to formally present their research is during the qualifying exam and thesis defense.

Recommendation: As a part of their formal training, require graduate students to present departmental seminars, Journal Clubs, or other similar activities at least once a year.

Examples:

Biochemistry & Cell Biology and Chemistry students are required to take a Graduate Student Seminar course where each student is required to give a research presentation annually.

Ecology and Evolutionary Biology requires students to take a Journal Club course in which each student is required to make a formal presentation.

Linguistics requires students to present their publishable papers as a departmental colloquium

To learn more: Appendix Q details these examples.

21. Publish guidelines/expectations for Independent Study Courses

Situation: Many graduate programs offer independent study courses which can be used to meet course requirements.

Complication: The scope and requirements for these courses vary widely by instructor, resulting in an inequality of credits received for the course.

Recommendation: Establish and publish guidelines/expectations for independent study courses.

Example:

Archeology publishes credit guidelines which include the number of hours the student must meet with instructor/ per credit hour.

ARCH: Independent Study

Credit Guidelines:

1. Three Credit Hours: Course workload should be equivalent to a 3-hour seminar. Faculty/student contact should be a minimum of 10 hour-long meetings during the semester. There must be reasonable student preparation for each meeting, and the student must produce a final project. The final project can be a paper, a design project or an exam.
2. Two Credit Hours: Course workload should be equivalent to a 2-hour seminar. The student must have at least 8 hour-long meetings plus produce a final project.
3. One Credit Hour: Course workload should be equivalent to a 1-hour seminar. The student must have at least 5 hour-long meetings plus produce a final project.

The final projects for 2 credits or 1 credit will be of the same type as that for 3 credits, only of a reduced scope.

An Independent Study Information Form, including a proposal, must be completed and turned in to the Graduate Coordinator before a student may register for Independent Study. This form should be submitted no later than the second week of classes. All Independent Study must be approved and signed by the faculty member involved and the DGS.

Peer Examples:

University of Colorado School of Pharmacy-

http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/pharmacy/AcademicPrograms/PharmDProgram/Documents/Independent_Study_Guidelines_2011.pdf

Dartmouth- http://www.dartmouth.edu/~mals/pdfs/is_guidelines_2010.pdf

DePaul- <http://communication.depaul.edu/academics/graduate-programs/Pages/independent-study.aspx>

22. Establish and publish a mentor program for 1st year students

Situation: The graduate school experience and expectations are very different from the undergraduate experience.

Complication: First year students can be confused and overwhelmed by the extra expectations beyond the classroom. Since they are also often experiencing living in an unfamiliar city or country for the first time, this can be a very stressful adjustment.

Recommendation: Establish and publish a mentor program for 1st year students by assigning current graduate students as their mentors.

Examples:

History and ECE pair incoming student with fellow graduate students to ease the transition into graduate school.

History: Mentors: Each incoming student is assigned a mentor, a fellow graduate student, who will assist the new colleague throughout the first year as he/she negotiates the many trials of getting started in graduate life. Feel free to ask this kind soul for advice and information about the city, the university, and the department. Your mentor will contact you prior to the beginning of your first semester.

ECE: Each incoming Ph.D. student will be assigned two seasoned ECE graduate students, one in his/her primary area of research and one from another area. Mentors will assist first year students in academic matters, including preparation for ELEC 599, social interaction with members of ECE and other interdisciplinary departments. Mentor/mentee social events will be planned over the course of the first year.

Peer Examples:

Purdue- <https://engineering.purdue.edu/AAE/Academics/Grad/mentoring>

Berkeley- http://chem.berkeley.edu/grad_info/gsh.pdf

Texas A&M- <http://gradmentors.tamu.edu/mentor>

23. Publish guidelines for RA & TA responsibilities and/or offer a TA training class/workshop

Situation: Most graduate students are required to TA or grade as a part of the degree program.

Complication: Graduate students often don't meet the expectations of the faculty members when performing TA and RA roles.

Recommendation: Publish responsibilities and expectations of TA/grader as well as RA. Offer training for TA/graders.

Examples:

History and English publish guidelines for RA and TA responsibilities

The School of Engineering requires all TA's paid by the Dean's Office to attend a TA workshop.

To learn more: Appendix R details these examples.

24. Publish guidelines for students whose advisor's primary appointment is in a different department.

Situation: In some departments, students are allowed to choose an advisor whose primary appointment is outside of the department.

Complication: While the student is required to follow the degree guidelines of his home department, there are some gray areas where differences in the departments can cause confusion. For example, the advisor may have expectations that are above and beyond the requirements of the home department.

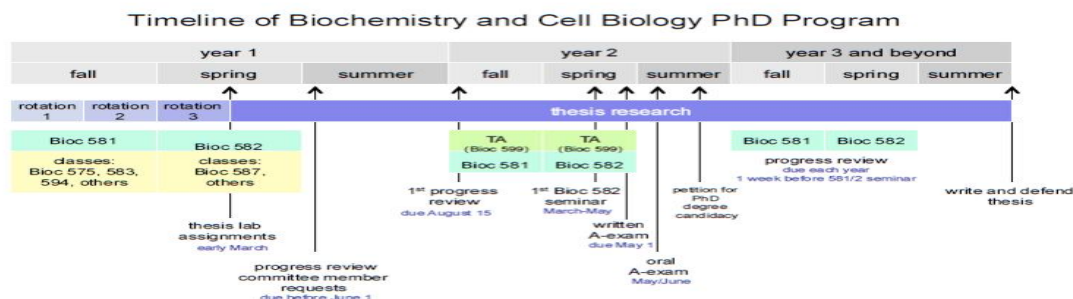
Recommendation: Publish expectations and guidelines for students whose home department is different from that of his advisor's primary appointment.

APPENDIX A

Publish Degree Timeline

Biochemistry and Cell Biology

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf



Business

A student is expected to be in residence throughout the year.

Year One

- Complete course work during Fall and Spring semesters.
- Begin working on research with area faculty.

Year Two

- Complete course work during Fall and Spring semesters.
- Continue working on research with area faculty through the year.
- Take comprehensive exam (if needed by area).

Year Three

- Take specialized courses as needed during Fall and/or Spring semesters.
- Produce working paper(s) on research with area faculty.
- Work on dissertation research.
- Defend dissertation research proposal by summer.

Year Four and beyond

- Finish work on dissertation research.
- Defend dissertation.

<http://business.rice.edu/PhD/>

Links to more examples

BIOE- <http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

HIST- <http://history.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Official%20Handbook%202012.pdf>

Peer Examples:

Stanford - <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/soc/doctoral/milestones.html>

Georgetown- <http://pharmacology.georgetown.edu/timeline.html>

Stanford- <http://economics.stanford.edu/files/Grad%20Handbook%2012-13.pdf>

APPENDIX B

Publish Course Requirements

BCB: Course List

Students are required to have training in Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Genetics, and Physical Chemistry or Biophysics. If students are missing formal training in these subjects, they are required to take the equivalent background courses during their first year. The corresponding courses at Rice are:

BIOC 301 Biochemistry (fall)

BIOC 341 Cell Biology (fall)

BIOC 344 Molecular Biology and Genetics (spring)

BIOC 352 Physical Chemistry for the Biosciences (spring)

All Ph.D. students are required to take the following graduate courses:

BIOC 575 Introduction to Research (fall)

BIOC 581, 582 Graduate Research Seminars (fall & spring)

BIOC 583 Molecular Interactions (fall)

BIOC 587 Research Design, Proposal Writing, and Professional Development (spring)

BIOC 594 Responsible Conduct of Research (fall)

BIOC 599 Graduate Teaching in BCB (2 semesters in year 2) (fall & spring)

BIOC 701,702 Graduate Lab Research (laboratory rotations in first year) (fall & spring)

Students also must take two units of the following advanced courses:

BIOC 525 Plant Molecular Genetics and Development (1 unit) (fall)

BIOC 530, 535 Graduate Laboratory Modules in Molecular Biophysics (1/2 unit each) (spring)

BIOC 540 Metabolic Engineering (1 unit) (fall)

BIOC 544 Developmental Biology (1 unit) (spring)

BIOC 545 Advanced Molecular Biology and Genetics (1 unit) (fall)

BIOC 550 Virology (1 unit) (fall)

BIOC 551 Molecular Biophysics I (1 unit) (fall)

BIOC 560 Cancer Biology (1 unit) (spring)

BIOC 580 Protein Engineering (1 unit) (fall, not offered in 2011)

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf,

SOCI: Required courses include:

SOCI 580: Classical Social Theory

SOCI 526: Contemporary Social Theory

SOCI 381/581: Quantitative Research Methods

SOCI 581: Qualitative Research Methods

SOCI 382/582: Social Statistics

SOCI 613: Advanced Statistical Techniques I

SOCI 700: Thesis Seminar

SOCI 611: Teaching Practicum (1 credit)

SOCI 596: Statistical computer programming (1 credit).

The sequence of courses will normally be as follows:

First Semester:

Classical Social Theory or Contemporary Social Theory

Research Methods or Qualitative Research Methods

Elective 1

Second Semester

Social Statistics and/or Qualitative Research Methods

Elective 2

Elective 3

Statistical computer programming

Third Semester:

Contemporary Social Theory or Classical Social Theory

Advanced Statistical Techniques I

Research Methods or Qualitative Research Methods

Teaching Practicum (or next semester)

Fourth Semester:

Thesis Seminar

Electives

Teaching Practicum (or previous semester)

Semesters 5-10:

Electives, Comprehensive Exams, and Dissertation

<http://sociology.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=271>

Course Advising

- **PHIL:** “Students are required to consult with the Director of Graduate studies each semester prior to registering for courses. The Director of Graduate Studies will have in mind two broad departmental policies concerning course selection: (1) Over the course of two years, the department expects the student to become familiar with the main branches of philosophy, including its history (ancient and modern), its main problem-areas (epistemology, metaphysics, ethics-social-political), and a good number of its central sub-divisions (philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, etc.). (2) The main offerings each semester consist of graduate seminars (courses listed at the 500 level) and students should be primarily taking graduate seminars. There are usually five or six graduate seminars offered per semester.”

- <http://philosophy.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=49#coursework>
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MATH: “Courses for the first and second year students will be determined by an interview with their assigned advisor. Thereafter, the research advisor will assume this role.”

<http://math.rice.edu/Studies-Graduate/graduate-overview.html>

Peer Examples:

Harvard- <http://www.physics.harvard.edu/academics/grad/requir.html>

UC Berkeley- <https://www.econ.berkeley.edu/grad/program/year-1>

APPENDIX C

Publish Information on 1st Year Course Advising

BCB: “Most of the formal courses will be completed in the first year of residence to allow students to commence thesis research at the end of their second semester. During the first year, graduate students will be advised by the Graduate Advisory Committee (current members listed in preface, page i). This committee will tailor the formal course program to be taken during the first year.”

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

ENGL: At the beginning of the first year, each student is assigned a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) by the Graduate Committee. The student and the PAC are responsible for evaluating the student's background and for preparing a tentative plan of study. In most cases this plan will specify courses to be taken and establish a schedule for meeting requirements and deadlines within the university and the department (see below "Achieving Candidacy"). Both the PAC and student should keep records of the students' progress toward completion of the plan by using a tracking sheet to be kept in the student's file. After the first year and before preparation for the Preliminary Exam in the third year, the student must find a faculty advisor with whom s/he plans to work on the Preliminary Exam and dissertation. Until the student has submitted a form with the names of Preliminary Committee members, the PAC will serve as the advisory body. The student may make changes to the PAC membership at any time by filling out a new PAC form that requires the signature of new PAC members. The student is responsible for completing the various phases of the graduate program within the prescribed time limitations

http://english.rice.edu/Graduate_Study.aspx

Computational and Applied Math: The Monitor System: The graduate committee assigns a faculty member to each individual to act as his or her monitor. Each student will meet with his/her monitor early in each semester to discuss curriculum choices, examinations, and so forth. A faculty monitor will be present throughout a student's graduate career. After a thesis advisor has been acquired, the advisor will take over the monitor's role. In addition, at the beginning of the second semester of the first year of study, all students will meet with the Graduate Committee Chair and/or the Departmental Chair to assess their academic progress.

<http://www.caam.rice.edu/PDFs/handbook2012.pdf>

Peer Examples:

UC Berkeley- http://chem.berkeley.edu/grad_info/gsh.pdf

Stanford- <http://history.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/PhD%20Handbook%2011-8-12.pdf>

Princeton- http://www.princeton.edu/sociology/graduate-program/graduate_handbook.pdf

APPENDIX D

Publish Detailed Requirements/procedures for Qualifying Exams

CHEM: The purpose of the qualifying examination is to establish the extent to which the student has achieved intellectual independence and has demonstrated the research accomplishments appropriate to become a Ph.D. candidate. The examination consists of (1) a written proposal which summarizes research achievements and describes future goals and (2) a public research seminar immediately followed by a closed oral defense in front of a faculty committee.

The written document must be submitted and defended before the end of the fourth semester of residence. In addition to the written and oral exam, the student must also request a letter of recommendation from his / her advisor and ensure that it is sent to all the members of the exam committee. This letter is due at the same time as the written document.

Criteria: The student is evaluated on his / her ability to demonstrate:

1. a mastery of relevant background material, recent literature, and chemical concepts relevant to the described work
2. a clear research plan and understanding of the reasons why the research is being pursued at both a strategic level and day-to-day practical level that is sufficient and realistic for a 5-year Ph.D. (i.e., within the next 3 years)
3. a track record of concrete, scientifically rigorous research achievement
4. the ability to make a clear, concise presentation of scientific information and to verbally answer questions from the committee related to the presented research and to general, fundamental chemical concepts.

Written Document:

The written document is a combination of a research summary and research proposal. The ideal examination document should convey to the reader (1) that the student has identified a scientific problem or sub discipline for study and has become an expert in this field, (2) that a careful research plan, appropriate for a single graduate career, has been developed that will create significant new scientific knowledge, and (3) that significant progress has already been made such that it appears likely that the student will complete the work necessary for the Ph.D. degree in an appropriate time frame.

Deadlines: Regardless of the student's oral presentation date, all students defending in the Spring semester are required to submit their written proposal by **5 PM on Monday March 4th** (the first day after spring break). Students defending outside of the Spring semester must turn in their proposal at least one week before the scheduled exam date. The text should be received both in electronic and hardcopy by all members of the exam committee. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure the committee has received the document on time. Failure to turn in the written document on time will result in failure of the exam (see below).

Length: The entire document, excluding Supporting Information and References, shall be 3500–7000 words. Supporting information and references may be of any appropriate length and do not count against the above word total. Documents that violate length restrictions will not be accepted.

Format: The document should be prepared in the J. Am. Chem. Soc. Template for Articles, which is accessible at http://pubs.acs.org/page/jacsat/submission/jacsat_templates.html. Note that there is a word limit rather than a page limit. It's important to develop expertise with templates, but the close spacing and small font makes it difficult to write comments. Please be willing to generate a version double-spaced in 12-point font on request.

Figures: Figures should be incorporated into the text as near as reasonable to the place where they are first mentioned. **IMPORTANT:** Figures must be properly referenced ("taken from ...", "adapted from ..."). Figures not referenced will be assumed to be the sole creative work of the student.

Organization:

Abstract: Concise (250 word maximum) summary of proposal goals and justifications.

Introduction and Background Literature: Broadly, what are you trying to do and why is it important? What is already known about this topic? What researchers are currently leading the field? What are the major problems or gaps in knowledge in this field? What has your chosen lab already done in this area?

Specific Aims: Exactly what are you trying to do? Each of the 2-5 aims should be described concisely in 1-3 sentences.

Timeline: Describe the timeline in which the above Aims are expected to be accomplished (can be a graph).

Research Accomplishments: Since coming to Rice, what have you (not other people in your lab) accomplished related to this goal? If you have already published or have a manuscript in review, you should indicate that here and what your specific contribution to that work has been. This section should be written as a logical summary of experiments and their ramifications.

Key figures, graphs or images which help summarize this work are useful. However, detailed experimental procedures and data should be included in the Supporting Information section sufficient to prove any claims described here. In some circumstances you may have done a significant amount of work on a different project that has not worked out or is not related to the current proposal. Because one goal of the qualifying exam is to assess research achievement, it may be appropriate to discuss work on such projects here, describing the concrete results that led to significantly altering research goals.

Experimental Strategy: Specifically, what experiments will be performed to address the Specific Aims? If synthesis is required, are the steps reasonable? What is the mechanism? If an analytical technique is used, how does it work? Can it accomplish what is proposed? Is the instrument available at Rice? Does the order of the experiments make sense? Are there alternative routes to accomplishing your goals if your primary approach fails?

Expected Outcomes: Assuming success in the experiments outlined in Experimental Strategy, what will the consequences of your work be? What will you have accomplished?

References (no word limit): These should be in a modified J. Am. Chem. Soc. format which includes the title of the article for example (please note that journal names should be properly abbreviated, e.g.: J. Am. Chem. Soc., not Journal of the American Chemical Society):

Bachilo, S. M.; Strano, M. S.; Kittrell, C.; Hauge, R. H.; Smalley, R. E.; Weisman, R. B.
"Structure-Assigned Optical Spectra of Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes" Science 2002,
298, 2361-2366.

Your references should be almost entirely from the primary literature. References to outstanding reviews or textbooks may be appropriate for broad, well known or old concepts. The internet is not typically acceptable. Avoid Wikipedia. **Improper referencing may be construed as plagiarism and result in failure of the qualifying examination and/or expulsion.** The Rice Honor Code, as always, is in effect for this examination.

Supporting Information (no word limit): This should include detailed JACS-style experimental procedures for all experiments described both in your Experimental Strategy and in your Research Accomplishments. Any data necessary to prove the results mentioned in Research Accomplishments should be included here. Portions of this section can be taken directly from any manuscripts already written by the student (but still must be properly referenced).

Written documents which do not follow the guidelines described above may be returned for revision before the oral examination takes place or result in failure of the examination (see below).

Oral Defense:

The student will present his or her work as a public seminar using a professional-quality presentation. These will be scheduled as part of CHEM 600. The student is responsible for the technical aspects of the presentation (for example the working of the projector and interface with the computer). The presentation should last 25-30 minutes and will be followed by questions from the general audience. Following the public presentation and questioning, the closed portion of the defense will commence with only the members of the student's committee. The examination may include (but is not limited to): clarification of a point or a request to discuss a point in more detail to ascertain whether the student understands in detail the concepts being presented; speculative questions to force the student to consider new ideas or alternative approaches and to think on his/her feet; and questions addressing fundamental chemical concepts relevant to the described work. The student will be scored independently by each committee member on four questions (see below) from 1-5 with a 5 being the best possible score.

http://chemistry.rice.edu/Graduate_Student_Handbook.aspx

SOCI: Comprehensive Exams Students will be required to take comprehensive exams that demonstrate their expertise in two of the following four areas: 1) Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration, 2) Urban and Community, 3) Population Health, or 4) Religion and Culture. Demonstration of expertise means that students should be able to: a) summarize basic questions, issues, and debates within each specialty area; b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations and middle-range theories in each area; c) understand and apply methodological approaches specific to each substantive area; and d) develop specific policy implications of theory and research in each area. A department examination committee is appointed by the graduate committee in each exam subject area and the parameters of the exam will be developed in collaboration with the student and the examination committee. The chairs of each exam committee are as follows: Race, Ethnicity and Immigration (Bratter), Urban and Community (Emerson), Population Health (Kimbrow), and Religion and Culture (Ecklund). Each area exam committee strongly urges students to take a certain set of courses in preparation for the exam. A student who is considering an exam in a specific area should be in touch with the chair of the committee or the graduate director during the first semester to determine the sequence of courses needed to prepare adequately for the exam. Comprehensive exams will be graded according to the following options: fail (leave the program), conditional fail (one chance to retake or revise exam answer), Pass, and High Pass with Distinction.

<http://sociology.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=299>

HIST: Prepare for Comprehensive exams. To qualify for Ph.D. candidacy (the final step before buckling down to your dissertation), you must pass written Comprehensive examinations in your three fields and an oral examination. Exams require a SIGNIFICANT amount of preparation outside class. Begin preparation for this exam as soon as possible, reading as widely in the fields as time will permit. A professor who agrees to examine you in a field will inform you of the nature of, the expectations for the exam in that field and this will usually include the books and articles that he or she expects you to read. Each professor differs in preparing you for Comprehensive exams. Do not expect uniformity. Some professors provide a list and will want you to read everything on it. Others will not give you a list but will ask that you research and provide one.

<http://history.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Official%20Handbook%202012.pdf>

Peer Examples:

Duke- <http://www.chem.duke.edu/graduates/GSHandbook%20Revised%2012-13.pdf>

Stanford- <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/english/deptWebFiles/forms/PhDHandbook.pdf>

UC Berkeley-

http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/grads/GRAD%20ACADEMIC%20HANDBOOK%202012-2013.pdf

Northwestern- <http://www.ibis.northwestern.edu/forms/Program%20Guide.pdf>

Assessment of Written Component of Qualifying Exam

Ratings: E, Excellent; S, Satisfactory; U, Unsatisfactory Comments

E S U 1. Specific Aims

E S U A. Hypotheses: Each aim has a hypothesis as its foundation. Hypotheses are scientifically relevant and soundly based predictions of biological importance and address scientific concepts rather than experimental outcomes.

E S U B. Logical Specific Aims: Each aim is a logical test of the stated hypothesis/hypotheses.

E S U C. Summary of Work: Concise summary of experimental plan for each aim.

E S U 2. Background and Significance

E S U A. Significance: Author provides clear and convincing significance of the research; the proposal would be competitive for funding.

E S U B. Background: Author includes published findings necessary to understand the current state of the research and excludes irrelevant, superfluous information.

E S U C. Context of the research question: Author effectively places current question(s) in the field of research.

E S U 3. Preliminary Results

E S U A. Demonstrated effort in experimental approaches

E S U B. Progress toward achieving goals

E S U C. Quality of data and interpretation

E S U 4. Research Plan

E S U A. Rationale: Author identifies the purpose of each experiment before giving procedural detail.

E S U B. Method Selection: Author describes why each selected method was chosen over other options (unless the reason can be logically inferred from the context).

E S U C. Appropriate Detail: Author includes an appropriate level of experimental/ technical detail to allow understanding of the experimental design.

E S U D. Controls: Appropriate controls are included and their purpose is accurately described, demonstrating that author understands the role of controls in experimental design.

E S U E. Possible Results: The types of data to be collected are accurately described. Possible outcomes are considered.

E S U F. Interpretation: Interpretations based on expected results are presented in context of the material provided in the Background and Significance section.

E S U G. Potential Complications and Alternatives: Author considers complications that potentially will hinder or prohibit collection of anticipated data. Possible solutions may be presented. When appropriate, alternative methods to address the research question are presented.

E S U H. Feasibility: Experiments are technically sound and feasible as described in the text.

E S U I. Novelty: Author highlights creativity or novelty in experimental approach and/or uniqueness in experimental design or application of existing methods

E S U 5. Style, Formatting, References

E S U A. Appropriate for Audience: Author writes at appropriate technical level for semi-expert audience, including only essential jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations, which are defined at first use.

E S U B. Organization: The organization is logical and clear at the document, section, and paragraph level.

- E S U C. Clarity: Concepts are easy to understand, sentences are grammatically correct, paragraphs are well developed with topic sentences, and useful figures/tables are included to explain concepts or provide data.
- E S U D. Quality of Data Presentation: Data are either (a) displayed clearly and legibly in figures/tables with concise titles and complete legends, or (b) adequately described in text. Each figure is explicitly referred to in the text.
- E S U E. Format: Document conforms to guidelines for length, font, margins, section headings, and page numbers.
- E S U F. Citations: Author appropriately cites previously published findings and figures and includes a complete and accurate bibliography at the end of the document that includes complete author lists and full article titles.
- E S U G. Proofreading: Document contains consistent formatting and few if any typos.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas, results, equipment design, visuals, or wording as if they were your own. You may include information provided by others but only if you use your own words and cite the source of the information. You may use the words of others, but only if you use quotation marks and appropriate citation. Changing a few words per sentence is not acceptable; it is plagiarism. See the BCB Graduate Handbook for more information. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and is grounds for dismissal from the BCB Graduate Program.

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

APPENDIX E

Publish Details on Requirements for thesis proposal/prospectus

BIOE: Thesis Proposal

3) The thesis proposal is a written summary of research progress up to that point and future research plans.

(a) This document should contain (as a minimum) the following sections:

Abstract (not to exceed 250 words)

Background with extensive literature survey

Problem statement

Research plans and methodology

Any results obtained up to that point, and

Proposed time-line for completion of thesis research

(b) Portions of manuscripts or reports to sponsors (if available) can be incorporated in the thesis proposal.

<http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

RELI: Prospectus requirements

4000-5000 words

Abstract

Articulate the question and the thesis in 500 words

State of the Question/Literature Review

Section outlining the secondary research on the student's question and/or a literature review, with a discussion of the student's contribution to the state of the question

Approach

Section explaining the student's approach to the materials, with reference to theorists and/or methods appropriate to the student's question

Contents

Section describing the planned content of each chapter of the dissertation

Timetable

Timetable for completion of the project, with real deadlines for completion of each chapter

<http://reli.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=266>

BCB: BIOC 587 Research Design, Proposal Writing, and Professional Development (summer, 3 credits)

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

HIST: HIST 578, Prospectus Seminar.

<http://history.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Official%20Handbook%202012.pdf>

Peer Examples:

Princeton- http://www.princeton.edu/cbe/grad/Grad_Handbook.pdf

UC Berkeley-

http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/grads/GRAD%20ACADEMIC%20HANDBOOK%202012-2013.pdf

Princeton- <http://www.princeton.edu/politics/graduate/requirements/dissertation/prospectus/prospectus-workshop/>

APPENDIX F

Publish a Mechanism for Progress Reviews and Written Assessments for First Year Students

CAAM: The Monitor System: The graduate committee assigns a faculty member to each individual to act as his or her monitor. Each student will meet with his/her monitor early in each semester to discuss curriculum choices, examinations, and so forth. A faculty monitor will be present throughout a student's graduate career. After a thesis advisor has been acquired, the advisor will take over the monitor's role.

In addition, at the beginning of the second semester of the first year of study, all students will meet with the Graduate Committee Chair and/or the Departmental Chair to assess their academic progress.

<http://www.caam.rice.edu/PDFs/handbook2012.pdf>

ArtHist: First Year Review: Copies of all papers, evaluations of oral reports, and written exams for course work in the first two years will be placed in the student's file. At the end of the Spring term of the first year and after close evaluation of written and oral work, the advisor and DGS will meet with the student to discuss his/her progress through the program. Any problems regarding the student's performance will be discussed at this time. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 or B or who has not demonstrated satisfactory critical thinking, writing, and research skills will be given an unsatisfactory report. Improvement must be demonstrated by the end of the third semester in the program or the student may be dismissed after re-evaluation in December of the second year.

<http://arthistory.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=370>

Peer Examples:

Stanford- <https://ed.stanford.edu/academics/doctoral-handbook/milestones/first-review>

UC Berkeley- http://gse.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/FirstYearEval_Doctorate.pdf

Duke- <http://www.chem.duke.edu/graduates/GSHandbook%20Revised%2012-13.pdf>

APPENDIX G

Publish a Mechanism for Annual Progress Reviews and Written Assessments of All Students

General Announcements: Graduate programs must establish mechanisms for tracking, reviewing, and documenting academic progress of graduate students on an ongoing basis and must provide graduate students a written assessment of their academic progress at least annually. In some graduate programs this ongoing progress review is carried out by a student's thesis committee, while in others it is carried out by a standing faculty committee. Although a student's supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student's academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program and requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program. For graduate students who are primarily engaged in coursework, for example, professional master's students, the transcript is an adequate form of written assessment.

CEVE: Annual Performance Review

An annual performance review will be conducted on all graduate students by the Graduate Studies Committee. The purpose of the review is to ensure that students make adequate academic progress and that the faculty provides timely feedback to the students' academic development.

The review will be a comprehensive evaluation of the student's academic performance including course work, research, professional development and other relevant activities. It will be conducted at the end of every spring semester. Additional reviews may be done upon request of the faculty.

Students will be reviewed based on the following:

Course work grades. Transcripts including the spring semester grades will be reviewed. For students who are not doing research (e.g., MCEE students), this will be the only document that will be reviewed.

An annual report submitted by the graduate student to the advisor by May 15. The report will include 1) a summary of academic activities. This includes but is not limited to manuscripts published, submitted or in preparation, conference presentations, awards, professional organization membership, and other research related activities; 2) a one page description of research progress and plans for the coming year. It is very important for the students to set clear and realistic research objectives for the coming year based on consultation with the research advisor and thesis committee. These objectives will be used to judge the student's research progress in the next review. An evaluation letter from the research advisor. The letter must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee by May 31 in the year when the review is conducted.

Other materials deemed necessary by the Graduate Studies Committee. A written assessment of the student's academic progress resulting from the review will be sent to the student before the beginning of the fall semester. Students whose academic progress is judged inadequate by the annual review will receive a warning, and be placed on probationary status. Note that an "Unsatisfactory" grade on Ph.D. or M.S. thesis research will most likely result in an unfavorable review. The student will be given a specific time frame within which improvement must be made to the satisfaction of the research advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee. Failure in demonstrating satisfactory improvement will result in dismissal.

It is strongly recommended that students meet with their advisors at least once per semester to define and adjust research objective. <http://ceve.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=162>

LING: Annual Assessment of Student Progress

Once a year, at the end of Spring Semester, the Linguistics faculty will meet as a whole to assess the academic progress of every graduate student. Based on the discussion at this meeting, the graduate advisor and department chair will then jointly draft an official progress letter for each student, which will be e-mailed to the student by mid-May. The letter will assess the student's achievement of milestones to the Ph.D., will alert the student of any deficiencies in progress, will notify the student of any faculty concerns along with suggestions for improvement, and will remind the student of deadlines and time boundaries relevant to the upcoming academic year. Students should feel free to discuss concerns with their advisor, the graduate advisor, or the department chair.

<http://linguistics.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=322#course>

BCB: Continual review of research progress is made by the thesis advisor, and a written evaluation is provided by the advisor prior to each progress review meeting after the A-Exam.

Written and oral progress reports are evaluated by the student's progress review committee every year until completion of his or her degree. See Chapter 9 for details. A research seminar is presented annually in BIOC 581/582 beginning in the second year and continuing until the thesis is submitted and the defense is scheduled.

Attendance and participation at the presentations is mandatory for all students. See Chapter 10 for details.

Attendance at the departmental guest seminar series is a critical part of the student's professional development and is also expected. https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

Peer Examples:

Columbia- http://www.stat.columbia.edu/drupal7/sites/default/files/files/2011-GSHandbook_Master.pdf

Stanford- http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/phd/overview/annual_eval.html

Duke- <http://sociology.duke.edu/graduate/ph-d-requirements>

APPENDIX H

Publish a Minimal Mechanism for Regular Thesis Committee Meetings.

General Announcements: Graduate programs must establish mechanisms for tracking, reviewing, and documenting academic progress of graduate students on an ongoing basis and must provide graduate students a written assessment of their academic progress at least annually. In some graduate programs this ongoing progress review is carried out by a student's thesis committee, while in others it is carried out by a standing faculty committee. Although a student's supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student's academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program and requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program. For graduate students who are primarily engaged in coursework, for example, professional master's students, the transcript is an adequate form of written assessment.

SOCI: After Ph.D. candidacy is granted, students will commence work on their dissertation. Each dissertation committee will be comprised of at least three tenured or tenure-track faculty members, including one outside faculty member from another department. The key members of this committee will meet annually with the student to examine his or her research progress and provide a written evaluation of the student's progress. http://sociology.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Program/Sociology%20Graduate%20Handbook_2012_09.pdf?n=3285

BCB: The Committee Meeting.

The student's committee members are encouraged to attend his/her BIOC 581/82 seminar to evaluate the student's progress in seminar presentation skills. However, committee members will reserve major questions for the subsequent committee meeting. Beginning in the third year, the progress review meeting will be scheduled by the Graduate Program Coordinator for the day after the student's BIOC 581/582 presentation. If, due to scheduling conflicts, the meeting cannot be held the day after the student's seminar, it will be scheduled as early as possible.

The student should arrive at the meeting with laboratory notebooks and an abbreviated, seminar style presentation of relevant data including figures from the report, prepared to explain any conclusions with original data and observations, and ready to discuss particular difficulties encountered in the research. The committee chair will write an evaluation of the student's progress following the meeting. Copies of this evaluation will be placed in the student's file and provided to both the student and the thesis advisor.

Each progress review is as important as the initial admission to candidacy examination. If the committee judges that the student is not making progress or exerting sufficient effort, the committee members can recommend to the department chair that the student be placed on research probation or dismissed from the program. However, the primary purpose of the annual progress review is to provide guidance and help for the student's research work. The student should be prepared to take notes of the committee's comments, concerns, and suggestions for discussion with the thesis advisor and, if appropriate, incorporation into future experiments and progress reviews.

Students are encouraged to seek advice from committee members or other faculty as needed. Students or advisors might occasionally find it helpful to have an additional progress review meeting outside of those automatically scheduled after the BIOC 581/582 seminar, e.g., for assistance in dealing with difficult scientific problems or for advice in choosing an effective experimental approach. Any student wishing to schedule an additional meeting should contact his/her committee chair.

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

BIOE: Progress Reports

1) All PhD students are required to submit a semiannual progress report. The progress report should state the student's progress and include, at minimum:

- List of completed coursework
- Description of research
- List of publication or conference presentations by the student
- Description of work planned for the next 6-month period

2) Progress reports must be submitted to the student's advisor and the members of student's thesis committee. A copy signed by the student's advisor must then be submitted to the Department of Bioengineering (Bioengineering Academic Program Administrator).

3) The signed copy of the progress report is due on January 31 and July 31 and must be submitted by all PhD students during their entire graduate career beginning with the first year. Submission of progress reports on time is one criteria considered in determining satisfactory performance. <http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

Peer Examples:

Stanford-<http://genetics.stanford.edu/education/handbook.html#advisory>

UCSD- <http://biology.ucsd.edu/education/grad/current/program-reqs.html>

Harvard- <http://www.seas.harvard.edu/student-affairs/academic-policies/committee-higher-degrees-policies#dissertation-supervisor-and-research>

APPENDIX I

Publish a Departmental Definition of Satisfactory Progress

BIOE: 1) Satisfactory progress is defined as and includes the following:

(a) PhD students must have at least 12 semester hours of graduate degree courses (graded using a standard letter grade and excluding course taken on a “pass/fail” or “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” basis) by the end of the first semester in residence.

(b) After the student’s first semester in residence, students must work on their thesis research on a full-time basis.

(c) Students must submit their progress reports by the deadlines:

- Period covering July 1 to December 31: Due January 31

- Period covering January 1 to June 30: Due July 31

(d) Students must submit and successfully defend their thesis proposal before the beginning of their fifth semester in residence.

(e) Students must maintain a GPA of 3.2 or better. Graduate students in the PhD program whose cumulative grade point average for the most recently completed semester (excluding the summer semester) falls below 3.2 are placed on probationary status.

- Students will be notified in writing of their probationary status. The periods of probation extends to the end of the next semester in which the student is enrolled.

- Once a student is placed on probationary status they have one semester (excluding summer semester) to improve their grades. If their GPA remains below 3.2 for two consecutive semesters, the student’s stipend will be suspended and the student will become responsible for tuition costs until the student’s cumulative GPA is once again above 3.2. Decisions to reduce or terminate a student’s stipend will be made on a case-by-case basis. The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, the thesis advisor, and the department chair will consider all the factors that may have affected a student’s performance before reaching such a decision.

- If the student’s GPA remains below 3.2 for more than two semesters, the advisor has the prerogative to immediately dismiss the student.

- If the student’s GPA falls below 2.33 for two consecutive semesters (including the summer semester), the student will be immediately dismissed without further warning in accordance with the policy of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies guidelines for dismissal.

<http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

PHIL: V: Sufficient Conditions for Satisfactory Progress

Semester 1. Pass all courses, complete 3 courses with 3.5 GPA, satisfy logic requirement

Semester 2. Pass all courses, have completed 7 courses with 3.6 GPA.

Semester 3. Pass all courses, have completed 10 courses with 3.65 GPA, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 4. Pass all courses, have completed 14 courses with 3.7 GPA, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 5. Pass Qualifying examination, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 6. Defend thesis proposal, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 7. Complete 25 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 8. Complete 50 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 9. Complete 80 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 10. Complete 110 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report

Semester 11. Complete 140 pages of good quality thesis draft, complete self-report

Semester 12. Complete 170 pages of good quality thesis draft, complete self-report

http://www.philosophy.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=49#Satisfactory_Progress

Peer Examples:

Stanford- http://politicalscience.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/images/ProgramGuide12.13_Reduced_0.pdf

Harvard- http://www.gsas.harvard.edu/handbook/degree_requirements.php

Duke- <http://stat.duke.edu/phd-program/description/formal-requirements>

Princeton- http://www.princeton.edu/gradschool/academics/policies/satisfactory_academic_pro/

APPENDIX J

Publish a Protocol to Assist Students Not Making Adequate Progress

Math: “A summary of the committee's view as to whether the student is making reasonable progress or, in the case of unsatisfactory progress, how and by when the deficit must be repaired, will be provided to the student in writing by the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee no later than 24 hours prior to the Spring semester deadline to add courses.” <http://math.rice.edu/Studies-Graduate/graduate-overview.html>

ANTH: Department faculty regularly assess the progress of students enrolled in their courses and regularly inform the Director of Graduate Studies of their findings. The Director will meet personally with any student judged not to be making satisfactory progress through the program in order to devise a plan for improvement. <http://anthropology.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=51&linkidentifier=id&itemid=51>

Peer Examples:

UC Berkeley- <http://classics.berkeley.edu/programs/graduate/classicsMAPhD2011.php#phd>

APPENDIX K

Publish a Departmental Policy for Graduate Student Vacation Time

BIOE: Vacation Time: During the first semester of study graduate students observe the same holiday schedule as other students engaged in course work. Beginning in the second semester, students engaged in research receive two weeks paid vacation annually, in addition to designated staff holidays, including winter break when the university is officially closed (Students do not automatically receive spring break as time off since the university is not officially closed during this time. Specific time off during spring break should be determined in consultation with the student's advisor). Vacation time must be approved by the student's advisor in advance.

BIOE: Nonscheduled Absences: Active participation in required academic activities including laboratory work is a basic condition of financial support. Absences other than medical and family emergencies, must be approved by the student's advisor in advance. In the case of medical or family emergencies, notification is expected in as timely a manner as possible depending upon the specific situation.

1) Students who are absent from required academic activities for a contiguous two weeks without permission and without mitigating circumstances may be judged to be not making adequate academic progress and are subject to termination of financial support.

2) Students who are not present and carrying out required academic activities for more than one week, without approval of the absence, will receive an immediate written warning.

<http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

Peer Example:

Princeton- http://www.princeton.edu/gradschool/academics/policies/student_vacation_time/

Caltech- <http://www.gradoffice.caltech.edu/current/vacation>

Duke-

http://gradschool.duke.edu/documents/financial_support/PhD%20Student%20Vacation%20Policy%20for%20Grant-Supported%20Students.pdf

APPENDIX L

Publish a Policy on Advisor/Research Group Change

CHEM: Changing Laboratories / Advisors

Changing advisors can be a serious disruption to a student's timeline toward a Ph.D. A student consequently requires the approval of a Committee on Advisor Changes to move from one research group to another. After a student has joined a research group, either the student or the advisor might determine that this match is not suitable. Students must have a research advisor to remain in good standing. A student is *required* to find a new research advisor to continue in the program if 1) s/he has received a grade of B- or below in CHEM 800 for two consecutive semesters or 2) has been otherwise removed from the lab of his/her advisor. A student may *elect* to leave his/her research group based on research area, perceived mismatch in student / advisor personality or other irreconcilable differences (a student who is considering changing advisors should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies). Regardless of the reasons the original student / advisor relationship has ended, the case is referred to a Committee on Advisor Changes.

The committee's responsibilities are to:

- 1) Determine whether it is appropriate for a student to try to find a new lab and stay in the program, or if the student should depart from the program.
- 2) If the student is approved to look for another lab, the committee must decide how long the student has to find a new advisor and recommend whether it would be appropriate to provide any bridge resources to support the student while s/he is not affiliated with a lab. The department chair will formally be the student's advisor during any time the student is between labs, and will submit grades or other evaluations of the student.
- 3) If the student finds an advisor willing to support him/her, the committee will determine if this particular student / advisor match has sufficient promise to go forward. The committee may solicit letters from i) the student, ii) the previous advisor, and iii) any potential new advisor(s). The committee may also ask the student to make a presentation on research achievements with the previous advisor, likely research projects with the proposed advisor, reasons for moving, or anything else relevant to the case in question. If the committee does not gain adequate confidence that changing advisors will lead to a positive outcome, the student will not be allowed to continue in the program. Generally speaking, the fewer years that the student has been with his/her original advisor the more favorable the outlook of the committee will be. Transfers during a student's first year are relatively common and usually due to student/advisor mismatch while a transfer after advancement to candidacy suggests a major setback in a student's time line to graduation and typically significant problems with the student in question.
- 4) If a student changes advisors prior to achieving candidacy, the committee, in consultation with the new advisor, will determine a reasonable time line for the qualifying exam to be completed. In some circumstances it may be more suitable to have the student defend a master's thesis.
- 5) A student who changes advisors after achieving candidacy will join the new lab on research probation (regardless of his/her previous status). This probation must be resolved by a meeting with the thesis committee at the end of the first semester in the new lab, in which the student must convince the committee that the transfer has been successful. If a student changes advisors early in graduate school, the qualifying exam will serve as the evaluation for whether the transfer has been successful.

http://chemistry.rice.edu/Graduate_Student_Handbook.aspx

ECE: 1.8 Advice on Changing Research Groups or Departments

Rice recognizes research interests may change after a student enters a graduate program. If a student feels their interests and talents could be better served working with a different advisor or in another research group or department, a change can be accommodated.

Although each case is unique, following are guidelines for making an advisor/group/department switch:

- (1) Discuss issues with current advisor. Often an adjustment of research topic may resolve the problem.
- (2) If issues are insurmountable, speak with faculty members whose research interests are more in line with student's and who has the funding for support.
- (3) When alternate faculty member agrees to replace current advisor, obtain permission from chair of ECE Graduate Committee and proceed to ECE Graduate Program Administrator, who will process the documentation required for the exchange.

<http://www.ece.rice.edu/academics/graduate/gradstudentHBnew.aspx>

Peer Examples:

Rutgers- http://coewww.rutgers.edu/main/dep_adv.php

Stanford- <https://ed.stanford.edu/academics/doctoral-handbook/requirements#advisors>

Princeton- <http://www.princeton.edu/ee/graduate/GSHandbook.pdf>

APPENDIX M

Publish Guidelines for Academic Probation and Dismissals

Bioengineering: A) PhD & MS Students:

- 1) Graduate students (PhD and MS) who are not making adequate progress will be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal from their research group and/or the graduate degree program.
- 2) The Department Chair and the office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will also be notified in writing of the possibility of dismissal from the research group and or graduate degree program.
- 3) The first written notice will make it clear to the student he or she is being placed on a probationary status and is being considered for separation from the research group and possibly the graduate degree program.
- 4) Students will be given clear expectations of what must be done within a specified time period of not less than three weeks to alleviate the deficiencies or problems resulting in the dismissal consideration.
- 5) A student is encouraged to seek another advisor during this time period in order to provide an option should corrective action not be successful and the student is dismissed from their current research group at the end of the probationary period.
- 6) The student will be reevaluated at the end of the first specified time period. The advisor may determine
 - Adequate progress has been made toward correcting deficiencies and the student is no longer being considered for dismissal. In this case the student will be notified of this decision.
 - Inadequate progress has been made toward correcting deficiencies. In this case, the student will be given a second written notification and additional time of not less than three weeks, to attempt positive progress. The possibility of dismissal must be clearly stated in this warning.
 - If after two written warnings and the passage of the specified probationary period of not less than six weeks, the student has not made sufficient progress toward correcting deficiencies and/or meeting the advisor's expectations, and the advisor is convinced that the student will be unable to achieve adequate progress despite intervention or additional time, the advisor may dismiss the student from their research group.
 - The date of dismissal may correspond with the end date of the last probationary period or any date thereafter. The student will be notified in writing of the decision to dismiss them from the research group. The official date of dismissal must be included in this notification and the student must be advised that financial support will be ending as of this date.
- 7) Opportunity to Join a Different Research Group
 - A student, having been given an opportunity to find another advisor during the probationary period, may change advisors if they are accepted into another research group.
 - A student dismissed due to inadequate progress may not change advisors more than twice. Students may not have a total of more than three advisors, including their initial advisor.
 - If a student is unable to find another advisor, the student will be dismissed from the graduate degree program.
- 8) Dismissal normally coincides with the end of a semester. A dismissal from the graduate degree program that takes affect during the semester will be approved by the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in accordance with the Guidelines for Dismissal, Petitions, Appeals, Grievances, and Problem Resolution
- 9) In cases of egregious failure to maintain satisfactory progress a student's fellowship may be terminated. Decisions to reduce or terminate a student's stipend will be made on a case-by-case basis. The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, the thesis advisor, and the department chair will consider all the factors that may have affected a student's performance before reaching such a decision.

B) Professional Masters (MBE) Students

- 1) Graduate students in the MBE program may be dismissed from the program if either their cumulative GPA or semester GPA falls below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters. Final decision will be made by the MBE Program Committee in consultation with the Department Chair.
- 2) If the student's GPA falls below 2.33 for two consecutive semesters (including the summer semester), the student will be immediately dismissed without further warning in accordance with University policy
- 3) Students will be notified of their dismissal once final grades have been received and posted to their records.

<http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

LING: Graduate Council has recently issued revised Guidelines for Dismissals, Petitions, Appeals, Grievances, and Problem Resolution. The revised guidelines can be found at graduate.rice.edu/dismissals Graduate student appeals and problems at the departmental level will be handled by a committee of the whole department faculty, minus the student's advisor and any members of the student's thesis committee.

Peer Examples:

Stanford- http://biology.stanford.edu/sites/all/files/PhD_Handbook_1213.pdf

Emory- <http://www.philosophy.emory.edu/graduate/handbook.shtml>

APPENDIX N

Publish Guidelines for Petitions and Appeals

ANTH: Petitions, Appeals and Grievances

Students who wish to petition the department or the Graduate Office for extensions of deadlines or other administrative matters, or to appeal a departmental decision already made, should send the petition via email to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director will convene a faculty committee of at least three members to consider the request.

Any student who has a conflict with a faculty member or a student colleague is first encouraged to seek to settle the conflict directly. Should this not be possible or should the conflict remain unresolved, any student may approach either the department Chair or the Director of Graduate Studies in order to file a grievance. A committee of at least three faculty who are not named in the grievance will be convened in order to consider the grievance and suggest a plan for its resolution.

CAAM: Petitions Students may petition for exceptions to these rules. Petitions will be handled on an individual basis. A petition regarding University requirements, regulations, or judgments must be submitted to the Office Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The petition must be accompanied by a recommendation from the program, typically a letter from the student's mentor/advisor and a letter from the department chair. An example for such a petition is the extension of the time to candidacy.

A petition regarding requirements, regulations, or judgments of the CAAM graduate program should be made in writing to the Graduate Committee and delivered to the Chair of this committee with a copy of this letter given to the graduate secretary (Daria Lawrence). Petition letters should state precisely what exception or variance is requested and give detailed reasons to support the request. Either the Graduate Committee or the full faculty will decide the issue, as appropriate. For example, a student may petition to take a non-CAAM course to satisfy the distribution course requirement (see section 4). Such a petition should be made before the course is taken! Another example is a petition to delay in the completion of the Masters Thesis. The student's MA thesis advisor will be asked for concurrence in this particular exception. For example, it may in some cases be reasonable to extend the date of the MA Thesis Defense if it has been agreed between student, MA thesis committee, and Graduate Committee that the MA Thesis will do double duty as a PhD Thesis Proposal. However, the student and thesis committee should take account of the risk that the added time and effort may not lead to PhD candidacy.

Appeals: A student may appeal a decision regarding a petition. Rice University guidelines allow only one level of appeal from a decision regarding a petition. In general, the appeal process will be resolved at the lowest level possible. When the petition is decided at the department level, the appeal must be submitted to the school. When the petition is decided at a school level, the appeal must be handled by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. When the petition is decided by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the appellant may submit an appeal to the Provost. An appeal must be submitted within 15 days from receipt of the decision that is being appealed. Late appeals will be dismissed, except for unusual situations when a delay is justified. Appeals must be acknowledged in writing immediately upon their receipt by the receiving unit. <http://www.caam.rice.edu/PDFs/handbook2012.pdf>

LING: Graduate Council has recently issued revised Guidelines for Dismissals, Petitions, Appeals, Grievances, and Problem Resolution. The revised guidelines can be found at graduate.rice.edu/dismissals Graduate student appeals and problems at the departmental level will be handled by a committee of the whole department faculty, minus the student's advisor and any members of the student's thesis committee.

Peer Examples:

UC Berkeley- http://chem.berkeley.edu/grad_info/gsh.pdf

Georgia Tech- <http://www.biology.gatech.edu/graduate-programs/current-students/docs/Biology.Graduate.Handbook.2010-2011.pdf>

APPENDIX O

Publish Guidelines for Grievances and Problem Resolution

BCB: Grievance Process.

Problems or conflicts may arise during a student's graduate education, and students must take responsibility for informing faculty of any such problem. Depending on the problem, students should feel free to go to their advisor, members of their progress review committee, the departmental ombudsperson (page i), or any faculty member with whom they feel comfortable for advice. It is best to move to resolve any conflicts quickly and amicably. However, if attempts to resolve a serious problem informally are unsuccessful, the following grievance procedure should be followed:

1. The student should submit the grievance in writing to the department chair, who will attempt to resolve the problem.
2. If the student remains unsatisfied, the problem should be presented to the BCB graduate grievance committee for resolution. This committee is a standing departmental committee (current members listed in the preface, page i). If a member of this standing committee also serves on the student's research progress committee, the student may ask the department chair for an additional pro tem committee member. Both the student and the department chair should submit a written record of their view to this committee.
3. If the student remains unsatisfied with the resolution of the issue, the problem should be referred to a standing subcommittee designated at the Graduate Council and composed of three faculty members (representing diverse disciplines within the University), one graduate student, and the dean of graduate studies. A written report of proceedings at stage two should be presented to the Chair of the Graduate Council, for forwarding to the subcommittee, together with all other written materials generated during the investigation. The decision of this subcommittee will be considered final.

CAAM: Exceptions: Exceptions to these rules will be handled on an individual basis according to the grievance procedures outlined below. Amongst these exceptions is delay in the completion of the Masters Thesis. Such extensions should be requested in a letter to the Graduate Committee stating the reasons for the extension (beyond the second semester of the second year). The student's MA thesis advisor will be asked for concurrence in this particular exception. For example, it may in some cases be reasonable to extend the date of the MA Thesis Defense if it has been agreed between student, MA thesis committee, and Graduate Committee that the MA Thesis will do double duty as a PhD Thesis Proposal. However, the student and thesis committee should take account of the risk that the added time and effort may not lead to PhD candidacy.

Grievance: All requests for exceptions or variances from the policies outlined above should be addressed to the Graduate Committee and delivered to the Chair of this committee. Grievance letters should state precisely what exception or variance is requested and detailed reasons given to support the request. Either the Graduate Committee or the full faculty will decide the issue, as appropriate.

<http://www.caam.rice.edu/PDFs/handbook2012.pdf>

BIOE: Appeals, grievances, and problem resolution are determined in accordance with the *Guidelines for Dismissal, Petitions, Appeals, Grievances, and Problem Resolution* found at <http://graduate.rice.edu/dismissals/>.

Peer Examples:

Clemson- <http://www.clemson.edu/caah/architecture/graduate-students/docs/ARCHITECTURE-GRADUATE-HANDBOOK-2012-13-061112.pdf>

Emory- <http://www.philosophy.emory.edu/graduate/handbook.shtml>

APPENDIX P

Publish a Departmental Minimum Cumulative GPA and/or Minimum Course Grade Accepted for Degree Credit

BCB: Students must achieve a minimum overall average of B ($\geq 3.0/4.0$) in the formal biosciences courses to be a candidate for the Ph.D. degree. The BCB faculty will evaluate the student's overall performance (see Chapter 8). https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

CAAM: For a satisfactory performance in their course work, students enrolled in the CAAM PhD program are expected maintain a B (3.00) average in the CAAM required introductory and distribution courses. In addition, Rice's rules specified in the General Announcements apply. <http://www.caam.rice.edu/PDFs/handbook2012.pdf>

CEVE: A minimum grade of B- must be achieved for each of these core courses, as well as a minimum average GPA of 3.0. <http://ceve.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=162>

BIOE: Students must receive a grade of B- (2.67) or above in all course work counted toward their coursework requirements. Courses in which a student receives a grade below a B- (2.67) may not be used to fulfill the coursework requirements. <http://bioengineering.rice.edu/phd.aspx>

LING: In all of your course work, a grade level of B- (2.7) is the formal minimum for a passing performance in the graduate program. A GPA lower than 2.7 will trigger probationary status. <http://linguistics.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=322#course>

CHEM: Each course must be passed with a grade of B- or higher. It is possible to repeat or replace a course, upon approval of the department's graduate advising committee. A maximum of two courses can be repeated/replaced. http://chemistry.rice.edu/Graduate_Student_Handbook.aspx

CEVE: A minimum grade of B- must be achieved for each of these core courses, as well as a minimum average GPA of 3.0. <http://ceve.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=162>

Peer Examples:

MIT: "Note that in most departments and graduate programs, grades below B are normally considered to be unacceptable as a measure of progress towards degree objectives." <https://odge.mit.edu/gpp/registration/performance/grades/>

Duke University: Grades: "To be certified as making satisfactory progress towards the degree, graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 (B) cumulative grade point average."

Stanford University: "In addition, graduate students must maintain a 3.0 (B) grade point average overall in courses applicable to the degree." <http://gap.stanford.edu/3-1.html>

University of Texas: "To graduate, all graduate students must have a graduate grade point average of at least 3.00. The graduate grade point average includes all graduate courses and upper-division undergraduate courses in which the student earns a letter grade while he or she is enrolled in the Graduate School" http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/student_services/academic_policies/

APPENDIX Q

Provide Students with Regular Opportunities to Formally Present Research

BCB: 10. THE GRADUATE SEMINAR: BIOC 581/582

All students, beginning in the second year, are required to present an annual research seminar in BIOC 581/582, which currently meets Monday at 2:00 pm. Attendance is required and students are encouraged to participate actively in the discussion period that follows the formal presentations.

There are three goals of this course:

- to provide a forum for graduate students to gain expertise in presenting a scientific seminar
- to provide exposure to other ongoing research in the department
- to develop critical analysis skills by evaluating the seminars of other students

Research seminars should be 35-45 minutes in length followed by a question period. Seminars should be presented in a format appropriate for a scientific meeting or regular departmental seminar, and include a brief background to the field and the specific research, a summary of relevant research results and conclusions, a discussion of possible future work, and acknowledgments.

While the primary audience for BIOC 581/582 is the graduate student body, students are encouraged to open their seminars to faculty, staff, and postdoctoral fellows as a way of broadening the potential feedback and discussion. The student's progress review committee is encouraged to attend the BIOC 581/582 seminar. This allows the committee the opportunity to gain a broad overview of the project and may eliminate the need for a second presentation during the progress review. Committee members will reserve major questions for the progress review meeting.

Attendance policy.

Two or more unexcused absences in the semester (without a documented illness, emergency, or other excused absence) will result in a grade of unsatisfactory in the course, which in turn will result in academic probation.

Please request excused absences well ahead of time (e.g., the preceding

Friday) via an email to the instructors and include a reasoned justification for the request.

Copy the Graduate Program Coordinator on the excused absence request. Arrival to class more than 5 minutes late will be considered an absence.

https://biochem.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_Studies/GradHandbookweb.pdf

CHEM: Students present seminars according to the following schedule:

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
1st		background and preliminary results
2nd	practice Q exam	qualifying exam
3rd		research progress
4th and higher	research progress	

http://chemistry.rice.edu/Graduate_Student_Handbook.aspx

LING: You are required to present one of your publishable papers as a departmental colloquium. Contact the department colloquium organizer to arrange to do this. In addition to your required publishable-paper colloquium, you are always welcome to give a talk on other projects you wish to share with the department, especially those related to your summer research proposals. You may also find it helpful to use a colloquium slot for giving a practice talk for an upcoming conference presentation, in order to get input and feedback before presenting your work at the conference itself. <http://linguistics.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=322#colloq>

EEB: EBIO 561, 562, 563, 568 ("Journal Clubs"): a student must take at least two of these courses (or the same course twice) prior to achieving candidacy. Frequent participation beyond this requirement is highly encouraged and may be required by a student's Major advisor. EBIO 585/586 Graduate Seminar is also required.

<http://eeb.rice.edu/index.html>

Peer Examples:

Baylor College of Medicine- <https://www.bcm.edu/genetics/graduateprogram/index.cfm?PMID=10596>

Cornell- <http://mbg.cornell.edu/prospective/graduate-programs/genetics-development/upload/G-D-HandbookRev11-1-10.pdf>

UC Berkeley- http://psychology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/Research/cbb_ProgramGuide.pdf

APPENDIX R

Publish Guidelines for RA & TA Responsibilities and/or Offer a TA Training Class/ Workshop

HIST: Teaching Assistant (TA)

Limited to no more than 12 hours per week. As a TA, you will assist the professor with the duties associated with a particular class. Upper-level courses at Rice rarely have TA's, so in all likelihood you will TA for a freshman- and sophomore-level course, such as the introductory survey courses. Responsibilities may include grading papers, leading small discussion sections, offering review/study sessions for students prior to exams, delivering occasional lectures, and of course attending the class each day it meets. While TA'ing can be time-intensive, serving as a

TA is a good way to gather information about effective teaching techniques and to reflect upon the sorts of methods that you'll wish to employ as an instructor. Pay careful attention to the professor's syllabus, his or her lecture style, his or her methods for leading discussion, the types of assignments given to the students, etc.; you'll be likely to acquire some strategies that will prove useful to you when you are teaching your own class. Generally speaking, first-year students do not serve as TA's.

Research Assistant (RA)

Limited to no more than 6 hours per week. Your job as an RA is to assist a particular faculty member with his or her research tasks. This may include locating sources in the library or through interlibrary loan, reviewing newspapers or microfilmed manuscript sources, working on databases, or limited amounts of photocopying and scanning. This is an opportunity to learn about how professional historians conduct research. The elements of effective research—framing questions, identifying sources, organizing materials, etc.—are not intuitive, and assisting a professor with his or her research work can provide a valuable model for your own research. Remember that faculty are very busy. Take the initiative and check in regularly with your faculty member. 21

Editorial Assistant (EA)

Limited to no more than 8 hours per week. For the EA work with the Journal of Southern History, you must complete 100 hours over the course of the semester. Both the JSH and the Jefferson Davis papers have detailed descriptions of their procedures; if this is your assignment, you will receive additional training from the full-time staff. Serving as a EA for the JSH or Davis papers is a unique opportunity for graduate students at Rice—an inside look at the publication process for journals or papers projects that few students receive.

<http://history.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Official%20Handbook%202012.pdf>

School of Engineering: Fall TA Workshops

Each fall, just before classes begin, the School of Engineering sponsors a one-day workshop that first-time teaching assistants whose teaching is funded by the dean's office are required to attend. This is a great opportunity to meet TAs in other departments and enjoy a lively, hands-on training experience.

Outstanding faculty and seasoned teaching assistants offer short presentations and exercises to help prepare TAs for their diverse roles in courses and labs and the challenge of teaching engineering undergraduates at Rice. The workshop is designed so that graduate students completing the workshop will be able to:

- identify individual learning styles and use them to help students become more effective learners,
- identify some assessment methods that improve learning and teaching in engineering courses,
- understand and apply some techniques for teaching mathematics,
- practice some basic skills required for oral presentations that engage the audience, and
- know what they are pledged to do, if they think a student might be violating the honor code.

Eligible graduate students will be identified by their departments. If you are specifically funded to work as a TA by the dean's office, and this is the first semester you have taught at Rice, you may wish to check with your department administrator to see if you are eligible, or contact Janice Bordeaux in the dean's office at: jbordeau@rice.edu.

Peer Examples:

UC Berkeley- http://chem.berkeley.edu/grad_info/gsh.pdf

Stanford- <http://history.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/PhD%20Handbook%2011-8-12.pdf>

University of Texas- <http://www.policies.utexas.edu/policies/teaching-assistants>

Northwestern- <http://www.english.northwestern.edu/graduate/tahandbook.pdf>

**RICE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

TEACHING ASSISTANTS: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of the Rights and Responsibilities is to ensure that teaching assistants (T.A.s) are neither overworked nor underutilized and that the T.A. experience will be rewarding for both the faculty member and the graduate student. The T.A. is there to assist the faculty member, but far more important is that she/he develop teaching skills and learn to feel comfortable in the classroom. The following are guidelines for the kind of work T.A.s might be expected to do. Please note that these guidelines are designed for the graduate student entering with a Bachelor's degree. Students entering with previous teaching experience will require less supervision; however, they will benefit from regular discussions with the faculty member about issues relating to the course.

Attendance/Classroom Dynamics

T.A.s are expected to attend class meetings and should be formally introduced during the first class. It is helpful to include the T.A.'s name and office hours on the syllabus. Supervisors should discuss with their T.A.s expectations regarding participation in class discussion.

Classroom Teaching

T.A.s should teach no fewer than three classes and no more than two weeks of classes per semester. The faculty supervisor should be present during at least half of these classes and should offer specific feedback and advice as soon as it is mutually convenient. At the end of the semester, the faculty member should submit a written evaluation of the T.A.'s performance to the T.A., and each student in the class should complete a Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form for the T.A. These evaluations should be kept separate from the professor's evaluations and should be given to the Graduate Coordinator to add to the student's files.

Papers, Exams, etc.

Class enrollments vary, so it is hard to create strict guidelines for the number of papers a teaching assistant should be asked to grade. Under no circumstances should the T.A. be asked to grade more than half the papers and/or exams for a specific course. We suggest that, when possible, the assistant be asked to grade at least some of the papers from two different sets so that she/he will have experience with different kinds of assignments at different times in the semester. Particularly in the case of new assistants with little or no teaching experience, the faculty member should exercise close supervision over at least the first set of papers graded by the T.A. Prior to the actual grading, the faculty member should go over his/her system of grading and talk about grading problems and strategies. After the first set of papers is graded, the faculty member should look them over, make comments, and discuss changes if necessary. Faculty members have final responsibility for the assigned grades although they should be careful not to undermine the authority of the T.A. and should suggest that students with problems go first to the T.A. who graded the paper.

Faculty members should discuss the design and goals of the course syllabus with the T.A. at the beginning of the semester. The teaching assistant may participate in the construction of exams, paper assignments, etc. Under no circumstances should a T.A. be used as a clerical assistant.

At the end of the semester, the supervisor must submit a detailed evaluation of the T.A.'s performance to the Graduate Committee for inclusion in the student's dossier. This evaluation will be part of the Preliminary Review.

**RICE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure that Research Assistants (R.A.s) are neither overworked nor underutilized and that the R.A. experience will be productive for both the faculty member and the student. While R.A.s are assigned, in part, to help the faculty member with ongoing projects, faculty should also actively mentor students, helping them to develop research skills.

R.A.s should be asked to devote, on the average, no more than five (5) hours a week during the weeks of classes to this part of their graduate work, and in any case no more than seventy (70) hours per semester. Faculty members should try to distribute the work evenly during the semester. R.A.s should under no circumstances be underutilized for weeks and then suddenly asked to do several weeks' worth of work at once.

R.A.s may be asked to do library research, proofreading, editing, fact-checking, or bibliographical work. Although it is appropriate to ask an R.A. to do some photocopying, this or other clerical tasks should not form the bulk of the work she/he is asked to do.

The faculty supervisor is required to send a written report (evaluation letter) on the R.A.'s work to the Graduate Committee at the end of each semester. This report forms part of the material the Graduate Committee reviews to evaluate each student's progress in the program.