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**Graduate Student Handbook**

**2023-2024**

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DEPARTMENT OF NEUROBIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR DIRECTORY

<http://neurobiology.uci.edu/>

Many staff and faculty will help you throughout your academic career at UC Irvine. Here is an introduction to some of them. Please reference our [NBB (Neurobiology and Behavior) Reference Sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kS9pztMzWV85Qp8dJwnsd0m2GrZHYfwQ/edit?rtpof=true&sd=true)

IMPORTANT GRADUATE FORMS

[Notice of Intent to Change Laboratory Assignment](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OnJcyfCk79yAkINNUo5N96d7tpeutiqlziEOC9VmF7U/edit)

Reimbursement

[Travel Checklist](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ElRtrLUEzJegOGjgyjjnZZaPoY4pRv8Q/view)

[Disbursement Voucher (DV) Checklist](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/files/2023/07/DV-Reimbursement-Checklist.pdf)

[ENT Checklist](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/files/2023/07/ENT-Reimbursement-Checklist.pdf)

[PO/PALCard Checklist](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/files/2023/08/PO_PALCard-Form.pdf)

UCI Registrar / Courses

[UCI Neruobio Graduate Course Catalogue](https://catalogue.uci.edu/allcourses/neurbio/)

[NBB Graduate Program Requirements](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/graduate-programs/requirements/)

[Registering for Courses](https://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/webreg.html)

**Graduate Program in Neurobiology & Behavior**

The expectations, requirements, and recommendations for making satisfactory progress toward completion of the graduate program in Neurobiology and Behavior (NB&B or NBB) are summarized here. Most students will enter the NBB program in their second year at UCI following a year in the gateway Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program (INP); although it is also possible to enter the program through a different gateway program, or directly in the first year. Graduate students should also review the policies and procedures of the Graduate Division as summarized in the UCI catalog (<http://catalogue.uci.edu/>).

Timeline

Course Work

Most students will spend their first year at UCI in the INP gateway program, and transfer to the NB&B graduate program at the end of that year. Entry into the NB&B program requires that students satisfy all requirements of the INP program. The NB&B program further requires satisfactory completion of each part of the NB&B core curriculum (B or better), performing at a higher than satisfactory level in at least some courses.

The core curriculum is:

* Neurbio 206: Molecular Neuroscience
* Neurbio 207: Cellular Neuroscience
* Neurbio 208: Systems Neuroscience
* Neurbio 209: Behavioral Neuroscience

Students in the INP gateway program who envisage transferring to the NB&B graduate program are thus strongly advised to take the above courses in fulfilling the Molecular, Cellular and Systems requirements of the INP program. If the Neurbio 209, Behavioral Neuroscience course is not taken during the first year, this must be taken during the second year, after entering the NB&B graduate program.

Students who enter through other gateway programs are similarly required to satisfy all requirements of that program and will generally be required to take NB&B core courses during their second year; although an exception may be granted by the Graduate Advisor to substitute one or more core courses taken in that program if appropriate.

Students entering directly into NB&B should take the same courses as INP students in their first year.

**Research**

The excitement of research provides the primary motivation for most students selecting a career in neuroscience and behavior. During first-year research rotations, it is important to stay in close touch with the research efforts of the lab with which you are affiliated and to attend the lab's meetings and seminars. Students planning to enter the NB&B graduate program should identify a research mentor associated with the program by the end of the first year. You can consult the Graduate Advisor and/or Chair for advice on this and other issues at any time.

Evaluations

Students are expected to have an overall GPA of 3.3 or higher by the end of the first year and to have met all the requirements of the gateway program in which they are enrolled. The Graduate Division requires graduate students to have a GPA of 3.1 or higher to serve as TAs (Teaching Assistants). At the graduate level, a grade of B (3.0) indicates satisfactory performance. Students with a B- grade in a single core class may be granted an exception to enter the NB&B graduate program but are placed on conditional academic status and are required to retake that class and obtain a passing grade (B or higher). Students on conditional academic status are also expected to exceed the department’s basic expectations in their regular work while making up for earlier deficiencies. To continue in the program, students must have an overall GPA of ≥ 3.3 and have satisfactorily made up any core course deficiency. Students obtaining B- grades in two classes, or a grade of C+ or below in a single class during their first year will not be permitted to enter or continue in the NB&B program until the deficiency is remedied.

Teaching

The policy of the School of Biological Science is that graduate students TA (Teaching Assistants) a minimum of two quarters at 50% time before they graduate. This total can be reached using up to four 25% TA assignments, as needed.

The Department of Neurobiology and Behavior implements this requirement partly by having students support the undergraduate neurobiology laboratory, N113L. The requirement is as follows (details may change depending on graduate class size and department needs):

Second year at UCI - either Winter or Spring: 50% TA: teaching N113L at 25% and grading N113L at 25%.

In addition to N113L (as described above), students must also TA an additional quarter at 50% (or two quarters at 25%) before they can graduate (as per School policy). The freshman biology course (Bio 93), in particular, has a strong mentored-teaching component and is highly recommended for students with an interest in teaching.

Students may TA beyond the required amount if they are interested in gaining additional experience or funds (not to exceed stipend level).

Related information:

a. Students on most federal fellowships or training grants may not receive TA appointments greater than 25%. In these cases, students can TA 25% for N113L in both Winter and Spring to fulfill their departmental requirement.

b. Students supported by a GAANN grant should expect to TA while on the grant, and the assignment should be carefully selected to include a strong mentor component for the student. Students may receive up to 50% TA appointments.

c. Per campus-wide practice, students in the MSTP (MD-PhD program) do not have TA requirements.

Seminars and Research Presentations

In addition to course work and research, students participate in seminars and other activities. Neuroblitz is a student-run activity in which graduate students deliver presentations on their research, followed by questions and feedback. The program was created to allow students to practice presenting their research in a comfortable and yet formal environment. NBB students are also required to attend and enroll in the N&B colloquium series (N290).

Annual Advisory Committee Meetings

Students must meet annually with a faculty advisory committee, except when they are advancing (normally in the 3rd year) or defending (normally in the 5th year) and submit a meeting report to be placed in the student’s file. The policy on Annual Advisory Committees and the form to be filled out by the committee can be obtained from the Graduate Program Coordinator, in the department office. Students should consider members of their advisory committee to be scientific mentors and should feel free to meet with them informally throughout the year. Advisory committee members will provide guidance to help develop the thesis project; in this way, the coherence and completeness of the project will be monitored throughout the student’s graduate career.

Presentation of an **Individual Development Plan (IDP) is required for all graduate students at the annual thesis committee meeting.** The IDP will be prepared in consultation with the thesis advisor, presented at the first thesis committee, and updated annually at all future thesis committee meetings. The IDP should describe the student’s career goals, desired training, and milestones associated with professional development and academic training (fellowship applications, technical workshops, meeting presentations, pedagogical training, development of communications skills, etc.).

Course Work

Students are encouraged to satisfactorily complete at least two advanced graduate courses before advancing to candidacy and are required to complete at least four before the dissertation defense. *One of these classes must be in the area of statistics and experimental design*. This requirement can be met by taking NB257 (Statistics and Experimental Design) or, with the approval of the graduate advisor, an equivalent statistics class offered by another department. Advanced classes must be taken for a letter grade, not on an S/U basis, to count toward the required minimum of four advanced classes. With the consent of the graduate advisor and PI, graduate courses from other departments may satisfy part of this requirement if they are not primarily introductory or technically oriented, and they are appropriate for the student’s training. Students should begin taking advanced courses in their second year and are strongly encouraged to enroll in NB257 or equivalent statistics class in their second year. Students are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.3 or higher throughout their time in the graduate program.

Evaluations

Students are evaluated once a year, at the end of spring quarter, unless they are on conditional academic status or are behind in their progress toward the Ph.D. Evaluation of students who have completed the core is based on (i) performance in advanced courses; (ii) laboratory research toward their academic aims; (iii) timely preparation for and performance on the advancement to candidacy exam; and (iv) teaching. If a student's performance has fallen below the department's expectations in more than one course, or the student is not meeting the aforementioned requirements for more than one quarter, or if the student has not made-up deficiencies in a timely manner, the faculty may immediately recommend that the student be academically disqualified by the Graduate Division.

BioSci 200 Syllabus

A new requirement from Graduate Council mandated that every independent study course (Bio Sci 200) needs a written syllabus. This means that each PI who has either Ph.D. or master students' needs to provide a syllabus to those detailing expectations. This will be sent out by the Graduate Program Coordinator and will be due during week 2 of the academic quarter. If you have any questions, please refer to your Graduate Advisor.

Advancement to Candidacy

In consultation with their research advisor and the Graduate Advisor, students should select an advancement to candidacy committee no later than spring quarter of their third year (directly admitted NB&B students also have until the 3rd year to advance, though they may advance earlier if they choose). Through individual and/or group meetings with the committee members, the student should take advantage of their expertise when developing a research plan for the dissertation and critiquing the literature in that area. The student should take the initiative in seeking their advice and should not postpone contact with them until the advancement to candidacy exam. Committee members can provide you with scientific or professional advice, it is fine to set up meetings with them between full committee meetings.

Before the end of the spring quarter of the third year, students are expected to write an advancement document that includes 1) a critical review of the literature in the area in which they plan to do their dissertation and 2) a proposal presenting plans for the dissertation research. Although it is good to have preliminary data to include, this is not a strict requirement. The scope of this document will depend on the research area, and students generally consult with their research advisor and committee members to determine an appropriate range of topics. One formula that can work well is to use your NRSA application’s research plan as a starting place, adding with an extended and scholarly overview of the background of your research topic up-front. You should get your PI’s input on the document, and they should help make sure yours is up to standard prior to sending it to your committee.

Students are expected to present this work to their advancement committee and to take the advancement to candidacy exam. The area defined by the review and proposal provides a focus for much of the oral exam, but candidates are expected to be able to discuss issues and answer questions in the broader domain of neurobiology and behavior. Details on the format for preparing the review and proposal are available from the graduate advisor, and examples of previous advancement documents can be obtained from the Department Office. The advancement document should be distributed to the committee at least a week before the exam.

Advancing to candidacy in the spring of the third year gives students two years to complete their Ph.D. within the department's expected time-to-degree of five years. Students for whom a second exam must be scheduled are expected to pass it by the end of the next quarter. Students may advance to candidacy before the deadline indicated, but those that have not met the deadline will not be considered to be making normal progress to the Ph.D.

The advancement committee, which must be approved in advance by the Graduate Advisor, generally consists of your research advisor, at least two additional Neurobiology and Behavior faculty members, and at least one “outside” member, for a total of at least five. The committee must be composed of senate-eligible faculty and have a majority of regular members that have primary, split, or joint appointments in Neurobiology and Behavior. If a conflict of interest has been recognized involving the student's project, an additional CoI (conflict of interest) member must be approved by the Graduate Advisor and Graduate Dean, and added to the committee, in addition to the regular members described above.

The student may prepare for the Ph.D. Form I (Report on Qualifying Examination) before the exam by collecting signatures from the committee members after the exam. The student then indicates on the DocuSign form the three faculty members who will serve as the Ph.D. dissertation committee: two departmental faculty who served on the advancement to candidacy committee plus the student's research advisor. Before submitting the completed form to Graduate Division, you must pay the required Ph.D. Advancement to Candidacy Fee online which is $90, and you must turn in the receipt on the DocuSign Form. If the student does not pass the oral exam, a second exam will be scheduled before the end of the next quarter. Having prepared a research proposal and received critical comments from the committee, students who have advanced to candidacy may choose to submit their proposal as part of an application for an individual pre-doctoral fellowship to NIH or another source. This decision should be made in consultation with the research advisor and graduate advisor.

After advancement to candidacy, students may optionally submit master's Final Degree Paperwork and obtain a master’s degree. Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator to submit paperwork. After advancement to candidacy, annual thesis committee meetings should directly assess and provide guidance for academic publication.

Outside Employment and Conflict of Interest

Doctoral students are expected to be fully engaged in the doctoral program and should not undertake outside employment. An exception may be granted for outside employment that provides a professional development opportunity, typically related to teaching. Requests for exceptions should be directed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

The campus has an established conflict of interest (COI) policy that must be met when a graduate student performs research, and the PI has a financial interest in the project. If there is a COI, there must be an additional committee member appointed to the thesis committee that is responsible for protecting the student from conflicts. This process is detailed in Ph.D. form I. The Graduate Dean shall select the Oversight Member from a list of three nominees agreed upon by the student, the faculty research/thesis advisor, and the departmental representative. The departmental representative shall submit a written request to appoint an Oversight Member to the Graduate Dean no less than two weeks prior to the date of the exam to allow a reasonable time for review. This request should include background information describing the circumstances of the possible conflict. The Graduate Dean will retain sole authority to appoint the Oversight Member. **Talk to the Graduate Advisor ASAP if you have a new COI**.

Doctorate Thesis

Students are expected to complete their research, write their dissertation and successfully defend it by the end of their fifth year. Students should work closely with their dissertation committee throughout the time from advancement to candidacy and completion of the degree. By the policies of the University of California, the final exam is open to the public but the privilege of examining the candidate remains with the committee unless extended by the chair.

Students must enroll and pay fees every quarter until they complete the requirements for the degree. If all requirements are satisfied except submission of the final version of the dissertation or completion of the final exam, a student may apply to pay only a filing fee. By the end of the quarter for which the filing fee was paid, the dissertation must be approved by the manuscript advisor in Graduate Division. During the quarter for which the filing fee was paid, the student normally may not use University services (e.g., the library) or be employed by the university as a TA, graduate student researcher or in any other capacity. Students are allowed to receive employment positions (GSR/TA) during summer while filing Fee and maintain housing and library privileges.

The dissertation must be prepared according to guidelines available online:

<http://etd.lib.uci.edu/electronic/tdmanuale>.

Dissertation Defense and Pre-Defense Exam

PhD candidates will schedule a “pre-defense” meeting with their dissertation committee for an oral examination based on a near-final draft of the dissertation. The meeting will be scheduled only after the draft is delivered to the committee, to ensure at least two weeks for evaluation. At the meeting, the student will give a brief oral presentation and answer questions about the draft. The committee may identify problems with the dissertation that should be addressed in the final draft. Note that the intent of this meeting is to strengthen the written document and not, for example, to identify problems with the experimental design (which should have been identified earlier, e.g., during annual advisory meetings). When the committee has signed off on the revised, final draft, only then can the public oral defense be scheduled.

After the public defense the committee and students will meet briefly behind closed doors for feedback on the presentation and to sign the paperwork.

During their final year of graduate study, doctoral students will present a detailed plan for post-graduate career development and employment to the thesis committee 6 to 12 months in advance of degree completion.

Submitting Your Manuscript

The library is very particular about the format of the manuscript. A manual has been prepared for you to follow and is available for purchase from the UCI Bookstore. The manual is also available at the Libraries Research Resource website located at <http://etd.lib.uci.edu/electronic/tdmanuale>.

Matriculation

Before candidates leave UCI, they are expected to do each of the following:

* Pay all departmental liens.
* Return all departmental and school property (e.g., keys, etc.).
* Sign all personnel and payroll forms.
* Provide the department with a forwarding address.
* Advice the department of the disposition of reprint requests (i.e., forward or refer elsewhere).
* If at any time during their training, candidates received support from the training grant or a fellowship, they must file a termination report with the supporting agency.
* Meet all Office of Graduate Division requirements.

UCI Campus Services

Graduate Division

<http://www.grad.uci.edu/>

The **Dean of Graduate Division** administers graduate education in accordance with academic policies established by the Academic Senate and by the Graduate Council, a standing committee of the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate. The staff of Graduate Division is prepared to answer questions about admissions, academic policies and procedures, graduate programs and degrees, financial assistance, student services, and other matters of concern to graduate students. They are available at Aldrich Hall 120, x4-4611.

Counseling Center

<https://counseling.uci.edu/services/>

The counseling Center is the primary counseling and mental health agency for UC Irvine graduate students. They strive to assist students with their academic success by developing dimensions of well-being.

**The Graduate Division Counselor: Phong Luong, Psy.D.**

Phong Luong is here to support YOUR academic journey and can provide:

* Academic support
* Time management strategies
* Effective communication skills
* An ear when you feel stressed by your new academic environment
* Referrals to campus services

**Hours:** Call or email for an appointment

**Location:** Aldrich Hall, Room 120

**Email:** [pbluong@uci.edu](mailto:pbluong@uci.edu)

**Phone:** 949-824-0246

Disability Services Center (DSC)

<https://dsc.uci.edu/>

At the University of California, Irvine, providing a culture of inclusion and equal opportunity for students with disabilities is a campus wide responsibility and commitment. UCI demonstrates its core values of individual growth, development, civility, and diversity by recognizing students with disabilities as an important part of its student body. Our mission is to empower students to maximize their abilities to thrive in today’s global community. New to DSC? Registering is the first step towards getting accommodation services at UCI. <https://dsc.uci.edu/register/>

Registration / Enrollment

<https://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/webreg.html>

Your registration at UCI consists of two separate steps that must be completed to be officially registered:

1. Enrollment in classes with a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 16 units.
2. Payment of fees; Once you have registered, your fees (which are paid for by the department or lab) are electronically transferred to the Cashier's office.

Be sure to register and see that your fees have been paid for each quarter by the deadline online through WebReg (<http://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/webreg.html> ). You will be charged a late enrollment fee if you are not enrolled at the end of the second week of instruction. Also be aware, late registration may affect your FICA status. If your account shows a positive balance for fees, contact the department office right away.

Address Changes

<http://www.reg.uci.edu/request/changeaddress.html>

Address information should be updated with the department. Please change your university records via StudentAccess (Frequently campus offices use e-mail to communicate with students so be sure to activate your UCINetID and check your e-mail frequently).

Student Photo ID Card

UCI photo ID cards are often required when conducting business with various campus services. The IDs are available for all graduate students at **UC Bookstore, the Hill** in the Student Center. Once your employment appointment is in place in our personnel records, take your student and employee identification numbers with you to obtain your UCI photo ID card.

Parking

<http://www.parking.uci.edu/>

<http://www.parking.uci.edu/at/modes/octa.cfm>

A valid parking permit is required at all times when parking on campus. The campus will no longer be issuing physical permits for faculty, staff, and students - your license plate will serve as your virtual parking permit. When you purchase your permit, you will be asked to register the vehicle you will be parking on campus. Your vehicle must be registered successfully prior to parking. You may update your license plate once per day in your MyCommute account. The parking and Transportation Service Office is located in Room 200 in the Public Services Building, at the corner of Berkeley and Pereira.

Graduate students are eligible to register for the free sustainable transportation program. Register at <https://www.parking.uci.edu/AT/>.

An effective way to avoid parking costs is to ride the OCTA (Orange County Transportation Authority) bus. University Pass allows students at UC Irvine to ride OC bus all day, every day for a fraction of the most compared to regular fare. <https://parking.uci.edu/AT/modes/OCTA.cfm>

The Anteater Express is a UCI-run bus system. Rides between graduate student housing and the main UCI campus are free. https://shuttle.uci.edu/

Internet

<http://www.oit.uci.edu/>

Office of Information Technology (OIT) operates the UCI campus network and telephone system. UCI offers mobile internet access via Wi-Fi across many locations on campus. UCI net Mobile Access provides UCI affiliates and visitors a fast and convenient way to connect to the web with mobile computers and devices.

E-Mail

<https://activate.uci.edu/activate/menu.php>

UCI provides free e-mail accounts to all its affiliates - faculty, staff and students. When you receive your employee or student ID number you will automatically be given an e-mail account. University offices frequently use e-mail to communicate information to students, so it is important to activate your UCINetID and check your e-mail frequently. To activate your account, go to the website and follow the on-screen instructions.

Anteater Recreational Center

<http://www.campusrec.uci.edu/>

The Anteater Recreational Center (ARC) is equipped with two different gymnasiums, an elevated running track, a rock-climbing wall, a fitness lab, and several activity rooms. Its Aquatics Plaza contains a 25 by 25-yard heated recreational lap pool and a 10,000 square foot weight and cardio room. Students can pursue their own fitness programs or participate in a full myriad of campus recreation programs. These programs include in-line skating, scuba, kickboxing, aerobics, Aikido, sailing and more! Tours of the ARC are available by calling x4-5346 to make an appointment. ARC Fee is included in your fees and paid except during Summer.

Housing

<http://www.housing.uci.edu/>

The Housing Office, located at G458 Student Center, x4-7247, provides a wide variety of affordable housing options on campus with different amenities and living arrangements such as studios, one, two, and three-bedroom units, townhouses, flats, graduate residence hall, laundry rooms, recreation rooms, park, childcare centers, gardens, and internet connections.

In addition, they provide information and services to help students locate and obtain off- campus housing, including lists of apartments, houses for rent, rooms for rent in private homes, roommates wanted, roommates available, and temporary housing. The housing office publishes “Living Around UCI”, a guide to local apartment communities which includes information about rental prices, local realtors, budgeting expenses, roommate selection, and tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities. For more detailed information please visit their website.

Safety Training

<http://uclc.uci.edu/>

Graduate students are required to complete a variety of online safety training modules. Some of these are specific to the laboratory environment, while some are required for all graduate students.

School of Biological Sciences Services

A variety of services and equipment are available through the School of Biological Sciences; most will require a grant or other fund number.

Image Works

<http://imageworks.bio.uci.edu/>

Image Works, located in 2112 Nat Sci 1, x4-6414, provides a large number of services, including production of slides, film development, black and white prints, color scanning of images and gels, high resolution drum scanning, wide format poster printing, binding, as well as a full-service copy center. The facility manager is Matthew Martinez.

Dishwashing and Autoclaving

<http://www.bio.uci.edu/research/services-and-resources/>

Dishwashing and autoclaving facilities are located on the third floor of Steinhaus Hall and the fourth floor of McGaugh Hall.

Vivarium

Animal care facilities are located in McGaugh Hall, Steinhaus Hall, and the Bonney Research Laboratory. Access to these areas is restricted; please take the [ULAR Training](https://ular.research.uci.edu/facility-access/) to gain access to these facilities. Please contact ULARtraining@.uci.edu to schedule an animal facility orientation tour. Please be certain to check with your faculty advisor for instructions about the care and handling of research animals. All laboratories have protocols approved and on file.

Computer Services

<http://comp.bio.uci.edu/>

Computer support is provided free of charge to the School of Biological Sciences faculty, staff, and graduate students. This is your starting point for help with computing problems.

* Visit their walk-in support center in 2112 NS1.
* Call to talk with helpdesk support staff at x4-3555 (949-824-3555)
* Email for assistance to [bcshelp@uci.edu](mailto:bcshelp@uci.edu)
* Urgent messages can be left at x4-3555 (#4 to mark urgent) for after-hours requests on weekends and holidays. Staff are automatically paged, and you will be called back.

BCS has various media equipment on loan in their office, such as a computer projector, laptop, etc. To reserve equipment, call their help desk at least a day in advance.

Travel Funding

Some research-related expenses, such as travel, can be obtained through Dr. Craig Walsh, Associate Dean of Graduate Affairs. If you are presenting a poster at a scientific meeting, such as the annual Society for Neuroscience, send the Graduate Program Coordinator a written request detailing your travel i.e., expenses, location and title of your presentation and they will request the approval from Dr. Walsh for up to $300 dollars.

Department of Neurobiology & Behavior Services

Mailboxes

All graduate students can be assigned a locking mailbox located just outside the department office. Please be careful not to misplace your key, as they are difficult to replace. Your official department address is University of California, Irvine, Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, 2205 McGaugh Hall, Irvine, CA 92697-4550.

Mail Service

Mail related to university business can be mailed from the department office. Outgoing off-campus mail must contain your name, return address, “zot” code, and your lab mail code. Your advisor or bookkeeper can help you to determine the correct mail code. On-campus mail should include at least a zot code and a department name. A list of campus zot codes is in the campus telephone directory. Mail pick-up and delivery is approximately at 11:00 am. Departmental letterheads and envelopes are available upon request from the department office.

Fax

You may use the fax machine in the department office to receive and send faxes. The fax number is 949-824-2447. Faxes addressed to you are put in your mailbox. If you send a research-related fax, use your lab account number on the fax log and your advisor's permission to use the account. Personal faxes are allowed, but you will be asked to reimburse the department for the cost.

Telephones

<http://www.oit.uci.edu/>

To dial on-campus extensions, first dial 4, for example, 4-XXXX.

To call off-campus, dial "9" and then the number.

If you wish to reach UCI emergency assistance from a cellular phone, you must dial 949-824-5223 to reach the UCIPD (UCI Police Department) emergency dispatch line.

Photocopying

Photocopy machines in McGaugh Hall are located on the second and fourth floors. Photocopiers are also located in the libraries. fTo copy materials for classes you are teaching or serving as TA, see the Department Office.

Bulletin Boards and Announcements

You may subscribe to a weekly listserv calendar of seminars in BioSci and NBB. To subscribe and unsubscribe, please follow the below instructions:

To subscribe or unsubscribe send an email with the correct body message email address below to the listserv:

1) Send an email message to: listserv@uci.edu

2) In the body of the message type only the line:

SUBSCRIBE BIO-SCI-SEMINARS YOUR NAME or…

UNSUBSCRIBE BIO-SCI-SEMINARS YOUR NAME

The School of Biological Sciences also offers an on-line calendar of coming events and seminar at: <http://www.bio.uci.edu/events/>

Building Emergencies

For emergency reports, please call Facilities Management Service Desk, (949) 824-5444, or after hours call Central Plant at (949) 824-5520.

Fellowships

If you and your advisor decide that you should apply for an NIH or private fellowship, contact Jason Park at [jpark@uci.edu](mailto:%3cjpark@uci.edu) for assistance. He can help you identify potential funding agencies and will guide you through the application process. Never send an application directly to an agency.

# **Finances**

PO/PALCards

To order supplies and/or equipment, you will need to complete a Purchase Order worksheet and have your faculty advisor sign off. To submit for purchase, you will need to login to KFS (Kuali Financial System), complete the requisition and upload the PO worksheet as signature approval in the Notes and Attachments tab. If you have any questions, please contact the Procurement Analyst to assist. **Never place a purchase order directly with a vendor.** PALCards are UCI credit cards used for the purchase of goods and services that may be available in your lab.  Alwayscheck with your faculty advisor and lab manager to determine the specific purchasing procedure for their lab.

Repairs

Equipment repairs are considered an outside purchase, whether you will be charged for the repair or not. **Always check with NB&B Procurement staff before you take or send any UCI Equipment off-campus.**

On-Campus Stores

Before purchasing any item on campus, make sure you have your faculty advisor’s approval and the appropriate recharge number with your KFS account and project number. Always obtain a receipt for your purchase and forward it to NBB Procurement Analyst.

Reimbursements for Supplies

For purchases of $100 or less, you may choose to pay for the supplies with your own money and be reimbursed. However, **please note that buying with your own funds should be a last resort and for urgent matters**. **It is highly discouraged since you are not an approved buyer for UCI.** To do this, you must have a **receipt and a detailed explanation of how the items are being used in your research.** Your receipt **must** have the store name printed or stamped on it and a printed product description, and date of purchase. All receipts must be submitted for reimbursement within 5 days of the purchase date. Bring your receipts with your explanation/description of their use to NB&B Procurement staff for reimbursement. We prefer to prepare a Disbursement Voucher reimbursement by depositing the funds directly into your checking account.

Complete a Disbursement Voucher document with your faculty advisor’s signature on the cover sheet. Submit to Department for processing. You will receive an e-mail notification from UCI’s Central Accounting that a deposit has been made to your account.

Paychecks

Graduate Student stipends can be paid via check or direct deposit. Checks will be sent to your home address. Direct deposit is available and often preferable to receiving a paycheck that you must take to the bank. You may review your check stub through “UCPath” at the following link: <https://ucpath.uci.edu/>. This is the same information that is normally shown on a check stub and will show you how much was deposited into your account. If you are interested in this option, please contact the Personal Analyst in the School of Biological Sciences. Reimbursement checks for entertainment, travel expenses, supplies, etc., will also be a direct deposit.

The sources from which you will be paid each year may vary as the department has several different types of funding sources. Each new academic year begins July 1. Please refer to your NBB Graduate Student Financial Support sheet for more information.

University fellowships may supply not only a stipend but also the payment of out-of-state tuition and/or applicable educational fees. Other support will be paid for from teaching assistantships and graduate student research appointments. For more information on UCI’s Fellowship Opportunities, please visit the UCI Graduate Division Website: [Current Fellowships - UCI Graduate Division](https://grad.uci.edu/funding/current-fellowships/).

Some students are paid from training grants (e.g., NIH T32) or individual grants and fellowships (e.g., NSF GRFP (Graduate Research Fellowship Program), NIH NRSA, foundation fellowships). As fellowship and training grant stipend checks are not produced through the payroll system, no deductions for taxes, social security, etc. are taken from them. However, according to the tax laws which went into effect 1/1/87, the income received from such sources is tax liable. You will want to be putting some money aside to pay the tax obligation. The Internal Revenue Service publishes a "Students Guide to Federal Income Tax" which explains the federal tax laws that apply to you. It describes your responsibilities in filing and paying taxes, how to file, and how to get help. To order IRS Publication 4, call (800) 829-3676.

If you have a problem with your paycheck, please contact your Graduate Program Coordinator ASAP!

Federal Student Aid

Financial aid to graduate students is available from the Federal government in two forms. The first is grants and fellowships, and the second is student loans. For both types, you need to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA form can be obtained from the Financial Aid office at 102 Aldrich, or it can be completed on-line at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>.

Establishing Residence

<http://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/residence/>

The UC system is considerably more expensive for non-California residents. During your first year as an out-of-state graduate student, non-resident tuition is paid by the department but after that, you are still a non-California resident, you will be responsible for this charge. It is therefore vital that out-of-state domestic students establish themselves as California residents during their first year. In order to be considered as a resident, you must obtain a [Petition for Resident Classification from the Office of the Registrar](https://www.reg.uci.edu/residency/downloads/reclass_grad.pdf), fill it out, and return it to them by the appropriate deadline. You then produce the required proof of residency at the end of one year. The following items are useful in demonstrating residence: Personnel Report showing date employment started, California Driver’s License, California automobile registration, California voter card, California income tax return, bank statements, utility bills, and rent receipts, especially for summer months. Please be sure to update your permanent address to your home address right away.

If you do not start the proceedings early, you will not establish your residency in time and will have to pay the higher fees. Contact the Residence Deputy in the Office of the Registrar, or look at the Registrar’s Office website at <http://www.reg.uci.edu/navigation/residency.html>

Medical Insurance

<http://www.shs.uci.edu/Health_Insurance_Privacy/Insurance.aspx>

University of California Student Health Insurance Plan (UC SHIP) is the University sponsored health insurance program for graduate students. **Eligible students are automatically enrolled in UC SHIP, and the premium for this insurance is assessed each term on the graduate student's registration fee statement**. You may request to [waive out](http://www.shs.uci.edu/Health_Insurance_Privacy/Insurance.aspx#WaiverQ) of this plan if you can demonstrate comparable and verifiable health coverage that meets the campus' minimum standards for insurance.

**UC SHIP is a comprehensive health plan that provides medical, mental health, pharmacy, vision, and dental coverage.** It features year-round, world-wide coverage using the Anthem Blue Cross PPO network. UC SHIP provides optimal coverage for services on campus and in the UC Irvine community and peace of mind for both parents and students.

For UC SHIP members, the Student Health Center (SHC) is their primary care provider. Primary care providers and specialists at the Student Health Center will administer treatment and/or, if necessary, they will generate a referral for the student to receive additional services in the community or be seen by a specialist in the community if those services are not offered at SHC. Please note that, under the terms of the UC SHIP plan, students must first obtain a referral authorization from a Student Health Center primary care provider BEFORE seeking treatment from a non-SHC provider in the community. If a referral authorization is not obtained in advance, then the claim will be denied. Exceptions to the referral requirement are listed below in the section entitled ["How To Use SHIP"](http://www.shs.uci.edu/Health_Insurance_Privacy/Insurance.aspx#HowToUse).

Your insurance is in effect as of the first day of the fall quarter, providing your fees have been paid and you are enrolled. Insurance premiums are paid in Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters only. Paying fees and enrolling in Spring quarter will extend insurance through Summer until the beginning of the subsequent academic year.

Emergency Preparedness

<https://www.ehs.uci.edu/>

Advanced planning is your best protection and your responsibility; forethought and preparation prevent panic. Please get to know the plans and procedures for your location on the UCI campus and remain safe at all times. To view a brief overview video about emergency preparedness on the UCI campus, please click here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVRBM2ak7SM&feature=emb_title>.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

UCI Police Department 9-1-1 on campus (non-emergency 949-824-5223)

Environmental Health & Safety 949-824-6200 [safety@uci.edu](mailto:safety@uci.edu)

Facilities Management 949-824-5444 [fmavc@uci.edu](mailto:fmavc@uci.edu)

Newport Urgent Care 949-752-6300

Student Health Center (First Aid Only) 949-824-5304

At Work

* Know who the Floor Warden and Building Coordinator are and what they expect of you in a disaster.
* During an earthquake, move to a clear area (if safe to do so). Avoid falling hazards. If inside, drop down to the floor and take cover under a desk or table. Protect your head and neck with your arms.
* When safe, evacuate the building. If you detect the odor of gas or any other unusual odors, do not use matches or candles. Do not use elevators, unless directed to do so. Use the stairs if available.
* Move cautiously and observe surrounding hazards.
* Assist the disabled if willing and able.
* Assemble at your pre-determined meeting point.
* Report any problems to your Floor Warden or Building Coordinator.
* Sign up for zotALERT <https://www.oit.uci.edu/zotalert/> or tune in to local radio stations for information and reports.
* Know your assembly area based on your location on campus

In Laboratories

* Ensure all UCLC (UC Learning Center) <https://uclc.uci.edu> training has been completed.
* Know the location of emergency exits, eyewash and safety showers, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers.
* Securely anchor items that could present a hazard during an earthquake, such as heavy equipment, furnishings, chemicals, and gas cylinders. Contact your school coordinator or facilities for more information.
* A two-chain securing device (i.e., chains at the top and bottom 1/3 portions) must secure gas cylinders at all times. Experience shows that the force of moving gas cylinders can easily snap a single twisted chain or strap. Anchor to a permanent building wall or fixture.
* Make sure all chemicals are stored properly on shelves equipped with lips or seismic restraining brackets, cords or in cabinets with positive latching doors. "Bungee" cords stretched across the front of chemical shelves are an effective means of restraining bottles that do not have lips.
* Separate acids (inorganic vs organic) and bases to an extent that will reduce the likelihood of their mixing if spillage occurs in a seismic event.
* Move heavy overhead storage to a lower level below eyesight. Leave an 18” ceiling clearance when stacking boxes/materials.
* Store liquid flammables in flammable cabinets and away from ignition sources (combustibles, oxidizers, heat etc.)
* Secure experimental apparatus firmly to racks or other stabilized hardware.
* Fire can contribute to as much loss of life and property as ground-motion. The above measures pertaining to chemical storage and gas cylinders can markedly reduce the risk of fire or explosion. In addition, make it a safety practice to affix sources of open flames against seismic tip over. (Building Coordinators can provide advice and assistance in this regard.)
* During floods, stay away from electrical sources, cover essential equipment if able with plastic tarps, do not go back into a flooded area due to risk of electric shock, slipping/tripping, or having items fall on you.
* Hold meetings periodically with your Floor Wardens, Building Coordinators, and Zone Captains to discuss emergency procedures and the course of action during emergencies.

Other Sources of Information

* The UCI Environmental Health & Safety Office coordinates campus training programs for disaster preparedness (<http://www.ehs.uci.edu/>).
* UCI Emergency Preparedness Procedures <https://www.police.uci.edu/emergency-mgmt/>
* UCI Medical Treatment Form <https://www.ehs.uci.edu/research-safety/occupational-health/_pdf/med-emergency-poster.pdf>

School of Biological Sciences & UCI Academic Policies

STATEMENT OF SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES POLICY FOR TA APPOINTMENTS

The school policy is that an exception to the 3.1 GPA criterion may be requested for a student that is in good academic standing and has a GPA greater than 3.0. Exceptions for students with a G.P.A. of less than 3.0 or who are otherwise not in good academic standing are not recommended and will not be approved within the school. A letter of exception is a formal statement the department considers the student in good standing and eligible to serve as a TA. If the School finds itself in a position to request that the student be dismissed from the graduate program, the credibility of the dismissal case has been weakened with a statement from the school that the student is in good standing. All requests for an exception to the GPA policy must be approved by Associate Dean Mulligan, prior to submission to Graduate Division for consideration. Exceptions may only be approved by the Graduate Division. Please see [Employment - UCI Graduate Division](https://grad.uci.edu/funding/employment/) for more information.

TA Appointment

For appointment as a Teaching Assistant, graduate students must be enrolled in a full-time program of study and making satisfactory academic progress. No student is permitted to begin an appointment who has not met all the applicable academic criteria as listed below. For more information, please visit [UCI Graduate Division Policies and Procedures.](https://grad.uci.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Graduate-Policies-and-Procedures-edited-5.30.2023.pdf)

For new and continuing graduate students:

1) Enrollment in at least 12 units during the current quarter (i.e., the academic quarter in which the teaching appointment occurs).

2) Combined campus-wide employment of 50 percent time (220 hours of assigned workload) or less during any academic quarter.

For continuing graduate students:

3) During each of the three most recent quarters of enrollment:

• Completion of 8 units or more of upper division or graduate level credit courses.

• A letter grade of C, S, or above in all courses completed.

• No more than two incomplete (I) grades except where stricter school policies apply, as indicated below:

• A cumulative GPA of 3.1 or higher in those courses where a letter grade (A through F) was received.

STATEMENT OF SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES POLICY FOR GSR APPOINTMENTS

The school policy is that an exception to the 3.0 GPA criterion or other academic probation may be requested for a student for one quarter. A student is expected to remove any academic deficiency during the subsequent academic quarter. If the deficiency requires re-taking a class that is only offered once per year, the thesis advisor is expected to submit a letter stating that the student is making satisfactory academic progress. All requests for an exception to the GPA policy must be approved by Associate Dean Walsh, prior to submission to Graduate Division for consideration. Exceptions may only be approved by the Graduate Division. Please see [Employment - UCI Graduate Division](https://grad.uci.edu/funding/employment/) for more information.

GSR Appointment

Appointment as a Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) or Graduate Student Associate Researcher (GSAR) in combination with other campus-wide employment may not exceed 50% of the time during any academic quarter. Between academic year sessions (quarters) and during the summer recess, appointments may not exceed 100% of the time. No student is permitted to begin an appointment who has not met all the applicable academic criteria as listed below. Please see [Academic Student Employees & Graduate Student Researchers – Academic Personnel (uci.edu)](https://ap.uci.edu/ase/) for most updated information.

For new and continuing graduate students:

1. Satisfactory academic progress toward the degree objective.
2. Enrollment in at least 12 units during the current quarter.
3. Combined campus-wide employment of no more than 50 percent time (220 hours of assigned workload) or less during any academic quarter without exceptional approval.
4. During each of the three most recent quarters of enrollment:
   1. Completion of 8 units or more of upper division or graduate level credit courses.
   2. A letter grade of C, S, or above in all courses completed.
   3. No more than two incomplete (I) grades except where stricter school policies apply, as indicated below:
   4. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in those courses where a letter grade (A through F) was received.

School and Campus Reporting Requirements

**Every Year:** Annual faculty committee/Thesis committee meeting. Completion of IDP.

**Year 3:** Advancement to Candidacy Exam (PhD Form I)

**Year 5 (6/7):** Pre-defense and Thesis Defense (PhD form II)

**Caution: The maximum time to degree is 7 years or 21 quarters.**

NEUROBIOLOGY & BEHAVIOR GRADUATE PROGRAM

Communicating with your graduate mentor

Although most graduate students complete their research under the supervision of a mentor without significant misunderstandings or disputes, serious disagreements can arise if you and your advisor do not effectively communicate. There are several strategies to use to proactively ensure that you and your advisor have well-defined and consistent expectations for graduate work. While individual student-mentor styles vary, here is some information that you should keep in mind to minimize misunderstandings. A good rule of thumb is that the more transparent and organized you are, the less likely you are to encounter misunderstandings with your mentor.

Time away from lab:Keep in mind that your role as a graduate student encompasses both paid employment *and* scholarship (work at the bench, journal clubs, seminars, data analysis, writing papers). These roles intersect in our field, but both satisfactory performance as an employee, and satisfactory progress on your academic research toward degree requirements are required. You should stay in close communication with your PI about your schedule throughout your graduate career, and make sure they are aware when you are requesting time off and time away from your academic pursuits.

Weekly updates on research progress:

It is often helpful for you to take some time to briefly record the following information at the beginning of each week in a 1–2-page document.

What did you do last week?

[*I did a western blot on cell lysates from kinase inhibitor-treated and control samples, stained other samples for flow cytometry and digested 20 minipreps to identify three plasmids which had my insert in the correct orientatio*n.]

What worked and what is your conclusion from these data?

[*My western blot data indicates that treatment with the kinase inhibitor does not reduce protein phosphorylation, although I would like to repeat this experiment.*]

What did not work and what will you try next?

[*My antibody staining didn’t work; my positive control was negative so I will try a longer incubation with a fresh set of samples to make certain that the antibody works*.]

What papers have you read and what interesting information have you learned?

This weekly document is distinct from your detailed research notebook and provides an on-going narrative and summary of your efforts each week. You may wish to email this document to your advisor or print it out for a weekly one-on-one meeting. By filing these weekly reports in sequence, you have a clear record of your research activity over time. This is useful for gathering data for writing papers or deciding with your advisor that an approach or reagent is not going to work as planned.

Meetings: It is often the case that students who are having difficulties with their project and/or advisor are reluctant to schedule regular, required meetings with their committee. The meeting should not be put off if you do not have “enough data” – having problems with the research project and/or communication with your mentor are key reasons to schedule a committee meeting to get a larger group of scientists thinking about your project.

Difficulties communicating with your mentor:

You may begin by talking with the NBB graduate advisor (Stephen Mahler), the Biological Sciences Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (Craig Walsh) or the Graduate Division counselor (Phong Luong) to plan how to approach resolving your specific problem. Problems requiring higher level mediation may involve the help of the Ombudsman's offices and/or OEOD (Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity) at UC Irvine. The Office of the Ombudsman is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource to talk about concerns, explore options, and make informed decisions to reach equitable and fair resolutions. The UCI Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (OEOD) is responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and University policies and procedures regarding discrimination, retaliation, sexual harassment, and sex offenses. OEOD works to promote and integrate the principles of equal opportunity, affirmative action, nondiscrimination, and inclusive excellence at UCI.

Plan to Implement Graduate Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Program Overview

**Neurobiology & Behavior** **Ph.D. Program**

The departmental degree requirements include: (1) required coursework; (2) teaching assistantship; (3) developing and executing a successful thesis research project; (4) meetings with faculty committees, including pre-advancement, advancement, and annual committee meetings; (5) participation in research in progress talks and departmental retreat; (6) preparation and presentation of the dissertation.

Required Coursework

In the first year, directly admitted students, or those entering through the INP with intention to join Neurobiology & Behavior must enroll in the first-year core courses: Molecular Neuroscience, Cellular Neuroscience, Cellular Neuroscience Lab, Systems Neuroscience, and Behavioral Neuroscience. These selections meet core requirements for all participating Programs and provide a broad base of knowledge to prepare students for successful contributions in Neuroscience. In conjunction with these courses, students build on core knowledge in the course Foundations in Neuroscience, which highlights ongoing faculty research. Students are also required to take Responsible Conduct of Research, which highlights the best ethical practices in all aspects of research.

Students who enter through other gateway programs are similarly required to satisfy all requirements of that program and will generally be required to take all of the NB&B core courses during their second year; although an exception may be granted by the Graduate Advisor to substitute one or more core courses taken in that program.

Students are encouraged to satisfactorily complete at least two advanced graduate courses before advancing to candidacy and are required to complete at least four before the dissertation defense. These classes must be taken for a letter grade, not on an S/U basis, to count toward the required minimum of four advanced classes. With the consent (via email) of the graduate advisor, graduate courses from other departments may satisfy part of this requirement if they are not primarily introductory or technically oriented.

Students should begin taking advanced courses in their second year and are strongly encouraged to enroll in NB257 (Statistics and experimental Design) in Fall quarter of their second year or, with the approval of the graduate advisor, in an equivalent statistics class offered by another department. This class counts toward the required minimum of four advanced classes.

Academic Evaluation: Students are expected to have an overall GPA of 3.3 or higher by the end of the first year and to have met all the requirements of the gateway program in which they are enrolled. The Graduate Division requires graduate students to have a GPA of 3.1 or higher to serve as TAs. At the graduate level, a grade of B (3.0) indicates satisfactory performance. Students with a B- grade in a single core class may be granted an exception to enter the NB&B graduate program but are placed on conditional academic status and are required to retake that class and obtain a passing grade (B or higher). Students on conditional academic status are also expected to exceed the department’s basic expectations in their regular work while making up for earlier deficiencies. To continue in the program, students must have an overall GPA of ≥ 3.3 and have satisfactorily made up any core course deficiency.

Students obtaining B- grades in two classes, or a grade of C+ or below in a single class during their first year will not be permitted to enter or continue in the NB&B program until the deficiency is remedied.

Teaching Requirement

The policy of the School of Biological Science is that graduate students TA a minimum of two quarters at 50% time before they graduate. This total can be reached using up to four 25% TA assignments, as needed.

The Department of Neurobiology and Behavior implements this requirement partly by having students support the undergraduate neurobiology laboratory, N113L. The requirement is as follows (details may change depending on graduate class size and department needs):

Second year at UCI - either Winter or Spring: 50% TA: teaching N113L at 25% and grading N113L at 25%.

In addition to N113L (as described above), students must also TA an additional quarter at 50% (or two quarters at 25%) before they can graduate (as per School policy). =

A 50% TA appointment corresponds to 20 hours per week over the course of the quarter. Typically, students will be required to fulfill their teaching obligations during their second and third years. Some students, particularly those on training grants, may do 2 quarters of 25% TAing in place of 1 quarter at 50%.

Research Rotations and Thesis Research

Students typically join the department at the start of their second year in graduate school, after the first year being in INP, though students may also be directly admitted to N&B. INP students complete three research rotations, and directly admitted students conduct research in the sponsoring mentor’s lab. During a student’s second year, they will, with their advisor, identify an interesting, tractable research problem, resulting in a thesis over the following 3–4-year period. Over the next several years the student, with the help of mentoring from their thesis advisor, will then work towards (1) developing the knowledge, technical, and critical thinking skills necessary to successfully complete the proposed project; (2) gathering and analyzing the data necessary to complete the proposed project; (3) gaining the scientific communication skills that allow them to effectively convey the results of their findings in both oral presentations at informal and formal meetings; and in written documents in the form of abstracts, papers, and grant applications.

Advancement to Candidacy

Before the end of the spring quarter of the third year, students are expected to write an advancement document that includes 1) a critical review of the literature in the area in which they plan to do their dissertation and 2) a proposal presenting plans for the dissertation research. Although it is good to have preliminary data to include, this is not a strict requirement. The scope of this document will depend on the research area, and students generally consult with their research advisor and committee members to determine an appropriate range of topics.

Students are expected to present this work to their Advancement Committee and to take the advancement to candidacy exam. The area defined by the review and proposal provides a focus for much of the oral exam, but candidates are expected to be able to discuss issues and answer questions in the broader domain of neurobiology and behavior. Details on the format for preparing the review and proposal are available from the graduate advisor, and examples of previous advancement documents can be obtained from the [Graduate Student Portal](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/graduate-programs/graduate-student-portal/). The advancement document should be distributed to the committee at least a week before the exam.

Advancing to candidacy in the spring of the third year gives students two years to complete their Ph.D. within the department's expected time-to-degree of five years. Students for whom a second exam must be scheduled are expected to pass it by the end of the next quarter. Students may advance to candidacy well before the deadline indicated, but those that have not met the deadline will not be considered to be making normal progress to the Ph.D.

The advancement committee, which must be approved in advance by the Graduate Advisor, generally consists of your research advisor, three additional Neurobiology and Behavior faculty members and one “outside” member, for a total of five. The committee must have a minimum of three Neurobiology and Behavior faculty.

Meetings with Faculty Committees

Students will meet with faculty committees at many key points in the Ph.D. program. At the start of their second year, they meet informally with a small group of 3-4 faculty to discuss their research project (second year meeting). In their 3rd year, they will form a committee of 5 faculty members that will serve as their Pre-Advancement Committee and as their Advancement to Candidacy Committee.

Yearly Committee Meetings with a student’s Thesis Committee are a department-level requirement. These meetings must be held at least once a year, every year between advancement and graduation. The goal of these meetings is to provide input and feedback on the student’s thesis progress and future plans, and to allow them to obtain approval for any proposed changes in direction. Students are required to make an oral presentation (with slides) of their research progress and future plans. After each meeting, the student will provide an Individual Development Plan (IDP), completed with the mentor, for review by the dissertation committee.

Professional Development

* 1. Oral presentation skills: All graduate students present a departmental “Neuroblitz” talk once a year, in front of other students and faculty. Students generally also present at journal clubs organized by department-affiliated Centers including the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory, Institute for Memory Impairments and Neurological Disorders, and the Irvine Center for Addiction Neuroscience.
  2. Pedagogy training: Students also have the opportunity to participate in teaching pedagogy activities including the UCI- HHMI teaching fellows program which provides training in use of evidence-based teaching practices, the GK-12 program which provides training in teaching science in secondary schools, and the Pedagogical Fellows program which trains experienced TAs to provide discipline specific training and mentorship to new TAs.
  3. Leadership training: The graduate student organization within the Department elects two representatives to serve as faculty liason, attending monthly faculty meetings, and providing input on a broad range of issues. Two graduate students are also elected to the speaker selection committee responsible for inviting and hosting 1-3 seminar speakers/year.

Thesis Defense

The Thesis Defense is a requirement of the UCI Academic Senate. Students must submit a written Ph.D. dissertation and then defend their thesis by providing a formal 1-hour seminar open to the public, followed by a closed committee meeting.

It is expected that a student receiving a Ph.D. in the department of Neurobiology & Behavior will be able to present and describe a significant body of work that they have been primarily responsible for, with regard to the formulation of the experiments, the acquisition and interpretation of the data, and the writing of a manuscript(s). It is also expected that this work will constitute a novel contribution to the body of scientific knowledge, usually suitable for publication as research articles in one or more peer-reviewed journals.

For PhD students, the normative time for advancement to candidacy is three years. The normative time for completion of the PhD is five years, and the maximum time permitted is seven years.

Program Learning Outcomes

***PLO1: Core Knowledge***

* Demonstrate a basic knowledge of central concepts of Neurobiology & Behavior
* Understand current and emerging concepts in Neurobiology & Behavior.
* Demonstrate specialized knowledge of Neurobiology & Behavior sufficient to carry out substantive independent research.

***PLO2: Research Methods and Analysis***

* Read and critically evaluate the scientific literature
* Formulate hypotheses based on current concepts in the field
* Design, conduct, and interpret their own research projects.
* Understand the range of tools appropriate for research in their sub-field.
* Understand and follow research ethics

***PLO3: Pedagogy:***

* Communicate effectively to large and small groups in pedagogical settings including teaching, research seminar and other formats
* Identify and effectively deploy suitable technologies for use in all aspects of instruction

***PLO4: Scholarly Communication:***

* Review and discuss relevant literature and their significance.
* Publish research results in peer-reviewed publications and in a dissertation
* communicate research results effectively through oral presentations at scientific seminars, conferences, and other venues
* Make clear and cogent oral presentations, including effective use of technology

***PLO5: Professionalism***

* Write compelling abstracts describing their research for consideration at research conferences
* Prepare oral presentations suitable for presentation at a research conference
* Make effective contributions to research teams and learning seminars.
* Make effective contributions to department, university, community, and professional service
* Mentor junior researchers (e.g., undergraduates, beginning graduate students)

***PLO6: Independent Research***

* Develop their own research projects that meet high standards of theoretical and methodological rigor with lasting impact
* Produce scholarship that is comparable in scope and format to articles that appear in leading peer-reviewed journals in molecular and biomedical sciences
* Supervise junior researchers (e.g., high school students, undergraduates, beginning graduate students) effectively

Evaluating Program Learning Outcomes

The Department of Neurobiology & Behavior is constantly evaluating its performance based on several streams of data. We evaluate student perceptions at the end of the first year, and via an exit survey at degree completion. These metrics are interpreted by the Assistant Graduate Dean, and the Department Graduate Advisor, and changes are recommended by then when necessary. The Graduate Advisor also tracks and records student progress yearly in a departmental faculty meeting and evaluates the required yearly IDPs (Individual Development Plan) from each student. We use findings from these evaluations and progress reports to identify programmatic problems and address them, and to contact and intervene with students having trouble, giving advice, and directing them toward appropriate resources. Students failing to meet department expectations as outlined above are put on conditional academic status, and close monitoring of their plan toward advancement/graduation is implemented.

CORE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Molecular Neuroscience N206
2. Cellular Neuroscience N207
3. Systems Neuroscience N208
4. Behavioral Neuroscience N209

Policy on Annual Graduate Student Advising

Pre-Advancement

A faculty committee that includes the student’s advisor and at least two other departmental faculty members will meet annually with each graduate student at the end of the first year. Other faculty, who need not be members of the department, can be included on an *ad hoc* basis in addition to the three-department faculty. The pre-advancement meetings ensure that the student is aware of, and is meeting, degree requirements and expectations promptly. Note that the purpose of these meetings is NOT to evaluate the student’s research or progress towards identifying a research topic, although such issues can be discussed. In addition, these meetings provide the opportunity to advise students on research opportunities, professional development, and scholarship and fellowship opportunities. A meeting report will be added to the student’s academic file after each meeting.

Advancement to Candidacy

Graduate students are expected to advance by the end of the third year. The Advancement committee may or may not include the same faculty as the Pre-Advancement committee (see above or contact the Graduate Advisor for details on the Advancement committee).

Post-Advancement

Students are expected to meet at least once each year with a thesis committee consisting of their advisor and at least two other department faculty members. At each meeting, the student and the committee will discuss recent progress, remaining objectives, and a timetable for completion of the doctoral thesis. A meeting report will be added to the student's academic file after each meeting.

The standardized School form (below) may be modified by individual departments to suit their needs; however, forms must include all information on the standard form.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

UCI's Graduate Council adopted a plan requiring all graduate students to complete an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) and to discuss it with their faculty research advisor in a one-on-one meeting. This process must be completed every academic year. IDPs are an excellent tool to help you develop as an independent scientist. They also help your advisor to better mentor you along this journey. You may find an example of the IDP on your [Graduate Student Portal](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/graduate-programs/graduate-student-portal/).

Graduate Program in Neurobiology and Behavior

[Ph.D. Degree requirements 2023-2024](https://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofbiologicalsciences/departmentofneurobiologyandbehavior/neurobiologyandbehavior_gradprogram/" \l "requirementstext)

A minimum of five courses are required to be taken during the first year of graduate studies and maintain an overall GPA at 3.3 or better.

Graduate students must participate in direct research each year:

**• NEURBIO 201A. Research in Neurobiology and Behavior. 2-12 Units. (first year)**

**• NEURBIO 200 (A,B,C) series. Research in Neurobiology and Behavior. 2-12 Units (second year and above)**

Students who enter the program through the Gateway Program are required to take NEURBIO 202A. All courses must be completed with a grade of at least ‘B’ in each course. All students are required to serve as Teaching Assistants for a minimum of two quarters at 50%. The normative time for completion of the Ph.D. is five years and the maximum time permitted is seven years.

Graduate Students also must take a minimum of four advanced courses before graduation. The list of acceptable graduate courses can be found on the [UCI Catalogue](https://catalogue.uci.edu/allcourses/neurbio/). To see when these courses are offered, please see The Teaching Plan on your [Graduate Student Portal](https://neurobiology.uci.edu/graduate-programs/graduate-student-portal/). Students can take graduate courses outside the department if approved by the Graduate Advisor.