

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Advising and First-Year Curriculum

New graduate students have a common fall semester curriculum. In addition, they will begin a series of research lab rotations. Courses taken in the spring semester depend on the degree sought, and students can discuss an appropriate course schedule with the Graduate Director, Graduate Academic Advisor, and any member of the MB faculty. To guide your progress in the first year, your course work, teaching, and laboratory rotations will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee. Once you have selected a lab for your dissertation research, your Major Advisor will advise you on your progress.

B. Laboratory Rotations and Finding a Research Lab Home

We will schedule in-person or virtual faculty talks so you can learn more about research that piques your interest. Lab rotations will span fall and early spring, each being about nine weeks long. The rotation calendar can be found in Teams.

To reflect lab rotations, you will enroll in Advanced Study (**BIOL 985**) hours for fall and spring of your first year.

Completion of Rotations – Once lab rotations are complete, you will submit to the Graduate Academic Advisor a ranked list of faculty members with whom you would like to work. Every effort will be made to allow you to join your first-choice lab, although there must be mutual agreement between the student and faculty member. This mutual agreement will depend on your effort and performance during the rotation, the availability of continued financial support, the availability of space within the lab, and so on. If the first choice cannot be fulfilled, the second choice will be examined under the same constraints. Once a mutual agreement has been reached, new students will officially join research labs. The faculty member in charge of the lab will become your Major Advisor. Your Major Advisor will help advise you in selection of the best degree track to pursue. This decision is usually made by the beginning of your second year of study.

In rare instances a situation may arise such that you, your Major Advisor, or both desire a change in Major Advisor. Because it is a requirement that you have a Major Advisor and home lab in order to be a graduate student in good standing, we have a rather detailed [official policy](#) on this.

C. Enrollment Requirements

KU has [on-line enrollment](#). The Department of Molecular Biosciences has established a minimum credit hour level of enrollment that is appropriate for normal progress (i.e., course work and research effort) and which is representative of faculty time required for a student's work towards an advanced degree. These requirements will equal and may exceed the minimum credit hour enrollment limit set by Graduate Studies. Departmental enrollment requirements are as follows:

1. PhD Enrollment Hours: Pre-Comprehensive Oral

Students who have not yet passed the Comprehensive Oral Exam are expected to enroll in at least **6** credit hours each fall and spring semester and **3** credit hours each summer session.

2. PhD Enrollment Hours: 18-Hour Post-Comp Rule

After passing the Comprehensive Oral Exam, you must be continuously enrolled, including summer sessions, until all degree requirements are completed. According to Graduate Studies regulations, for the first 18 hours of post-comprehensive enrollment, you will enroll in a minimum of **6** credit hours per semester and **3** credit hours per summer session. You are welcome to enroll in more than 6 if you so choose. **Be sure that you enroll in BIOL 999 for the remainder of your studies.**

3. PhD Enrollment Hours: Fewer Than 6 Rule

Students who have completed the 18-Hour Post-Comp requirement are now eligible to enroll in **fewer than 6 hours**. The Graduate Academic Advisor will let you know when this milestone has been achieved.

4. MS Enrollment Hours:

Master's students with a 50% payroll appointment are required to enroll in **6** hours each fall and spring semester. Without a payroll appointment, **9** hours is the requirement. Those who have completed the required course work for their degrees must be continuously enrolled in the fall and spring semesters until they finish. While Graduate Studies does not require MS students to enroll for summer, if you have a GRA appointment for the summer, the Provost's Office requires that you enroll in **3** summer hours.

D. Academic Performance

Grading Systems - Graduate courses use the ABCDFP grading system or the SP, LP, NP performance criteria (SP = satisfactory progress, LP = limited progress, and NP = no progress). Advanced study, thesis, and dissertation research courses are graded with the latter.

Academic Standing - Only grades of **A** or **B** in graduate courses are considered satisfactory. If a grade of **C** or below is obtained, you will not receive graduate credit for this course and **the course must be retaken**. If your cumulative grade-point average falls below **B** (3.0 on a 4.0 scale), you are automatically placed on academic probation and will be required to raise your cumulative grade-point average to at least a **B** during the next semester. Grades such as **P, S, U, SP, LP, and NP** are omitted from these calculations. Failure to meet this requirement may result in termination of your graduate studies. In exceptional cases, the Graduate Admissions Committee (during your first year) or your

Major Advisor and examination/advisory committee (once you have chosen your dissertation lab) can request that Graduate Studies extend your probation for one additional semester, after which time the minimum standards must be met. Regardless of these decisions, you will not be allowed to hold a GTA or GRA appointment until probationary status has been removed.

Probationary Students: Students who enter the program on probation (an undergraduate overall grade-point-average between 2.75 and 3.0) must maintain a **B** (3.0) cumulative grade point average their first semester. Any student who fails to meet this requirement will not be allowed to enroll the next semester. Alternatively, upon recommendation by the Graduate Admissions Committee the Chairperson may request of Graduate Studies that probation be extended for one additional semester. If, after the second semester, a student who was originally admitted under probationary status fails to maintain a **B** (3.0) cumulative grade point average, the student will be dismissed from the graduate program.

E. Graduate Assistantships

If you are a student in good standing, the department will provide a stipend for five years of graduate study. Unless you receive a graduate fellowship, you will be supported by the following mechanisms:

Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs): GTAs are provided on a semester-by-semester basis. Students holding these appointments will make arrangements with their Major Advisor for summer appointments. The specific GTA is set by departmental requirements and expertise of the student.

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs): Individual faculty may have Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) available from grant funds. GRAs are appointed for one or two semesters at a time.

F. Health Insurance

The University of Kansas, together with the Kansas Board of Regents, offers health insurance coverage for eligible graduate students through United Healthcare Student Resources. MB graduate students who hold a 50% GTA/GRA appointment and meet the eligibility requirements qualify for [KU's reduced premium health insurance plan](#) offered through United Healthcare. Health insurance is mandatory for international students on an F-1, F-2 and J-1 visa and is automatically added after the student enrolls in classes. For more information visit the International Support Services webpage on [Insurance Requirements](#). Students enrolled in a graduate student health insurance plan should check the policy's terms of eligibility and enroll accordingly.

G. Tuition and Fees

If you hold a GTA slot, the University will pay all your tuition plus 3 graduate credit hours of campus fees. *Please be aware that you or your Major Advisor will be responsible for the balance of your campus fees.*

If you hold a GRA slot, your Major Advisor is responsible for paying your tuition and fees. Please be sure to consult with your Major Advisor in advance of payment deadlines.

H. Teaching

Teaching is a necessary component of an advanced degree education. PhD graduate students are required to teach for at least two semesters. This requirement may be satisfied at any time during your tenure but is usually fulfilled during the first year. You will be evaluated by the students in every class you teach. MS students may be required to teach for the duration of time in the graduate program.

I. Graduate Committees

It is your responsibility, in consultation with your Major Advisor, to identify faculty members to serve on your graduate committees following the rules outlined below. The Graduate Academic Advisor should always be notified when a committee is formed or changed.

Mandatory Annual Meetings: Annual committee meetings are mandatory, and you are responsible for scheduling a committee meeting once each year. Failure to satisfy this requirement may lead to you being considered [not in good academic standing](#) by the department. Following each committee meeting, a completed, signed [Annual Report Form](#) should be provided to the Graduate Academic Advisor.

Doctoral Students: PhD students should establish an examination/advisory committee as early as practicable at the start of their second academic year. A typical committee will consist of:

- Your Major Advisor
- Four tenured/tenure-track faculty from Molecular Biosciences
- A Graduate Studies Representative (informally known as the "outside member")

At least five committee members must be present for the comprehensive oral exam (the exam typically taken at the end of the second academic year) and for the final oral exam (the PhD defense). For each exam, one of these members must be the Graduate Studies Representative.

Your Major Advisor is the Chair of the doctoral examination/advisory committee *except during progress towards the comprehensive oral exam*. In Molecular Biosciences the Major Advisor does not attend the comprehensive oral exam; instead, the Chair of the committee for the comprehensive oral exam will be selected by its members.

The Graduate Studies Representative must be a tenured/tenure-track faculty member from a department other than Molecular Biosciences. The role of the Graduate Studies Representative is to ensure the examination process is [professional and fair](#). Additionally, the Graduate Studies Representative can be on the faculty of [KU Medical Center](#).

Additional information on requirements for a doctoral committee can be found in the [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#) KU policy document, or you can speak with the MB Director of Graduate Studies or the MB Graduate Academic Advisor.

Master's Students: MA/MS students should establish an examination/advisory committee as soon as possible after entry to the master's program. MA/MS student oral exam committees should include at least three members, one of whom will be your Major Advisor. Most of the committee should be tenured/tenure-track faculty from Molecular Biosciences. No Graduate Studies Representative is required.

J. Progress to Degree Forms

The Progress to Degree form (PTD) enables the University to track and collect vital information about students' progress to degree. Upon receiving information from you, the Graduate Academic Advisor will complete the necessary PTD form and forward it to the College for approval. Thus, it is very important that you contact the Graduate Academic Advisor when you do **ANY** of the following: **change degree status, form a committee, hold a committee meeting, schedule an exam, schedule a seminar, schedule a defense, or change degree program**. If you are not sure about something, please check with the Graduate Academic Advisor.

K. Seminars

All graduate students will be expected to attend the weekly Departmental Seminar. These are generally speakers from outside the University. It is scheduled every **Monday at 3:30 p.m. in 1005 Haworth Hall** (unless otherwise noted).

After your first year, all graduate students will also be required to attend and enroll in ONE of the following specialized seminars:

BIOL 701 – Cellular and Molecular Proteins (CaMP)

BIOL 905 – Genetics of Development (GoD)

L. Website

We maintain a departmental [website](#) where news is posted monthly. We are proud of our students and we want to showcase them so anytime you have an update to [your profile](#), please let the Graduate Academic Advisor know.