



Graduate Studies Program Policy Handbook Albany Medical College

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1 ADMINISTRATION

The Graduate Studies Program at the Albany Medical College is responsible for the educational planning, methodology, and assessment leading to the granting of a graduate level degree. The Program offers curricula leading to the Doctor of Philosophy and Masters of Science (M.S.) degrees, and provides a stimulating environment that fosters biomedical research and critical thinking. In both basic science and clinical curricula, students join in the excitement of discovery and the challenges of research, and contribute meaningfully to the scientific enterprise of the Nation.

The Albany Medical College is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

THE GRADUATE STUDIES OPERATING COMMITTEE manages the Graduate Studies Program at Albany Medical College. It is composed of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (Chair), the Vice Dean for Academic Administration, Graduate Directors from each of the Basic Science Departments and the Clinical Science Centers, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee and a Graduate Student Representative from the Graduate Student Organization.

The Graduate Studies Operating Committee coordinates its management through the actions of the Curriculum Committee, and the Graduate Student Progress Committee. With the exception of admissions decisions, all actions from the standing committees must be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAM oversees all graduate level educational matters including preparation of the curriculum, designation of instructional time for all programs, making rules and regulations affecting all matters that may be properly referred to as the academic affairs of the Graduate Studies Program.

The Vice Dean for Academic Administration is the Chair of the Executive Committee. The voting membership consists of one Director from each of the Basic Science Departments and the Clinical Science Centers, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, (represents the Graduate Studies Operating Committee), the President of the Graduate Student Organization and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

The Ex Officio committee members include: the faculty members of the Graduate Studies Operating Committee (GSOC), the Director of Admissions and Student Records, the Director of the Schaffer Library, a liaison member from the University at Albany School of Public Health, and the Dean of the Albany Medical College. This governing body is responsible to the Academic Governing Council, which is chaired by the Dean of the Albany Medical College.

THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE, as advisory to the Executive Committee through the Graduate Studies Operating Committee, is charged with the development and maintenance of the graduate curriculum, according to the standards set by the Executive Committee. Specific responsibilities include the review and recommendation for approval of course offerings, ensuring that curricular offerings exist in a coherent plan across Centers and Departments, overseeing the evaluation process, and recommends updates of the Graduate Studies Program rules. The members of the Curriculum Committee include faculty members from the each Basic Science Department and Clinical Science Center, a Faculty representative from the School of



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Public Health, a student member nominated by the Graduate Student Organization and the Vice Dean for Academic Administration as an ex-officio member. The Committee representatives, in conjunction with representation from the State University at Albany School of Public Health, shall develop and oversee the joint component of the first year curriculum for basic science students. The full membership of the AMC Curriculum Committee shall recommend all courses for graduate credit and evaluate suitability of courses for transfer credit. All courses, whether graduate or medical at Albany Medical College or graduate level at other institutions (available for registration through the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities), must be reviewed and recommended for approval by the Curriculum Committee, through the Graduate Studies Operating Committee, with final approval by the Executive Committee before graduate credit can be recorded by the Office of Student Records. The list of such approved courses is available in the Graduate Studies Program Office and on the AMC Website (www.amc.edu).

THE GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE, as advisory to the Executive Committee is charged with the evaluation of academic performance of each graduate student in all programs to ensure compliance with standards as set forth by the Executive Committee. The members of the Graduate Student Progress Committee include Graduate Directors in each Center and Department, faculty members of the Curriculum Committee, or a member appointed by the Center Director or Department Chair, and the Vice Dean for Academic Administration as an ex-officio member. The Committee is chaired by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

HUDSON-MOHAWK ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES - The Graduate Studies Program of the Albany Medical College is a member institution of the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities thereby subject to all inter-institutional agreements and policies.

2 ADMISSIONS

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D) AND MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) DEGREES. The Graduate Studies Program is "interdisciplinary" in nature, designed to expose students to a broad range of choices for research specialization, while allowing them to develop a deep understanding of the principles of science coupled with technical expertise. The interdisciplinary program is built upon four basic science Departments and two clinical science Centers. The Graduate Studies Program is comprised of:

- The Department of Immunology and Microbial Disease
- The Department of Molecular & Cellular Physiology
- The Department of Neuroscience and Experimental Therapeutics
- The Department of Regenerative & Cancer Cell Biology
- The Center for Nurse Anesthesiology
- The Center for Physician Assistant Studies
- The Alden March Bioethics Institute
- The Masters and Certificate Programs in Clinical Investigation

The Albany Medical College is committed to the belief that educational opportunities should be available to all eligible citizens without regard to race, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation,



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religion, marital status, disability or national origin. Our policies, practices and procedures reflect and support this belief.

Admission to the Graduate Studies Program is open to students who have successfully completed the requirements for a Bachelor's degree or an equivalent academic degree and have demonstrated superior academic achievement. If a student meets the Albany Medical College admission requirements, but fails to meet program prerequisites, provisional acceptance into the Graduate Studies Program, pending completion of prerequisite undergraduate courses, may be granted.

The Center for Nurse Anesthesiology require applicants to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) prepared and administered by the Educational Testing Service, Box 592, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

Programs listed below no longer require the GRE exam for admissions

- The Department of Immunology and Microbial Disease
- The Department of Molecular & Cellular Physiology
- The Department of Neuroscience and Experimental Therapeutics
- The department of Regenerative and Cancer Cell Biology
- The Center for Physician Assistant Studies
- The Alden March Bioethics Institute
- The Masters and Certificate Programs in Clinical Investigation

Upon recommendation of the sponsoring Center or Department and the approval of the Graduate Studies Operating Committee the GRE may be waived for applicants with doctoral degrees, (M.D., DDS, and D.Eng). The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or an equivalent examination is required of all foreign national applicants from non-English speaking universities or countries. Foreign applicants must also complete the International Applicant Supplemental form.

3 STUDENT STATUS AND ACADEMIC YEAR

The academic year consists of two semesters, July 1 through December 31 and January 1 through June 30. The minimum number of credits a fulltime student may take per semester are 10, the maximum is 18, and the normal course load would be 15-16. A student may take a maximum of 15 credits of research and a one to three credit colloquium or course per semester.

Students in an approved degree program must be registered in every semester until completion of their Defense of Thesis or request a Leave of Absence. During the student's final semester, he/she must be registered for an appropriate number of credits determined by the Graduate Director and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. During this semester, the student will be considered full-time for the purpose of student status. Physician Assistant Studies scheduling reflects three semester's terms per calendar year: spring (15 weeks), summer (12 weeks), and fall (15 weeks).

A full-time student is one who is matriculated in an approved degree program of the Graduate Studies Program and is registered for a minimum of ten credits each semester. Such a student will be assessed full tuition, which will cover all courses, including summer courses during the



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academic year at Albany Medical College and at other institutions in the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities.

A part-time student is one who is matriculated in an approved degree program of the Graduate Studies Program and is registered for nine credits or less each semester. For matriculated part-time students taking less than ten credits during a semester, tuition will be assessed on a credit-hour basis.

Non-matriculated students may register for Graduate Studies Program courses with approval of the Course Director and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Non-matriculated students will be assessed tuition on a credit hour basis. No limit is imposed upon the number of non-medical curriculum courses that may be taken for credit by a non-matriculated student. Courses in the Medical curriculum and courses involving laboratory work are not open to registration by non-matriculated students. Non-matriculated students must submit to the Office of the Graduate Studies Program evidence of qualification in the biological/biomedical sciences (usually a B.S. or equivalent degree).

Albany Medical College graduate students may cross-register for courses at other institutions in the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities. Albany Medical Center employees may register for Graduate Studies Program courses as non-matriculated students. Details of the Program may be obtained from the Graduate Studies Program Office.

Full-time graduate students enrolled at other institutions in the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities who wish to cross-register for Albany Medical College graduate courses numbered 500 or higher may do so with permission of the Course Director and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Courses in the medical curriculum and courses involving laboratory work are not open to cross-registration. Cross-registered students are not assessed tuition. Albany Medical College graduate students may cross-register for courses at other institutions in the Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges and Universities.

Graduate students who have been either fulltime or part-time students at Albany Medical College and have withdrawn from the Graduate Studies Program will not be allowed to register for courses as a non-matriculated student.

4 STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS & IMMUNIZATIONS

It is a New York State requirement that all students be protected by a comprehensive medical health insurance plan. Proof of such health insurance must be presented to the Graduate Studies Program Office prior to registration or coverage may be arranged through the Student Health Program Office, (518) 262-5948. All students will be provided with a physical examination form and an immunization documentation form to be completed by their physician prior to matriculation.



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5 HONOR SYSTEM

A Student Honor Code was revised by the Albany Medical College student body and was approved by the Board of Trustees on August 6, 1997. Article I of the Student Honor Code of the Albany Medical College states in part:

"As students of medicine and of the medical sciences, we embrace the foregoing physician statement and hereby acknowledge the confidence that has been bestowed upon us along with the responsibilities attendant with this privilege. As future physicians, teachers, and scientific investigators, we recognize the importance of conducting ourselves at the highest level of professional ethics and our duty to serve our mentors our colleagues and ultimately our patients."

Students, at the time of registration at Albany Medical College, are required to sign a statement that they have read the Honor Code and that they pledge to abide by that Code. Students whose behavior denotes a lack of fitness for the practice of medicine or for the conduct of scientific research shall be considered to be in violation of the Honor Code. Complete copies of the Honor Code are available in the Graduate Studies Program Office and will be made available to accepted students prior to matriculation.

Students may be dismissed for violation of the Student Honor Code. All procedures in the Honor Code will be followed. Notification of dismissal for any cause will come from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

6 COURSE WORK AND CREDIT HOURS

Normal course load for a fulltime student consists of 10 to 16 credit hours each semester. The lower and upper limits of fulltime registration are 10 and 18 credits each semester. A maximum of 15 credit hours of research each semester may be recorded. Matriculated students registering for course loads outside this range are required to receive the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. In the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology, credit for clinical courses is equivalent to 100 clinical hours = 1 clinical credit. In the Center for Physician Assistant Studies credits for graduate level full time rotations ranges in 40 hours per week or 160 to 200 hours per credit hour.

Courses for graduate credit must be approved by the Executive Committee as recommended by the Curriculum Committee, through the Graduate Studies Operating Committee. New graduate-level courses to be considered for approval must be submitted to the Curriculum Committee by the graduate faculty responsible for the course and accompanied by a detailed course description. Each credit for graduate-level courses is allocated on the basis of 15 lecture hours for didactic courses or 30 laboratory hours for research courses. It is a reasonable expectation that every learning experience typically involves outside classroom activity, out of class time is estimated to approximate the Federal standard of 1 hour in class and 2 hours out of class time. Out of class time will vary for students' individualized study needs.

Courses given at other institutions require the review and recommendation for approval by the Curriculum Committee, through the Graduate Studies Operating Committee. The final approval



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must come from the Executive Committee to be eligible for graduate credit at The Albany Medical College.

The Executive Committee must approve all courses, and the Office of the Graduate Studies Program shall give notice of approval to the Registrar in writing.

6.1 COURSE EVALUATION

The Curriculum Committee reviews information from student and faculty evaluations of courses taught each semester and makes recommendations to the Graduate Studies Operating Committee. Student evaluations, using instruments designed by the Graduate Student Organization in concert with the Curriculum Committee and processed anonymously online with the summary of results forwarded to the Curriculum Committee. Faculty evaluations of courses are gathered by the course director and forwarded to the Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee has responsibility for comparing previous year's evaluations and making recommendations to the Executive Committee through the Graduate Studies Operating Committee. The Curriculum Committee will communicate any recommendations to each course director.

6.2 COURSE CANCELLATION

A request to cancel a course may be made by the Course Director if less than five students register for the course. When a request is made to cancel a course the Curriculum Committee will review and advise the Center Directors and Department Chairs on the impact of the course cancellation. Then the Center Directors and Department Chairs along with the Vice Dean for Academic Administration will vote on the request for course cancellation within 48 hours of the course director's request.

6.3 GRADING SYSTEM AND REPORTING OF GRADES

All courses that have been approved for graduate credit are graded as follows: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, or F. For each credit hour earned, numerical values are allotted to these grades as follows: A=4, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2, C-=1.7, D=1, and F=0. These numerical values are multiplied by the number of credit hours allotted in each course to obtain "quality points." The grade point average (GPA) is obtained by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of credit hours. The grades of D and F are not acceptable for course credit toward a graduate degree but will be used in calculating the GPA. Research credits are submitted as S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). Other courses with the recommended approval of the Curriculum Committee may be graded as P (Pass) or F (Fail), Grades of S/U or P/F are not included in GPA calculations). Aspects of professionalism may be incorporated into the grade.

The criteria for assigning the grade of S (Satisfactory) include enthusiasm for research, excellent work-ethic, independent thinking, keeping current with the literature, conducting experiments in an appropriate and timely manner, thoroughly analyzing the data, keeping excellent records of the experimental procedures and outcomes, writing the results in the form of abstracts, manuscripts, and presentations, and the ability to interact well with others in the laboratory.

If the student's mentor believes that the student is not performing up to expected standards the mentor may assign a grade of U (Unsatisfactory).



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The criteria to be considered for receiving a grade of P (Pass) includes enthusiasm for the material presented, class participation, an excellent work-ethic, reading the literature, conducting experiments and/or completing assignments in an appropriate and timely manner.

If the student does not perform at the expected level during the course, the course director may assign a grade of F (Fail).

Graduate courses taken at other institutions through cross-registration will be included in calculating the GPA. Courses taken at other institutions prior to admission shall not be calculated in the GPA, although such courses may be used to fulfill the degree requirements.

Subject to recommended approval by the Progress Committee, a student may remediate or repeat a didactic course in which a grade of C, D, or F was received. Although both grades will appear on the transcript, only the remediated or repeated grade will be used to calculate the GPA. All recommended approvals made by the Progress Committee must receive the approval of both the Graduate Studies Operating Committee and the Executive Committee before they are put in to effect.

Grades should be recorded by Student Records within one week after the end of the course. If a student fails to complete course requirements the grade of incomplete (I) will be recorded on the transcript and the student will be notified. All requirements in a course must be completed within one month following the last day of examinations in that course. An incomplete (I) will be converted to Failure (F) on the transcript, if the student fails to complete all requirements. Exceptions may be granted for health or emergency reasons.

6.4 *TRANSFER OF CREDIT

***Please note that Transfer of Credit is not permitted in all Centers/Departments, currently neither the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology nor the Center for Physician Assistant Studies permit Transfer of Credit.**

A request to transfer credit to meet a specific Albany Medical College Center requirement or elective should be initiated by the student's Center/Department and forwarded to the Office of the Graduate Studies Program. The letter should clearly state which Center/Department requirement or elective each transferred course would replace and should provide assessment of the course in terms of 1) the course(s) to be transferred must be of a graduate level or equivalent, 2) the course content compared to the course that it is intended to replace, 3), in the case of courses taken more than five years ago, the appropriateness of the course's material in the current field of study. 4) The student must have received a grade of at least B or 3.0 in the course(s) requested for transfer. The supporting documentation must include a detailed description of the course(s) and a certified transcript, and in addition, a student may be required to take a competency examination. Given that the student will be receiving an Albany Medical College degree, he/she should generally not transfer more than half of their total AMC didactic credits; however students may request on a case-by-case basis that additional credits be transferred. Research credits earned at other institutions are not transferable. Requests for transfer of credit must be made within the first year of study in the program. The Curriculum Committee will evaluate the courses for transfer and will recommend the credits for each course. The Committee will determine whether the credits to be transferred are appropriate for fulfilling Graduate Studies Program requirements and will make the appropriate



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recommendations to the Graduate Studies Operating Committee for review prior to presenting the final recommendation to the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee will determine the number of credits acceptable for transfer and will submit their decision and the certified transcript to the Registrar. The approved courses shall be entered on the Albany Medical College Graduate Studies Program transcript showing institution, course title, and credit hours. Grades earned at another institution or program will not be used to calculate the GPA for Albany Medical College graduate students. The above does not apply to grades earned at another institution through cross-registration or by other approved mechanisms while a matriculated student at Albany Medical College.

A student who has completed a course or degree program in the Graduate Studies Program of the Albany Medical College may, within two years, transfer all non-research credits with a grade of A or B into a graduate program, at the request of the Center/Department Graduate Director. These grades will be reflected in the GPA with the recommendation of the Curriculum Committee and approval of the Executive Committee.

If a continuously matriculated student transfers from one Department to another while pursuing the same degree, research and course credits are transferable, subject to the approval of the new Department. The Curriculum Committee, with the support of both Departments, will determine whether the results of a successfully completed Written Preliminary Examination may be transferred from one Department to another. Recommendation for action will be made to the Graduate Studies Operating Committee for review prior to presenting the recommendation to the Executive Committee.

If a continuously matriculated student transfers from the Master's degree program to the Doctoral degree program (which requires the approval of the Department and the Graduate Studies Operating Committee), all research and didactic credits are transferable.

AMBI Credit for Life Experience

In very special circumstances the Bioethics Program will grant credit for life experience. To start the process of accepting life experience as a basis for course credit, a student must first be accepted into the Alden March Bioethics graduate program at Albany Medical College. The student will then develop and submit a portfolio to include relevant information such as detailed description of the life experience with consideration of how that experience reflects the goals and outcomes of the program. This portfolio can include evaluations for courses taught; published papers in peer review journals, certificates granted or other significant contributions.

The portfolio will be reviewed by a content expert, assigned by the graduate director, who will then write a recommendation to grant credit or not, based on the learning objectives of the program. The student may then be asked to complete an oral or written exam or assignment to assess knowledge of the subject matter.

6.4.1 ALDEN MARCH BIOETHICS INSTITUTE CREDITS APPLIED TO MS IN BIOETHICS FROM JOINT DEGREE LAW SCHOOL

Students in joint Juris Doctorate degree programs with the Alden March Bioethics Institute have agreed that credits from specific courses taken at their joint degree institution will be applied to their Master of Science in Bioethics degree at the Alden March Bioethics Institute at Albany Medical College. Once the Albany Medical College Registrar receives a transcript from the student's joint degree institution documenting that the student has completed the appropriate



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courses, those credits will be applied to the Master of Science in Bioethics degree and transcript. The students must have completed the courses at their law school at the standard necessary for that particular institution in order for the credits to be applied to the Albany Medical College transcript and Master of Science degree in Bioethics.

6.5 AUDITING OF COURSES

Auditing students are permitted to register, but not for credit, in any course approved for graduate credit. The audit must be approved by the Course Director and by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies prior to registration. Limitations and tuition charges set for non-matriculated Students apply. Audit shall be indicated on the transcript by the designation AUD. A course taken for audit credit cannot, at a later time, be used for credit or to satisfy degree requirements for that course.

6.6 COURTESY COURSE ATTENDANCE

Students, fellows, and other staff members of Albany Medical Center may attend lectures in a course with permission of the instructor and/or supervisor without registration. Courtesy course attendance cannot be considered as registration for auditing of courses. Such individuals may not register at a later time in order to claim credit for such attendance.

6.7 REGISTRATION

Responsibility for notifying graduate students of critical dates such as registration rests with the Office of the Graduate Studies Program in conjunction with the Office of Student Records. Students must be registered continuously (for every semester) until completion of the Defense of Thesis or request a Leave of Absence. Students must register by the date specified or be subject to a late fee of \$20. Registration for matriculated students is accomplished through a computerized registration process.

6.8 ADD/DROP COURSES

Changes in courses or credits may be accomplished by submitting a completed, signed Graduate Studies Program Add/Drop Registration Form to the Office of the Graduate Studies Program. A student may add a course prior to the completion of 30% of the course, based on total contact hours. The procedure for withdrawal is to use the Add/Drop form together with the written approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. A student may withdraw from a course prior to completion of 30 percent of the course. Such withdrawals shall be indicated on the transcript by W. A student withdrawing from a course after 30% of the course has been completed but prior to completion of 60% will receive a grade of W/P (withdrawn/ passing) or W/F (withdrawn/failing) at the discretion of the Course Director. The grade of W/P shall be based on a grade of C or better at the time of withdrawal; if there is insufficient information to determine a grade, then a grade of W shall be given. The determination of 30% and 60% is based upon total contact hours. W, W/P, and W/F are not used to calculate the GPA and a course in which a student has received one of these grades does not count in the determination of credits for fulltime student status. Requests for course withdrawal after completion of 60 percent of a course will be denied. Exceptions may be made if a health or emergency reason exists. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, after consultation with the Course Director, will decide on the validity of any requested exception.



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6.9 GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If a student wishes to withdraw from the Graduate Studies Program they must complete the following:

1. Inform the Center/Department Graduate Director in writing of their request to withdraw including an effective date, with a copy of the letter sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.
2. Pick up from the Graduate Studies Program office or download from the AMC Intranet and complete an AMC Graduate Studies Program Clearance form found on the AMC Intranet at: <http://intranetconfluence.amc.edu/display/gradst/Forms>.

6.9.1 WITHDRAWAL POLICY - GRADING

If less than 30 percent of a course has been completed, the student will receive a W. Such withdrawals shall be indicated on the transcript by W. A student withdrawing from a course after 30% of the course has been completed but prior to completion of 60% will receive a grade of W/P (withdrawn/ passing) or W/F (withdrawn/failing) at the discretion of the Course Director. The grade of W/P shall be based on a grade of C or better at the time of withdrawal; if there is insufficient information to determine a grade, then a grade of W shall be given. The determination of 30% and 60% is based upon total contact hours. Grades of W, W/P, and W/F are not used to calculate the GPA and a course in which a student has received one of these grades does not count in the determination of credits for fulltime student status. Requests for course withdrawal after completion of 60 percent of a course will result in a W/F. Exceptions may be made if a health or emergency reason exists. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, after consultation with the Course Director, will decide on the validity of any requested exception.

7 FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAM

The Faculty of the Graduate Studies Program shall be selected from the faculty members of the Albany Medical College. Each Basic Science Department shall prepare an annual list of its graduate faculty and from that list name faculty who may serve as mentors. All research Department mentors must be fundable scientists. All research for degree purposes must be conducted under the direct supervision of a faculty member of the Graduate Studies Program.

8 CENTER / DEPARTMENT PEROGATIVE

The statements in this rulebook reflect the minimal standards and requirements of the Graduate Studies Program. A Center or Department may establish more rigorous standards and additional requirements. Before matriculation, students will be provided with a written set of the Center's or Department's supplemental rules and regulations, if such supplemental rules and regulations exist in that program. Such requirements are subject to review and recommendation for approval by the Curriculum Committee. Recommendation for action will be made to the Graduate Studies Operating Committee for review prior to presenting the recommendation to



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the Executive Committee. The final approval must come from the Executive Committee. Center/Department requirements are available in the Graduate Studies Program Office.

9 FINANCIAL ISSUES

9.1 DOCTORAL STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Upon matriculation, doctoral students may receive Albany Medical College financial support. This support may be either in the form of a Predoctoral Stipend or as a Predoctoral Research Assistantship. This support is dependent upon the student being in good academic standing. This would include maintaining a grade point average of at least 3.0. If a student should be placed on academic probation, stipend support may be terminated.

It is expected that PhD students receiving a stipend and a full tuition scholarship will be engaged full-time in their academic activities and should not be employed elsewhere. Employment undertaken without authorization may result in the loss of the student's stipend. Special exceptions to this rule are cases where the graduate student would like to gain specific career-related training experience relevant to the student's career goals not available on site. This experience would need to be relevant to the student's biomedical career experience and it would need to be of limited time constraints having a defined beginning and ending date. It would need to be done during times that would minimize interference with the student's academic and research experience. This student would need to be in good standing and have completed all the appropriate goals for this point in their program. The student would need to provide written justification for undertaking the experience. Furthermore, the training experience would need to be approved in writing by the student's mentor, the student's departmental GEC (letter to be written by the departmental Graduate Director) and the student's departmental Chair. Supporting written documentation regarding the training experience and associated approvals must be received by the Graduate Studies Office and submitted to the Graduate Studies Operating Committee for review and approval prior to beginning this external career experience.

Graduate students do not cease to be full-time students on the day they successfully defend their thesis, as time is needed to make revisions to the thesis and get it bound. For doctoral students, stipend support may be extended beyond the defense of thesis as deemed necessary by the thesis advisor/mentor but will not normally exceed 30 days following successful defense of the thesis.

Predoctoral Research Assistant - This category includes all students supported by Albany Medical College institutional and grant funds. These students are considered to be temporary employees and will receive a W-2 form or other statement of taxes, (such as a 1042-S form) at the end of the calendar year. However, this employment is for educational purposes and the students are exempt from the AMC Drug Screening and Criminal Background Checks, (as approved by the Vice Dean for Academic Administration and AMC Human Resources on 2/23/04).

A Predoctoral Stipend is provided to support doctoral students on a NIH Training Grant. It is a subsistence allowance to help defray living expenses during the student's research training experience. These funds are not payment for services and are therefore not salaries. However, all or part of this income may be subject to Federal or State income tax. Albany Medical College does not issue a W-2 or 1099 form for Predoctoral Stipend income. Students receiving a Predoctoral Stipend are advised to use their final stipend check stub at the end of the calendar



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year as a statement of stipend monies received in calculating their annual tax returns. Students may ask AMC Payroll to send them a letter indicating the amount received during the calendar year. Students, you may wish to seek the advice of a qualified tax attorney or accountant.

9.2 EMPLOYMENT OF MASTER OF SCIENCE STUDENTS

The Alden March Bioethics Institute offers a part-time MS degree program. All other MS degree programs at AMC require students to immerse themselves in an intense and integrated program of courses and research or clinical experiences. For these reasons, outside employment is strongly discouraged. Students are encouraged to visit the AMC Financial Aid Office for other possible solutions.

If a student must obtain income from outside employment, s/he must understand that such employment may not conflict with classes, laboratory research or clinical assignments. Decisions to be employed outside AMC must be discussed with the student's mentor or coordinator AND the Center's or Department's Graduate Director prior to any job commitment. Employment conflict is not an acceptable excuse for any missed academic commitment, interference with studying, or unsatisfactory performance in the classroom, laboratory or clinic.

9.3 RETURN OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID DUE TO STUDENT WITHDRAWAL AND TUITION REFUND POLICY

In accordance with rules established by the U.S. Department of Education, schools must adhere to new provisions regarding the treatment of Federal Title IV Financial Aid for students that withdraw from school completely for any term. These rules govern all federal loan and grant programs and the regulations assume that a student must "earn" federal financial aid awards directly in proportion to the number of days of the term attended. In other words, a student earns financial assistance as they attend class. If a student completely withdraws from all classes during a term, the College must calculate the portion of the total scheduled financial assistance earned. If the student received (or the school received on behalf of the student) more assistance than was earned, the unearned excess funds must be returned to the federal programs. Institutional charges at the school that are no longer covered by financial assistance immediately become the responsibility of the student and the student is also responsible for return of unearned federal financial funds that were disbursed directly to him/her. The portion of federal loans and grants the student earned, is calculated on a percentage basis comparing the total number of calendar days in the semester to the number of days completed before withdrawal. All Title IV aid is considered earned after the student has completed 60% of that semester.

Tuition Refund Policy for MD, PA, NA and Graduate Students* Students who withdraw officially or who are dismissed from the College for any reason after the beginning of a term may be entitled to a partial refund in accordance with the schedule show below:

Effective Date of Withdrawal*	Tuition Credited %	Tuition Liability
Prior to term start	100	0
Day 1-7	100	0



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Day 8-14	80	20
Day 15-21	70	30
Day 22-28	60	40
Day 29-35	50	50
Day 36-42	40	60
Day 43-49	30	70
Day 50-56	20	80
Day 57-63	10	90
Day 64+	0	100

*The Bioethics students policy is 100% tuition refunded up until the start of the class. After classes start, no tuition is refunded.

10 LABORATORY ROTATIONS

It is recommended that three rotations be completed by the end of the first academic year. The length and scope of the rotations will be defined by each Department. Students can only rotate through laboratories in their own Department. If a student wishes to rotate through a different Department, the Graduate Director from each of the concerned Departments must meet with the student to determine the goal of the rotation.

11 TRANSFERS

11.1 DEPARTMENT TRANSFER

A student may request a transfer from one Department to another within the Graduate Studies Program. Such a request should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies who will notify the appropriate Department Chairs. The determination on whether a transfer is feasible must be decided by mutual agreement of the involved Department Chairs.

11.2 PROGRAM TRANSFER

A student may request transfer from the M.S. to Ph.D. Program within the same Department. To be eligible the student must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 and written support must be provided by the Department Chair(s) and the student's mentor or Graduate Director. The request will be reviewed and acted on by the Graduate Studies Operating Committee. In the event that a Ph.D. student's GPA falls below the acceptable level of 3.0, or a student wishes to change programs for another reason, the student may request transfer to the M.S. program. The Department Chair(s) and the student's mentor or Graduate Director must provide written support. The request will be reviewed and acted on by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. After completion of the requirements for the M.S. program, including thesis defense a student may reapply to the Ph.D. Program.

12 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN THE BASIC SCIENCES

12.1 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY REQUIREMENTS

The course of study for the Ph.D. takes approximately five to six years. The residency requirement is two years. A minimum of 74 credit hours is required for the Ph.D. degree. The



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number of required course work credits is between 24 and 30, depending on the Department and 50 credit hours of research. (A Department cannot require more than 30 didactic credits. The required credit hours of course work is comprised of didactic and elective courses selected by the student in consultation with a mentor. The required number of credits does not include credits for journal clubs. A course in Ethics is also required. All students are required to demonstrate competence in English in the oral and written communication of their research. Upon recommendation of a Department or Thesis Committee, students may be required to undertake remedial English training.

Departments may require students to participate in journal clubs, seminars, and colloquia regardless of whether credit is granted without these being counted under the didactic credit limit.

A maximum of 15 credit hours of research and a total of 18 credit hours may be recorded each semester. If a student registers for more than three didactic credits, the amount of research credit must be reduced by the corresponding amount. Students are expected to register for research credits during all semesters while engaged in thesis research, even if the research credit requirement has been fulfilled.

In the event that a student's GPA falls below the acceptable level of 3.0, the student may request transfer to the M.S. program. After completion of the requirements for the M.S. program, including thesis defense, a student may reapply to the Ph.D. Program.

Students will be required to meet every six months with their thesis committee beginning in the spring semester of the second year (see requirements for thesis committee selection in the next section). The Qualifying Exam and Candidacy Exam count as meeting with the thesis committee. Students are required to submit a Thesis Committee report after each meeting to the GSP office. The form for this report can be found on-line and is to be completed at the meeting so the thesis committee members can sign the completed form. Beginning with meetings in the fifth year of study students will be required to attach a Timeline to the Thesis Committee report. The Timeline should include experimental work to be completed, progress toward manuscripts, planned submission of manuscripts, a proposed date of the final data set meeting, and a proposed date of thesis defense. A Timeline form can be found on-line. Beginning in the sixth year of study, the thesis committee should meet every three months specifically to monitor student progress in meeting the proposed Timeline and to approve any request for modification. More frequent meetings (i.e. monthly) can be proposed as required and these can be as a group or individually with the student. The thesis defense will serve as the last meeting of the thesis committee. The thesis must be defended within seven years from the date of initial registration, except under extenuating circumstances that are explained in a request for an extension that is submitted by the student' department to the Graduate Student Progress Committee. A request for an extension must provide a timeline for completion of all degree requirements and cannot extend for more than one year.

12.2 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY EXAMINATIONS

12.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Doctoral students are required to pass four examinations: The Qualifying Exam, the Candidacy Exam, the Final Data Set Meeting and the Thesis Defense. The format of these exams is the same for all Basic Science Graduate Programs at Albany Medical College. The Graduate Studies Program Office must be informed in advance of the scheduled examination dates. After



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completion of the examinations the Graduate Studies Program Office must be notified in writing of the result of each examination. Appropriate forms for notification are available in the Graduate Studies Program Office or may be found on the intranet under forms (<http://intranet.amc.gradstu/Forms/forms.html>).

Students must be in good academic standing as defined by a minimum GPA of 3.0 to take these examinations, or with the approval of the Department's Graduate Education Committee, and satisfactory grades in research.

12.2.2 QUALIFYING EXAM

12.2.2.1.1 Introduction

In the spring semester of their second year of study, doctoral students will take a qualifying exam (QE) to demonstrate that they have the knowledge base required to perform a research project in the laboratory of their mentor and in the department in which they will obtain their doctoral degree. Thus, the purpose of the QE is to evaluate:

- the depth of the student's understanding of the system(s), and literature that are relevant to the proposal and the subject area of the research being proposed.
- the ability of the student to derive novel, testable hypotheses, and provide a rationale for why these hypotheses should be tested using information integrated from the published literature and (if available) from preliminary data generated by the student or previously by the lab.

12.2.2.1.2 Selection of Thesis Committee:

The QE will be administered by the student's mentor and thesis committee. Doctoral students will select a Thesis Committee no later than January 31st of their second year of study, although Departments may require the committee formation prior to this date. The Committee will consist of the mentor (nonvoting) and five voting members. The voting members will include at least one holding a primary appointment in the student's Department, at least one not holding a primary appointment in the student's Department, and at least three must be from within the Institution. A maximum of two members may be individuals from outside of the Albany Medical College. The student's mentor shall be a nonvoting member of the Thesis Committee and shall serve as the chair of the committee. The mentor (chair of the committee) is required to have an appointment in the Graduate Studies Program of the Albany Medical College. The committee is selected by the graduate student, mentor, and Departmental Chair; the final committee composition is subject to the approval of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

The QE is an oral exam. Before taking the oral exam, students will be required to 1) have an initial meeting with their thesis committee and 2) write a research proposal that is distributed to the committee prior to the QE. Below is a description of these pre-requirements leading to the exam and of the QE oral exam.



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Getting Started (January of year 2)

- The student in consultation with their mentor, should develop a specific aims page which includes a hypothesis and a set of specific aims. The mentor will provide guidance, but the student should write the specific aims page.
- The student will have their first thesis committee meeting prior to the submission of the written QE proposal to the Thesis Committee. At this first thesis committee meeting the student will give a seminar type of presentation in which the project will be explained. A hypothesis and specific aims can be presented as the last slide to allow feedback from the committee. Target dates should be determined at this time for submission of the written proposal and the oral QE.

12.2.2.1.3 The Written Proposal

After the first committee meeting the student will finish writing and submit a NIH F31-style fellowship proposal based on their thesis research. This written document will serve three purposes:

1. Provide a platform from which the thesis committee will generate questions for the oral exam.
2. Be used in conjunction with the summary statement provided by the thesis committee critique as the initial phase of the candidacy exam.
3. Be the initial roadmap for the student's thesis research.

The proposal will follow NIH guidelines for the Research Training Plan Section of a F31 Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. This will consist of Specific Aims Page and the Research Strategy. Students will be familiar with this format as they have taken the AMC603 Grant Writing course that went over this format.

Authorship: This is an examination of the student, and it should represent their work product. Thus, the mentor's input should point out big shortfalls (i.e., a lack of organization of the document or lack of clarity of thoughts and ideas) but should not be editorial in nature. The student may receive advice on their proposal from the mentor, committee, other faculty or students but they are expected to write the proposal in their own words and **be able to defend it.**

When the student submits the written proposal, they should immediately schedule the oral exam for three weeks from the day of submission.

After submission of proposal

Thesis committee members will review the proposal with two purposes. The first objective will be to become familiar with the project so questions for the oral exam can be generated. The committee members should focus on the rationale for performing the specific aims as opposed to specifics on experimental methods/approaches when generating questions. The questions should range from the basic knowledge required to perform the project or interpret the results to asking about current literature and how this proposed research will fill a gap of knowledge.

The second objective will serve as preparation for the candidacy exam. Each thesis committee member will provide a written critique of the proposal like that used by NIH review panels and will have the following sections:

- Significance: Strengths and Weaknesses
- Approach: Strengths and Weaknesses



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- Grantsmanship: Strengths and Weaknesses

The critique should be submitted to the mentor prior to the oral component of the QE **even though it will not be used during the oral QE**. The mentor will prepare a summary statement of all the critiques and that summary statement will be given to the student after the oral exam and will form the basis for the Candidacy Exam (see below).

** If a committee member feels the written proposal is not acceptable due to a structural deficiency or a lack of clarity of thought, the committee member should contact the mentor and the other committee members via email and a decision should be made regarding having the student rewrite the proposal.

12.2.2.1.4 The Oral Qualifying Exam

On the day of the oral examination, the student will answer questions that test their fundamental understanding of topics related to their project as described in the written proposal, including the system(s) under study, the existing literature related to problem, the approaches previously used to address the problem and questions to clarify the rationale for performing the research put forth in the proposal (what the gaps in knowledge). The student should have access to a white board to allow for explanations, for example outlining a signaling pathway important to their project. Students, mentors, and committee members all need to remember **this exam is designed to determine if the student has the knowledge base required to perform a research project in the laboratory of their mentor and in the department in which they will obtain their doctoral degree.**

Once the committee feels the Q&A session is complete, the student will leave the room and each committee member vote "Pass" or "Fail" for the exam. For the student to pass the exam, four of the five committee members must vote to pass the student. If two or more members of the committee vote "Fail", the student will be told what their areas of weakness were and be given two to three weeks to strengthen these areas of knowledge by reading (or rereading) the literature or even going back to textbooks to solidify their understanding of fundamental principles. A second oral exam will be scheduled and questions covering the deficient areas will be answered by the student. A passing score will require four of the five committee members to vote to pass the student. If the student does not pass the exam, they will then be dismissed from the doctoral program.

The mentor should submit the appropriate form following each committee meeting for an oral exam. This will include the vote tally; a paragraph summarizing the students' performance on the oral component of the QE and be signed by each committee member.

Once the Qualifying Exam is Passed.

In the week after the student has passed the QE, the mentor composes a summary statement from the committee member's critiques on the written proposal that outline the major issues the student must consider for revising the proposal in preparation for the Candidacy Exam. The summary statement should be as concise as possible and encapsulate the major issues that need to be addressed going forward. The summary statement will be shared with and approved by the committee within one week after successful completion of the Oral Exam. The preliminary comments may be altered by the committee members after the oral exam to reflect discussion at or after the meeting. Upon approval by the committee, the mentor will share the summary statement and the NIH-style critiques with the student. This summary



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statement will serve as the starting point for the candidacy exam. In addition, the summary statement of the written proposal and the summary of the oral component should be sent to the Graduate Studies Office to document the successful completion of the QE.

Timing of the Qualifying Exam

	Recommended	Required by	Dismissed if not passed by
1st Committee Meeting	January - March of 2 nd year	March 31 st of 2 nd year	
Proposal Submission	February – May of 2 nd Year	May 31 st of 2 nd Year	
Oral Exam	March - June of 2 nd Year	June 30 th of 2 nd Year	August 31 st of 3 rd year

12.2.3 CANDIDACY EXAMINATION

In the spring semester of the third year of study, doctoral students will take a Candidacy Exam (CE). The objective of the Candidacy Exam is to determine if

- the student meets the graduation objective of being able to design and write a research proposal that passes peer review.
- the student can develop a project that can lead to a peer reviewed manuscript and the completion of a thesis.

The student can take the CE anytime during their third year of study but must submit to the Thesis Committee the first version of the CE proposal no later than March 31st of the third year of study. The exam must be completed by August 31st of the beginning of the fourth year of study.

Like the Qualifying Exam (QE), the CE has two parts, a written component, and an oral component. Below is a description of the parts of the exam in the order students will follow when taking the exam.

Written Component

For the written component of the CE the student will revise the research proposal that was submitted during the QE. The student can discuss the critique with their mentor to clarify the concerns provided in the summary statement, so the student understands what to address in the Introduction of the revised proposal. The mentor should then let the student rewrite the research proposal and the introduction on their own. In addition, the student is expected to have generated some preliminary data or feasibility data of their own that will be used in the proposal.

This proposal will again follow the NIH guidelines for the Research Training Plan Section of a F31 Pre-Doctoral Fellowship and will consist of Specific Aims Page and the Research Strategy. The student should identify how they responded to the specific criticisms provided after the QE by writing an Introduction following NIH guidelines (one page at beginning of the resubmitted proposal). Students will be familiar with this format as they have taken the AMC603 Grant Writing course that went over this format, and they applied this format previously to the written component of the QE.



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The mentor should read the proposal to determine that the format is appropriate and that it is a coherent document. The mentor should not correct the science as this is part of the exam. The student will distribute the research proposal to the thesis committee and schedule a meeting of the committee allowing two weeks for the committee to read the proposal.

Similar to the QE, each thesis committee member will write a critique of the proposal similar to that used by NIH review panels and will have the following sections:

- Significance: Strengths and Weaknesses
- Approach: Strengths and Weaknesses
- Grantsmanship: Strengths and Weaknesses. This section should also comment on the student's response to the written critique provided from the QE

If the thesis committee member believes that the document has so many fatal flaws that it cannot be defended in the oral exam, the committee member should write an email to the mentor and the other committee members explaining what the issue(s) is/are to allow for a decision to be made regarding if the oral should be held or if the student should rewrite the proposal. If the committee decides to postpone the oral exam, the mentor should explain what the major issues are to the student who will then be allowed one month to fix and resubmit the research proposal.

The critique will be brought to the oral component of the CE as the committee members can use their critiques to generate questions.

Oral Component

This portion of the CE will provide the student an opportunity to explain/defend their written proposal. Questions will concentrate on the approach including experimental design, statistics, potential problems and alternatives. The student will also answer questions concerning the preliminary data.

Following the Q&A the student will be asked to leave the room and the thesis committee members will vote pass or fail. For the student to pass the exam, four of the five committee members must vote to pass the student. If two or more members of the committee vote "Fail", the student will be allowed one month to rewrite and redefend the proposal. Like the QE, the chair (mentor) will collect all the reviews following the oral exam (allowing committee members to revise their critique if desired) and compile into a single summary statement. The thesis committee should provide the student with an overall score so the student can assess how close they are to obtaining a "pass" for the CE. This summary statement will be approved by the committee and will be used by the student as a guide to rewrite the proposal.

Again, the student should identify how they responded to the specific criticisms in the summary statement by writing an Introduction following NIH guidelines. The student will resubmit the rewritten proposal and schedule a second oral exam. After the oral exam a vote will be taken, a passing score will require four of the five committee members to vote to pass the student. This will be the last time the student will submit the proposal. If the student does not pass the exam, they will then be dismissed from the doctoral program.

*If the new preliminary data generated following the Qualifying Exam does not support the student continuing with the project outlined in the proposal presented for the Qualifying Exam, the student will write a new proposal. The protocol for administering a completely revised



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Candidacy Exam will be the same as outlined in the previous paragraphs including the writing of an Introduction to explain why the student needed to write a new proposal.

	Recommended	Required by	Dismissed if not submitted by
Proposal Submission	February – May of 3 rd Year	May 31 st of 3 rd Year	
Oral Exam	March - June of 3 rd Year	June 30 th of 3 rd Year	August 31 st of 4 th year

12.2.4 FINAL DATA SET

Prior to the defense of the Ph.D. Thesis, the student must convene a thesis committee meeting to approve the Final Data Set of the thesis. Approval of this document by the thesis committee provides that all experiments and figures to be included in the written thesis have been completed, all statistical analyses have been performed, and the interpretations of the data are justified.

Publication Requirement: At the time of the Final Data Set meeting (see below), the doctoral student must have at least one peer-reviewed journal article (accepted for publication or published), on which the student is the first author. The publication must be based on original research conducted in pursuit of the AMC Ph.D. degree. The AMC Graduate Studies Program will consider the requirement for publication to be met by publication in any print or online-only journal that meets the following criteria of peer-review, selectivity, and accessibility:

- The journal is published on a regular schedule or continuously.
- Manuscripts are sent for peer-review of their scientific merit by individuals who are expert in the field of study and are not part of the journal's editorial staff.
- The journal selects papers for publication based on scientific merit as determined by outside review and does not routinely publish all submissions.
- Published papers are searchable, indexed in PubMed or comparable databases.
- Published papers are accessible freely or by subscription to print or online issues.

Co-first author publications will be accepted as the first author peer reviewed publication if:

1. The student & mentor can document that the student has made a substantial contribution (typically 50% or more) to the data presented and in the writing of the manuscript.
2. Acceptable to all members of the thesis committee.

In addition, the student will be expected to incorporate all the research presented in co-authored publications in any discussion of the manuscript during the oral thesis defense. The student must attach a copy of the published article(s) and/or a copy of the journal acceptance letter(s) to the Final Data Set Committee meeting form.

Note* The first author manuscript is only partial fulfillment of the research requirement for the student to obtain a doctoral degree. The written thesis will also be used by the thesis committee to determine if the entire body of research conducted by the student meets the research requirement to obtain a doctoral degree.



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Final Data Set Meeting:

When the student and their mentor agree that all experiments that will be in the student's thesis are completed, the student will convene a thesis committee meeting where they will present their Final Data Set. All tables and figures with complete figure legends (including those in the Background and Significance and summary figures) formatted as intended for the written thesis, must be submitted to the thesis committee for review at least one week prior to the Final Data Set meeting. The committee should evaluate all tables, figures and figure legends to make sure they are legible and appropriate for use in the thesis. Published figures and tables can be used as published (referenced appropriately) but will be reviewed with the same rigor as unpublished figures, there is no guarantee that a thesis committee member needs to accept a published figure if they feel it is not complete or analyzed correctly. At least four of the five voting members of the student's thesis committee must agree that no more experiments are necessary, that the data and data analyses are sufficient for the thesis, and that the data presentation in the tables and figures is appropriate. If additional experiments must be completed, or if substantial new data must be added or analyzed, or if the data figures and/or tables are not considered to be in appropriate final format, then the committee will need to reconvene at a later date to consider the revisions and approve the Final Dataset.

A date for the thesis defense will be scheduled for no later than four months beyond the approval date of the Final Data Set. If the student fails to defend their thesis within this time frame, they will be required to petition the Student Progress Committee for an extension. It should be noted that continued funding of a stipend cannot be guaranteed for such extensions.

12.2.5 THESIS DEFENSE

Prior to Defense:

Students will prepare a dissertation of their laboratory research in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Students should consult the Instructions for Submission of the Ph.D. Thesis available in the Graduate Studies Program Office and work with their thesis committee on the format of the thesis. Publication of portions of a student's research prior to submission of the dissertation is permissible. Copies of the thesis must be submitted to the members of the Thesis Defense Committee at least three weeks before the scheduled date of the defense. Each member of the Committee must review the dissertation promptly. If any Committee member finds the dissertation not representative of the approved data sets or not coherently written, the chair of the Committee is to be notified in writing (email), with copies to the other Committee members, within one week of receipt of the dissertation. The nature of the objection(s) will be specified in the email. The chair and the student must decide together whether to revise the dissertation or to defend it as originally submitted. If revisions are made, the revised pages must be distributed to the members of the Committee at least one week before the date of the defense. If there is a decision to delay the thesis defense, members of the committee and the Office of Graduate Studies must be notified in writing describing the nature of the delay. A new target date for the final thesis defense must be set at that time.

A PDF copy of the thesis/dissertation and a copy of the Seminar-Defense notice must be delivered to the GSP Office at least one week before the proposed date of defense. The thesis will be placed on display in the Schaffer Library on a computer where it cannot be copied or printed. Library staff will place PDF of thesis in the documents folder on Library public PC #5



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(1st Floor). There will be instructions at reference/circulation desk on the password. One week prior to the student's defense, the notice of the date, time, and location of the defense should be disseminated throughout the College Community by the student's department.

Defense of the Thesis

On the day of the thesis defense, the candidate will present a public seminar of the thesis research allowing time for questions from the audience. Following the seminar and the open question and answer session, the student and the Thesis Defense Committee will convene privately for the final examination. A minimum of four voting Committee members must be present at the defense, which should last no more than two to three hours. The examination is restricted to the research and to allied topics that relate to the candidate's dissertation. The student will be expected to defend his/her thesis in terms of hypothesis, experimental approach, data interpretation, conclusions, and future studies. At the end of the examination, each committee member will cast either a PASS or FAIL vote. A defense is successful if a student receives at least four PASS votes. Following this meeting the chair of the Thesis Defense Committee will submit a final report of the examination to the Office of Graduate Studies.

If a student receives more than one FAIL vote the defense is unsuccessful. In all cases, a thesis defense is unsuccessful if four PASS votes have not been recorded in the Graduate Studies Program Office following the examination. If the thesis defense is not successful on the initial attempt, a second defense may be granted upon the recommendation of a majority of the Thesis Defense Committee and the recommendation of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, subject to approval by the Executive Committee. If the student fails the second thesis defense, he/she is subject to dismissal.

Final corrections should be made within 14 days after the successful completion of the thesis defense. One PDF copy of the final version of the thesis (including the signed approval page) must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Program, a second PDF copy must be submitted to the student's Department Office, and another final PDF copy and an acid-free paper copy (meeting the AMC requirements for thesis submission) must be submitted to the Schaffer Library.

The thesis must be defended within seven years from the date of initial registration, except under extenuating circumstances that are acceptable to the Graduate Student Progress Committee and the Executive Committee.

Graduate students do not cease to be full-time students on the day they successfully defend their thesis, as time is needed to revise the thesis, for submission of copies to the department, library and ProQuest, and for completion of experiments to complete a manuscript. For doctoral students, stipend support may be extended beyond the defense of thesis as deemed necessary by the thesis advisor/mentor and the department chair but will not normally exceed 30 days following successful defense of the thesis.

13 MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN THE BASIC SCIENCES

13.1 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The course of study for the Master of Science degree usually will extend over a two to three year period. The residency requirement for a M.S. candidate is one year. A minimum of 32 credit hours is required for the M.S. degree. The number of required course work credits is



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between 12 and 18, depending on the Department and 20 credit hours of research. (A Department cannot require more than 18 didactic credits. Course work is comprised of required and elective courses selected by the student in consultation with a mentor. The required number of credits does not include credits for journal clubs. A course in Ethics will also be required. All students are required to demonstrate competence in the oral and written communication of their research in English. Upon recommendation of a Department or Thesis Committee, students may be required to undertake remedial English training.

Department may require students to participate in journal clubs, seminars, and colloquia regardless of whether credit is granted without these being counted under the didactic credit limit.

13.2 THESIS RESEARCH AND DEFENSE - MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN THE BASIC SCIENCES

In order to qualify for the thesis defense, students must be in good academic standing, with a minimum GPA of 2.5. Fulltime M.S. students are required to complete all requirements and receive their degree within two to three years except in extenuating circumstances that are acceptable to the mentor, the Graduate Student Progress Committee, and the Executive Committee.

Students in the M.S. Degree program will select a thesis committee by September first of their second year of study. The Thesis Committee consists of the mentor who is the nonvoting chair and three voting members. One member must be from the student's Department, and one must be from outside the student's Department. The remaining member may be from either inside or outside of AMC. The Committee is selected by the graduate student, mentor and Department Chair with the final committee composition subject to the approval by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The M.S. Thesis Committee will meet at intervals of six months to review the progress of the thesis research and to make appropriate recommendations.

Prior to the defense of the Master's thesis, the student must convene a thesis committee meeting for the presentation of the **Final Data Set** that comprises the basis for the thesis. The protocol and expectations for the MS degree Final Data Set will be similar to that of the Ph.D. degree; however, there is NO publication requirement for the M.S. degree and the data set will not be as extensive. At least two of the three voting members of the student's thesis committee must agree that the Final Data Set is sufficient and appropriate for the thesis. A target date for the thesis defense will be scheduled at this meeting and that date should be no more than four months beyond the date of the Final Data Set meeting.

The **thesis defense** will be conducted as described previously for the Ph.D. program except that the public seminar is optional. The evaluation of the M.S. Thesis Defense will be similar to that of the Ph.D. Defense and will require two of the three votes to be PASS for a successful Defense.



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14 MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN THE CLINICAL SCIENCES

14.1 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS - MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY

Center for Nurse Anesthesiology - The course of study for the Masters of Science degree in the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology extends over a 28-month period. The program consists of 68 credits, including 8 credit hours of research. Graduate students in the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology are required to maintain a GPA of 2.5 to remain in good academic standing, pass ANES 505, 517, 507A, 507B, 512A and 512B with a C or better, and all other courses with a B or better.

14.2 RESEARCH PROJECT REQUIREMENTS - MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY

The research project requirements for the Master of Science Degree in the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology are designed to provide the graduate student the opportunity to develop skills in critical thinking and clinical judgment. The outcome of the research project requirements is for the graduate student to prepare a scholarly project developed according to Center guidelines and make a formal presentation. The requirements for the project are described in detail in the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology Student Handbook and the course syllabus for ANES 501 A & B.

14.3 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS - MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN THE CLINICAL SCIENCES - THE CENTER FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

The course of study for the Master of Science degree in the Center for Physician Assistant Studies extends over a 28-month period. The program consists of 66 credits during the first four terms of didactic instruction and 49 clinical credits over the last three terms. An additional three credit hours are awarded for Portfolio preparation during the clinical terms. Graduate students in the Center for Physician Assistant Studies are required to maintain a GPA of 2.5 to remain in good academic standing and must pass all courses with grade of C or better.

14.4 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

During the clinical year (Terms 5-7) students complete rotations in primary care medicine, surgery, and medical and/or surgical specialties. A concurrent Master's Portfolio is assembled with ongoing PA faculty advisement documenting the student's achievement of PA competencies.

Graduation requirements include successful completion of all coursework and clinical rotations, the Master's Portfolio, and passing of summative clinical competency and written examinations.

15 MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN BIOETHICS – AMBI ALDEN MARCH BIOETHICS INSTITUTE



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15.1 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A Master of Science degree in Bioethics is available as a distance learning program and provides training for physicians, attorneys, clergy, journalists, and others to bring skills in ethical reasoning, policy analysis, and ethics consultation back to their current workplaces, to new careers, or as a supplement to joint degrees. Students who earn an M.S. in Bioethics degree go on to chair hospital ethics committees, be members of institutional review boards, serve as advisors to corporations, write scholarly articles in bioethics publications, and much more.

The academic year definition for the Bioethics Program is 30 weeks. Full-time students take 6 credits per term. Over 3 terms this is 18 credits in 30 weeks. The minimum number of credits that a student would need to take a term to qualify for a student loan would be 3 semester-based credits in a term. Expected progress for an AMBI student is completion of the M.S. Degree program within 12 registered terms.

Go to www.amc.edu/Academic/GraduateStudies/index.html and click on Alden March Bioethics Institute.

16 LABORATORY RESPONSIBILITIES

When a student leaves AMC for any reason including withdrawal, leave of absence, or graduation, the student must update all laboratory notebooks and information.

17 ACADEMIC STATUS

Poor academic achievement may lead to dismissal from the Graduate Studies Program. Failure to maintain a GPA that meets the standards of the Graduate Studies Program and the Center or Department, or failure to pass any of the required examinations or two unsatisfactory evaluations in research are possible reasons for academic dismissal.

The Graduate Student Progress Committee will evaluate the academic performance of each student at the end of each semester. The Graduate Student Progress Committee, upon determining that a student is performing in an unsatisfactory manner, will, through the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, notify the student and Center Director or Department Chair concerned in writing. Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Science students are required to maintain minimum GPAs of 3.0 and 2.5, respectively. A student may be granted one probationary semester by the Graduate Student Progress Committee and the Executive Committee if there are reasonable expectations that an acceptable GPA can be obtained during this probationary period. At the request of the Center or Department, subject to approval by the Graduate Student Progress Committee and the Executive Committee, a graduate student may be allowed a second probationary semester to improve his or her GPA. Institutional support in terms of stipend and health insurance, which is determined by the Department and research mentor, may not be provided to a student during this second probationary period. If at the end of the second semester of probation the student's GPA is not acceptable, the student may be subject to dismissal.

Students failing the Written Examination, Oral Examination, or the Thesis Defense are subject to dismissal. If a student fails any of these examinations, he/she will have to retake the exam within six months of the original exam. Each of these examinations may be repeated once. The



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Written Exam may not be retaken later than December of the third year; the Oral Exam must be retaken no later than the end of March of the fourth year. If the student fails the reexamination, he/she is subject to dismissal.

A student who receives two grades of Unsatisfactory (U) in research will be dismissed unless the mentor and the Department Chair successfully petitions the Graduate Student Progress Committee and the Executive Committee for continued matriculation based on extenuating circumstances.

18 TIME TO DEGREE COMPLETION FOR Ph.D. DEGREE

Doctoral students are subject to dismissal for failure to complete all requirements within seven years from the date of matriculation. The Mentor and Department Chair may petition the Graduate Student Progress Committee and the Executive Committee for an extension based on extenuating circumstances. Periods of time granted as a leave of absence do not apply toward the seven-year program completion rule.

19 TIME TO DEGREE COMPLETION FOR MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

Students are subject to dismissal for failure to complete all requirements within three years from the date of matriculation. The mentor and Department Chair may petition the Graduate Student Progress Committee and the Executive Committee for an extension based on extenuating circumstances. Periods of time granted as a leave of absence do not apply toward the three-year rule program completion rule.

20 GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS COMMITTEE

The faculty of the Albany Medical College has a responsibility not only to our students, but also to the public that our students will eventually serve. A basic part of that responsibility is to see that our students perform in a manner consistent with the most appropriate standards of scholarship and professional behavior (including patient safety and interactions with patients) accepted by society and the scientific professions. It is sometimes necessary for the Faculty to consider instances in which students appear not to meet an appropriate level of professional competence or performance, whether due to inadequate scholastic achievement or unprofessional behavior. These guidelines have been established so that such students may be treated fairly and judged in a reasonably consistent manner. The ultimate responsibility for decisions affecting the status of any student has been delegated by the Trustees of the Albany Medical College to the Academic Governing Council. The Council has, in turn, delegated that responsibility to standing and ad hoc committees such as the Executive Committee of the Graduate Studies Program, the Graduate Studies Operating Committee, the Graduate Student Progress Committee, the Student Honor Committee*, the Committee on Student Appeals, and the Disciplinary Hearing Panels.

*See the Student Honor Code of Albany Medical College, August 6, 1977, as may be amended from time to time.

The Graduate Student Progress Committee (Progress Committee), as advisory to the Executive Committee, is charged with the evaluation of academic, research, or clinical performance of each graduate student in all graduate programs to ensure compliance with standards as set forth by the Executive Committee. The members of the Progress Committee include the Graduate Director from each Center or Department, the faculty member on the Curriculum Committee from each Center or Department, or a member appointed by the Center Director or



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Department Chair, and the Vice Dean for Academic Administration as an ex-officio member. The committee is chaired by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The Progress Committee meets at the end of each term or more often, as needed.

20.1 ACADEMIC CONCERNS

Poor academic achievement may lead to dismissal from the Graduate Studies Program. Failure to maintain a GPA that meets the standards of the Graduate Studies Program and the Center or Department, or failure to pass any of the required milestone examinations and required courses, or two unsatisfactory evaluations in research are possible reasons for academic dismissal.

The Progress Committee will evaluate the academic performance of each student at the end of each term or as required. The Progress Committee, upon determining that a student is performing in an unsatisfactory manner, will, through the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, notify the student and the Center Director or Department Chair. Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Science students are required to maintain minimum GPAs of 3.0 and 2.5, respectively. A student may be granted one probationary semester by the Progress Committee and the Executive Committee if there are reasonable expectations that an acceptable GPA can be obtained during this probationary period. However, if the issue is a matter of patient safety, the student may not be allowed a probationary period.

At the request of the Center or Department, subject to approval by the Progress Committee and the Executive Committee, a graduate student may be allowed a second probationary semester to improve his or her GPA. During the second probationary period, institutional support in terms of stipend and health insurance may be provided to a student at the discretion of the Department and research mentor. If at the end of the second semester of probation the student's GPA is not acceptable, the student may be subject to dismissal.

Students in the basic science Departments, failing the Written Examination, Oral Examination, or the Thesis Defense are subject to dismissal. If a student fails any of these examinations, he/she will have to retake the exam within six months of the original exam. Each of these examinations may be repeated once. If the student fails the reexamination, he/she is subject to dismissal.

20.2 ACADEMIC PROBATION

A letter of Academic Probation may be based on a grade point average of less than 3.0 for a Ph.D. degree student or less than 2.5 for an M.S. degree student, or failure of a required course, or failure of a Competency examination. This letter will indicate what remedial actions are necessary to be removed from probation. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student's mentor and graduate director and will become a part of the student's record. When a student has been identified as performing at an unsatisfactory academic level, the Progress Committee will determine whether the student should be placed on probation, dismissed, or continue in the curriculum with remediation. Additionally, if the issue is a matter of patient safety, the student may not be allowed a probationary period. Probationary status will be evaluated at the end of the first term of probation, at which time the Progress Committee should make one of the following determinations and recommendations:

A. That the student, having achieved a satisfactory GPA and achieved satisfactory performance in all courses, will be removed from probation.



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B. That the student has progressed and is doing satisfactory work, but has not yet raised his/her GPA to the required level, may be allowed to remain on academic probation for an additional semester.

C. That the student, having continued to do unsatisfactory work in one or more courses, or having failed to raise his/her GPA to the required level, should be dismissed.

B.1.a.i. **Alden March Bioethics Institute** - Students in Bioethics whose GPA drops below 2.50 may be placed on academic probation. The length of the probation will be the time necessary to retake the course when next offered. This will provide the student an opportunity to earn an acceptable grade in the course. Students may be removed from probation by raising their GPA to 2.50 or above by taking other, additional courses. This must be completed within a calendar year.

B.1.b. Time to Degree Completion for Doctor of Philosophy Degree - Doctoral students are subject to dismissal for failure to complete all requirements within seven years from the date of matriculation. The Mentor and Department Chair may petition the Progress Committee and the Executive Committee for an extension based on extenuating circumstances. Periods of time granted as a leave of absence do not apply toward the seven-year program completion rule.

B.1.c. Time to Degree Completion for Master of Science Degree - Full-time Masters students are subject to dismissal for failure to complete all requirements within three years from the date of matriculation. The mentor and Department Chair may petition the Progress Committee and the Executive Committee for an extension based on extenuating circumstances. Periods of time granted as a leave of absence do not apply toward the three-year program completion rule. Part-time students in the Center for Nurse Anesthesiology must complete their program no later than 39 months from the start of their program.

B.1.d. Synopsis of Grading System - Student grades should be forwarded to and received by Student Records within one week after the end of the course. If a student fails to complete course requirements the grade of incomplete (I) will be recorded on the transcript and the student will be notified. All requirements in a course must be completed within one month following the last day of examinations in that course. An incomplete (I) will be converted to Failure (F) on the transcript, if the student fails to complete all requirements. Exceptions may be granted for health or emergency reasons.

All courses that have been approved for graduate credit are graded as follows: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, or F. For each credit hour earned, numerical values are allotted to these grades as follows: A=4, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3, B-=2.7, C+=2.3, C=2, C-=1.7, D=1, and F=0. These numerical values are multiplied by the number of credit hours allotted in each course to obtain "quality points." The grade point average (GPA) is obtained by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of credit hours. The grades of D and F are not acceptable for course credit toward a graduate degree but will be used in calculating the GPA. Research credits are submitted as S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). Other courses with the recommended approval of the Curriculum Committee may be graded as P (Pass) or F (Fail). Grades of S/U or P/F are not included in GPA calculations. Aspects of professionalism may be incorporated into the grade. In the grading of Research, if the student's mentor believes that the student is not performing up to expected standards the mentor may assign a grade of U (Unsatisfactory). If the grading of a course is P/F and the student does not perform at the expected level during a course, the course director may assign a grade of F (Fail).



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Remediation of Unsatisfactory (U), and Failing (F) grades - Subject to recommended approval by the Progress Committee, and final approval by the Executive Committee, a student may remediate or repeat a didactic course in which a grade of C, D, or F was received. Although both grades will appear on the transcript, only the remediated or repeated grade will be used to calculate the GPA. All recommended approvals made by the Progress Committee must receive the approval of both the Graduate Studies Operating Committee and the Executive Committee before they are put into effect.

20.3 CLINICAL CONCERNS

Students in the clinical centers of the Graduate Studies Program (Alden March Bioethics Institute, Center for Nurse Anesthesiology, Center for Physician Assistant Studies) must meet the professional performance standards established by their Centers, such that their conduct is judged to be lawful, ethical, professional, and safe for patients and others at all times.

If, in the judgment of the Center, a student:

- Conducts himself/herself in a way that is unsafe, unethical, or unprofessional a failing grade may be assigned for the course/rotation/activity and a recommendation for probation or other action (including dismissal) will be made to the Progress Committee.

Exhibits physical, emotional, or behavioral problems in the clinical setting that threaten patient safety the Center may suspend participation from such activities until such time as it can be determined that the problem has been resolved. Failure to resolve such problems in a reasonable period of time may result in a dismissal recommendation.

Commits any act, behavior, or pattern of acts or behavior that raises a serious question of moral turpitude, or serious concern as to the student's fitness to pursue a clinical career, a recommendation for dismissal will be made to the appropriate committee.

In addition to these guidelines, students enrolled in the clinical centers are subject to the policies and procedures established within their Centers.

20.4 NON-ACADEMIC CONCERN, WARNING OR PROBATION

All other concerns relating to student professionalism will be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and if necessary, by the Progress Committee. If necessary, the Associate Dean can suspend a student until the Progress Committee has an opportunity to review the situation. The Status of Non-academic Concern, Warning or Probation shall be based on reports relating to attitude, integrity and ethical conduct or other measures of professional conduct. The Progress Committee will issue a letter of non-academic status (includes a recommendation for dismissal, if warranted) after determining the severity and pattern of unprofessional behavior. The Progress Committee may also recommend to the Dean that the matter be referred to a Disciplinary Hearing Panel. Students may also be dismissed for violation of the Student Honor Code of the Graduate Studies Program. All procedures in the Honor Code will be followed.

Notification of dismissal for any cause will come from the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

20.5 ADMINISTRATIVE PSYCHIATRIC REVIEW

An Administrative Psychiatric Review may be required to continue in the Graduate Studies Program for one of the following reasons:



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When it appears possible that academic, clinical, and research performance is being influenced by emotional, psychological or social issues that may need to be properly identified and addressed in order to permit successful and timely completion of the requirements for either PhD or Masters Graduate degree.

When a student's professional demeanor or personal behaviors and activities raises serious questions about his or her ability to pursue a career in biomedical or clinical sciences.

The psychiatric evaluation must be performed by a Board Certified Psychiatrist. The individual being reviewed must understand that performance of the evaluation will not create a physician-patient relationship and that the evaluation is not a confidential medical record but rather a summative report that is utilized to determine a plan of action necessary to allow the individual to successfully complete the course of study. The summative report becomes part of the student's confidential academic record and will be utilized and protected accordingly. Failure to undergo an administrative psychiatric review when requested for one of the above reasons may result in dismissal from the Graduate Studies Program.

21 COMMITTEE ON STUDENT APPEALS

- A. The Committee on Student Appeals shall consider appeals from students of sanctions imposed by the Academic Governing Council, the Progress Committee, Executive Committee, the interaction of the Student Honor Committee and the Dean pursuant to the Student Honor Committee recommendations or a Disciplinary Hearing Panel. The Committee on Student Appeals may, in its sole discretion, decide whether to hear the appeal and, if so, whether to hear it in depth as provided in paragraph C immediately below or conduct a formal hearing. At a minimum, however, the Committee shall consider the student's record as well as any relevant substantive information the student may offer within his or her appeal request.

The Committee shall be a subcommittee of the Academic Governing Council appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Dean and shall be composed of five (5) members of that Council, chaired by one of these members as designated by the Dean. In order to provide the appropriate continuity in the deliberations of this standing committee, there will be no fixed terms for its members. Membership shall, however, be reviewed annually by a committee composed of the Dean, the Vice Dean, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

- B. A diligent effort shall be made to schedule a meeting of the Committee on Student Appeals not less than 3 nor more than 12 calendar days following the actual receipt of the student's request for an appeal.
- C. The Committee on Student Appeals shall not try a case or otherwise conduct its business in an adversarial fashion. If the Committee exercises its discretion to hear the appeal in depth, it shall consider only the written material submitted by the student, written documentation from the Progress Committee, the student record and in some cases additional information collected by the Committee in connection with any formal, non-adversarial hearing it may convene or any personal appearance by the student or any other person(s) the Committee or its designee(s) may decide to interview. The Committee may only consider the following questions to guide its deliberations:



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- Were the requisite sanction procedures followed appropriately up to the time of the appeal?
 - Is there any potentially useful evidence that had not been available for consideration?
 - Was the sanction imposed in good faith and neither arbitrary, capricious nor clearly unreasonable?
- D. On appeals from actions of the Progress Committee, the Committee on Student Appeals shall report within 24 hours, in writing, the results of its determination to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies for implementation. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies shall notify the student, Center Director or Department Chair, and Graduate Director involved.
- E. On appeals from actions of the Academic Governing Council, Student Honor Committee, or Disciplinary Hearing Panel, the Committee on Student Appeals shall report within 24 hours, in writing, the results of its determination to the Vice Dean or the Dean's designated representative and the student(s) involved.
- F. If it has considered the appeal in depth, the Committee on Student Appeals shall report separately on each of the three questions it is to consider (Items C1, 2, 3) and may confirm the prior action or recommend to the Dean or the Dean's designee a rehearing of the case by the initiating body, a modification of the determination, or a modification of any sanctions imposed.
- G. The Dean shall then make a final and binding disposition of the matter concerning Academic Governing Council actions, Student Honor Committee actions, and Disciplinary Hearing Panel actions.

22 DISCIPLINARY HEARING PANELS

There will occasionally be incidents or reports of conduct on the part of a student occurring outside the academic realm or usual purview of Albany Medical Center that cannot be resolved through interaction of the Progress Committee or the Student Honor Committee and that may raise serious questions about the fitness of the student to continue in the study and eventual practice or teaching of medicine. Such matters shall first be referred to the Dean or the Dean's designee, who shall undertake an investigation, with which the student shall be required to fully cooperate, and thereafter recommend appropriate action. If that recommendation is for dismissal, or if the Dean or the Dean's designee considers the matter of sufficient moment, the Dean or the Dean's designee may convene a disciplinary hearing panel to consider all aspects of the matter. The subject student is entitled to a hearing before a Disciplinary Hearing Panel (DHP) under these circumstances in order to present his or her case. The student must make a written request for a DHP hearing within five business days of such recommendation or be deemed to have waived it.

The DHP shall consist of 7 members as follows: 3 faculty members of the Academic Governing Council, 3 other senior faculty, and the President of the Student Council. If a quorum of 5 faculty members of the DHP is not available, the Dean may appoint ad hoc members for a meeting. If the President of the Student Council is unable to attend a meeting, the Vice President of the Student Council may substitute. The Dean shall appoint a Chair from the membership for each case. Faculty members of the DHP shall serve three-year terms with two members being replaced each year. In order to establish this rotation, the Committee shall initially have two faculty members serving one-year terms, two serving two-year terms and two



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serving three-year terms. No member of the Committee may serve more than two consecutive terms. In order to derive sufficient information upon which to base a recommendation, the DHP may interview the student and any other person appropriate to the matter at hand. The DHP hearing shall be conducted in most cases according to the following general guidelines, which shall be subject to adjustment at the reasonable discretion of the Chairman.

- A. A reasonable attempt shall be made to notify the student in writing by personal delivery or by certified mail to his or her last local address as shown in the records of the College that the DHP will conduct a hearing. The notice shall contain a full and a fair summary of the information or charges against the student, sufficient to enable the student to formulate a response, as well as notice as to the date, time and location of the hearing.
- B. A diligent effort shall be made to schedule the hearing not less than seven nor more than 21 calendar days following personal delivery or certified mailing of the notice.
- C. The notice of the hearing shall (through sending the student these guidelines) inform the student of the following:
 1. The student has the right to be present at the hearing and is, in fact, is expected to be present.
 2. The student may be accompanied at the hearing by legal counsel (one person) and, in addition, by his or her faculty advisor. The legal counsel may confer with and advise the student but may not interfere with or participate in the proceedings. The Student's counsel shall not interview witnesses.
 3. The College may have legal counsel present to confer with and advise the Committee and College personnel, but such counsel may not interfere with the proceedings and shall not interview witnesses.
 4. A record or transcript will be made of the hearing and the student has the right to review such record or to obtain a copy or copies of such record upon payment of the cost of its reproduction.
 5. The student has the right to present such evidence, testimony, affidavits, exhibits, and witnesses as are relevant to the stated purposes of the hearing or to the charges upon which the recommendation for the hearing was based.
 6. Prior to the hearing, the student has the right to review his or her official Student record as defined by applicable law and any additional material upon which the recommendation for the hearing has been based. Copies of items in the student record and copies of other pertinent materials may be obtained by the student upon payment of the reproduction costs.
- D. Upon completion of the evidentiary portion of the hearing, the DHP shall proceed in executive session to determine the validity of the charge(s) and to recommend to the Dean appropriate action, as decided by simple majority vote. A minority report may, if desired, also be presented to the Dean. The minutes of the DHP in executive session shall not constitute part of the record of the hearing. Only the vote reached in such a session shall be included in the record. If a request is made for a minority report to the Dean, that fact, too, shall be included.
- E. The recommendation of the DHP shall be transmitted in writing within 72 hours of the adjournment of the executive session of the hearing to the Dean and to the student(s)



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involved. The letter of notification to the student shall inform him or her of the right to apply in writing within 7 days to the Chairman of the Committee on Student Appeals for permission to appeal the decision of the DHP. Failure to submit such application within the specified time period shall constitute a waiver of the student's right to further appeal.

23 INTERIM ACTIONS

At any time during the preliminary investigation process, the hearing process or the appeals process, the Dean or the Dean's designee may suspend or remove a student from normal academic basic science or clinical science activities if such action is deemed to be in the interest of maintaining the normal function and atmosphere of the College. Such suspension or removal shall automatically be reviewed at the time of the next proceeding in any case and a recommendation for its continuation or termination made to the Dean.

Upon recommendation of any of the individuals or committees listed below, the Dean or the Dean's designee may require appropriate educational, psychometric or medical evaluation of a student in order to help determine his or her academic, behavioral, or emotional fitness for continuation as a graduate student:

The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

The Vice Dean for Academic Administration

The Student Progress Committee

The Executive Committee

The Disciplinary Hearing Panel

The Committee on Student Appeals

24 LEAVES

24.1 GRADUATE STUDENT PERSONAL LEAVE TIME

Graduate students may be granted a personal leave each year. The time allowed will be determined by mutual agreement of the mentor and student. The suggested guideline for use by the mentor and student is two or three weeks per year.

24.2 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students are expected to follow a continuous course of study at Albany Medical College. A student who wishes or needs to interrupt study temporarily because of personal circumstances, including: physical or mental illness or injury; academic circumstances or to engage in research or other degree programs may request a personal LOA. A personal leave of absence (LOA) will not be granted for less than one semester or for more than two years. Written application for such a leave is required and must include the reason(s) and duration for the proposed leave. The application must be countersigned by the student's mentor and the Center Director or Department Chair. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will grant or deny requests for a personal LOA. A personal LOA is usually granted for one year at a time. A second year may be requested if needed. A student on a personal LOA may be required to commence repayment of



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loans prior to completion of their leave, in accordance with Federal Education Law. Personal LOAs will require a statement regarding whether a student's stipend will be reinstated when the student returns (and any conditions or stipulations associated with this) and/or a statement about additional tuition or other expenses that will result from the leave.

A personal LOA does not count toward the maximum time allowed in a degree program, (seven years for a Ph.D. and three years for a M.S. degree program).

If a student does not return from a personal LOA by the designated time or does not apply for and receive an extension, the student may be dismissed from the Graduate Studies Program.

(See change in Student Status below for appropriate form to be completed.)

24.3 MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In the case of illness or injury, a student may be granted a medical LOA with the approval of their Graduate Director and/or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and with the written recommendation of a physician. A physician's letter stating their readiness to return to class or clinical session will be required. A medical LOA may be granted for varying periods of time, as ordered and specified by a physician. Medical LOAs exceeding one month will be evaluated by the appropriate Department or Center, the Graduate Studies Program and the Office of Academic Administration and may involve a temporary loss of stipend and/or additional tuition expenses.

(See change in Student Status below for appropriate form to be completed.)

24.4 MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity LOA (6 weeks for a natural birth or up to 8 weeks for a surgical birth) with continued stipend support is available for graduate students. Additional LOA may be arranged by way of the Graduate Studies Program Leave of Absence Policy.

Recognizing that certain reproductive health hazards may be associated with continued exposure to chemicals, infectious agents or gases in the laboratory, or clinical settings, students are required to notify their supervisor and their Graduate Director, as soon as they are aware that they are pregnant. Adherence to the AMC Environmental Health and Safety Policy and Procedure No. 1.704.130: Potential Reproductive Health Hazards is mandatory.

(See change in Student Status below for appropriate form to be completed.)

24.5 CHANGE IN STUDENT STATUS AND REPORTING

Any change of status (Leave of Absence, Deceleration within a program, Withdrawal, as defined below) must first be approved by a student's Graduate Director and/or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. All requests for a status change must be accompanied by a Graduate Student Status Change Request Form, which is provided by the student's Graduate Director. Upon completion, the student must submit the form to the Registrar's office for final signoff.

A. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Leave of Absence Protocol

To request a LOA, the student must meet with their Graduate Director and/or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (ADGS), explain the reasons for the proposed leave and propose the start and end dates of the leave. If the Graduate Director and/or the ADGS finds the student



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to be eligible and approves the request, the student must complete the AMC Status Change Request Form with their Graduate Director. Upon completion, the student must submit the form to the Registrar's office for final signoff. A student who does not request a personal LOA but does not participate in the academic program they were admitted to, or whose request for a personal leave is denied, and does not enroll in courses, will be considered to have withdrawn from the School effective the last date of recorded academic activity.

Albany Medical College reserves the right to place a student on a LOA when, on the recommendation of an Administrative Psychiatric Evaluation, the ADGS and/or the Vice Dean of Academic of Administration determines that the student is a danger to self or others because of a serious medical problem.

The general policies that apply to all types of leave are:

1. A student may be granted a LOA for a maximum of one year with possible extension for one additional year. Any approved leave will be for a specified period and during this period the student will not be considered to be enrolled.
2. A student on a LOA is not eligible for financial aid, including loans; and in most cases, student loans are not deferred during periods of non-enrollment.
3. A student on a LOA in a given academic program may not fulfill any degree or curricular requirements in the same academic program during the time on leave.
4. A student on a LOA is still eligible for the use of any AMC facilities normally available to enrolled students, including the library.
5. A student on a LOA may continue to be enrolled in AMC Health Insurance by making arrangements through the Office of Student Affairs. Coverage is not automatic. In order to secure continuous coverage from AMC, enrollment in this plan must be requested prior to the beginning of the term in which the student will be on leave or, if the leave commences during the term, within thirty days of the date when the leave is approved.
6. A student on a LOA must notify the Registrar in writing of his or her intention to return at least 30 days prior to the documented end date of the approved leave. In addition, if the returning student wishes to be considered for financial aid, he or she must submit appropriate financial aid applications to the School's financial aid office to determine eligibility.
7. Prior to returning to AMC, all students must satisfy all stipulations for return outlined on the Graduate Student Status Change Request Form.
8. Any additional changes to a student's LOA (extension, change of circumstances) must be approved by the student's Graduate Director and the ADGS. Once approved, a new AMC Status Change Request Form must be submitted to the Registrar's office.

A student on a LOA who either does not notify the Registrar at least 30 days prior to the documented end date of the leave that they are returning, does not return at the end of the approved leave, or does not request and receive an extension from their Graduate Director and the ADGS, will be administratively withdrawn from the Albany Medical College.

B. ACADEMIC LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Any student that the Graduate Studies Progress Committee has determined shall repeat any academic year due to not satisfying curricular requirements will be granted an academic LOA until the start of the next academic year. The general policies governing all LOA's are described above. In this case a Graduate Student Status Change Request Form must still be completed.



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C. DECELERATION

Any student that drops a course, rotation, etc. or otherwise changes the normal program scheduling such that this change can potentially prolong their stay at AMC must complete a Graduate Student Status Change Request Form explaining why this course of action was taken. It must be stated how the projected dates for completion may be changed and also if there is any expected financial implications of this change. Any stipulations (Academic or Other) associated with a return to the course, rotation, program, etc. must be clearly stated on this form. The form must have all the normal approvals and be submitted to the Registrar's office.

D. WITHDRAWAL

If a student decides not to continue studies at Albany Medical College, it is the student's obligation to officially withdraw through the Graduate Studies office. To officially withdraw, the student must do so in writing, either via email from their AMC email account sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, or a signed letter. In addition, the student is required to also notify their Graduate Director. The effective date of the withdrawal will either be the last date of academic activity (as determined by the Graduate Director) or the date of the letter, whichever is later. The Graduate Studies office will also provide the student with a checkout form that must be completed and turned in within 10 days of the withdrawal date. In the event that the student is not on campus or physically unable to complete the form, the student must request alternate arrangements from the Graduate Studies office.)

25 ADMISSION TO STUDY OF MEDICINE AT ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE

Graduate students cannot apply for admission to the M.D. degree program of the Albany Medical College before the start of the academic year in which all of the requirements for their Ph.D. or M.S. degree are expected to be completed. The last date for defense of thesis is August 1st. All revisions must be completed and the thesis submitted for binding to the Schaffer Library prior to matriculation. Failure to meet either of these deadlines will result in forfeiture of the student's acceptance to the Albany Medical College M.D. degree program. Completion of a graduate degree program at Albany Medical College does not assure admission to the M.D. Program, although the Albany Medical College Admissions Committee may consider accomplishments by a student in the Graduate Studies Program.

26 TRANSFER (TO ANOTHER SCHOOL) POLICY

Graduate students who wish to transfer to other graduate programs/schools will be assisted only under the following conditions. The transfer process will be initiated upon receipt of an administrative fee of \$500. The administrative fee may be waived at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Students receiving scholarships and/or stipends will be assisted only if their reasons for transferring are exceptional. Albany Medical College will reconsider and may curtail further scholarship and/or stipend support for any students who declare their intention to transfer.

If a student in the doctoral or masters degree program does not complete their studies and will be attending another medical or graduate school, the Albany Medical College will notify the student's medical or graduate school in writing.



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27 AMENDMENTS

The Rules and Regulations of the Graduate Studies Program may be amended as approved by the Executive Committee.

28 EXCEPTIONS

A student who feels justified in requesting an exception to any of the regulations contained herein may do so in writing to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will make a final ruling on the request for exception within two months of the receipt of the request.

29 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

The postdoctoral fellowship is a period of apprenticeship meant to advance the professional career of research scientists. With guidance of the mentor in whose laboratory the fellow works, the postdoctoral fellow will enhance his/her knowledge base, management skills and research and other skills necessary for a satisfying, productive and successful professional career. In order to initiate the fellowship, the fellow and the mentor must develop an agreement that outlines the objectives, requirements, time frame and outcomes of the fellowship experience. An annual review of the fellow's performance will be required. The fellow will also evaluate their experience from their perspective on an annual basis in order to assure that the fellowship is successful. Documentation of the reviews must be filed with the Department Chair. Individual AMC health insurance will be provided.

30 AMC SMOKING POLICY

The smoking policy at Albany Medical Center applies to all students and will be strictly enforced. All students must adhere to the policy. Any student who is reported to be smoking on campus in an area other than a designated smoking area will be reported to the **Deans' Committee** composed of: The Vice Dean for Academic Administration, The Associate Dean for Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Services, the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Community Outreach and Medical Education, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The student will be interviewed and given a warning for the first offense. If reported a second time the student will be recommended for non-academic probation after being presented to the appropriate progress or promotions committee. If the student violates the policy a third time, the student will be recommended for dismissal to the appropriate progress or promotions committee.

Students, please refer to your Center or Department's guidebook or rulebook for additional rules.