

# NEUROSCIENCE PROGRAM ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE

## 1. Academic Requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Neuroscience

Note: General requirements of the University of Utah Graduate School concerning residency, grading policies, supervisory committees, qualifying examinations, the dissertation and the final examination may be found in the University of Utah General Catalogue <https://catalog.utah.edu/#/home>

### 2.1 Completion of the Core Program in Neuroscience

#### 2.1.1 Required Courses (students entering 2023 and later)

Course	Course Title	Credits
NEUSC 6040	Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience	4
NEUSC 6050	Principles of Systems Neuroscience	4
NEUSC 7750	Developmental Neurobiology	1.5
NEUSC 6900	Neuroscience Rotations 3 times (half- semesters)	1 x 3
NEUSC 6250	Molecular Biology Laboratory	1
NEUSC 6245	Neurophysiology Laboratory	1
MBIOL 6200	Critical Thinking	2
MBIOL 6300	Proposal Preparation	2
MBIOL 7570	Research Ethics	1
MBIOL 6490	Intro to Biostats and Probability for Biosciences	2

#### 2.1.2 Recommended Seminar/Journal club Courses

Neurobiology	Research in Progress	N/A
NEUSC 6030	Behavioral Neurosci Journal Club	1
NEUSC 7920	Quantitative Methods in Neuroscience	1

**2.1.3 Advanced Didactic Training- required elective courses:** At least 4.5 graded, graduate level credit hours of coursework and 2 credits hours of ungraded journal clubs/seminar courses are required. The student's supervisory committee is expected to provide guidance and advise student of best choices for elective course compatible with the student's area of research.

**2.2 Petitioning for transfer of credit:** If a student enters the program having taken a graduate level course that has substantial overlap with a required Neuroscience course, they may petition the Neuroscience program for a course waiver. To petition for a course waiver, students should send the Curriculum Chair the following information: the institution at which they took the course, a course syllabus, and the grade they received. Elective course waivers are unlikely to be granted. Ethics and proposal preparation courses will not be waived. <https://gradschool.utah.edu/navigating-grad-school/graduate-policies/credit.php>

## 2.3 Qualifying Examination

### 2.4 Dissertation Research: 20 hours of thesis research (graded)

**2.5 Student research presentations:** Predoctoral students in the Program are required to give at least two public research talks based prior to their dissertation defense. Students must receive formal written feedback from two Neuroscience Program faculty for each presentation. An evaluation form can be found on the website. Students can fill this requirement at many venues such as the Snowbird Symposium, a T32 or student retreat, department RIPs, department seminar series, special lecture opportunities on campus, and research interest groups. Students can also fill this requirement at National or International conferences. If two Neuroscience Faculty will not be in attendance, the student should email the NP curriculum chair for pre-approval to receive feedback from outside faculty. The student is responsible for enlisting the faculty who will give the feedback and for submitting copies of the evaluations to the Program office for their files. \*TIP: When the talk is at an event with many neuroscience faculty expected, the easiest way to fill the requirement is to bring two copies of the evaluation form to the event and ask faculty that are in attendance to do the evaluation. This is easier than lining up specific faculty ahead of time.

**2.6 Lecturing requirement for PhD students (optional for cohorts 2024 and beyond):** All PhD students must fulfill a minimal requirement for lecturing by the end of their 4th year. There must be a didactic teaching component (i.e., give one lecture to an undergraduate- or graduate-level class in the field of neuroscience or a closely related field). The lecture content must include at least a reasonable amount of new or revised material prepared by the student. For example, although some lecture slides may be taken from a previous lecture by another person, at least 1/3 of the lecture slides should be effectively new or substantially revised, to provide the student with experience in developing as well as presenting material. Credit for borrowed slides shall be explicitly indicated. Further, the student cannot simply serve as an assistant to the course director, conduct office hours, or grade papers or exams (this type of work would fill the TA requirement but not the lecture requirement).

To fill the lecture requirement, the student (with input from their mentor and Supervisory Committee) must submit a brief (~1 paragraph) proposal via email for approval by the Curriculum Chair at least 1 month before the date of the lecture. The proposal must communicate how the requirements will be met by including the lecture topic, course, and identify the faculty mentor who will provide written feedback.

After lecturing, there must be written feedback from a faculty member, such as the course instructor. This should be provided to the student, Curriculum Chair, and Program Administrator. As indicated in item 1 above, the student should ensure in advance that the selected faculty member understands and has agreed to their role in this process. The faculty member's written feedback must 1) explicitly indicate whether or not the quality of the lecture was sufficient or insufficient to satisfy the program requirement; 2) describe potential strengths, weaknesses and areas for future improvement; and 3) provide concrete examples of instances in which the student has succeeded or failed. Instructors often also provide verbal feedback on student's proposed lecture materials and/or practice presentation in advance of the lecture, and after the lecture. The student should communicate a summary of their teaching feedback to their research mentor and Supervisory Committee at the next scheduled committee meeting.

If interested, students can gain significantly more teaching experience through the Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence (CTLE) - <http://www.ctle.utah.edu/>

**2.7 Teaching Assistant (TA) requirement:** A Teaching Assistant (TA) requirement will be required for all students entering fall 2021 or later. TA-ing at least one half-semester course should be completed by the end of the fourth year. The student must negotiate all TA-ships with their faculty mentor, and the mentor must agree in writing (email is ok) for each course the student TAs. NOTE: Students may complete the lecturing requirement in the same course that they are completing the TA requirement.

**2.8 Advanced Student Review (ASR):** It is important for students to complete their doctoral studies in a timely fashion. To facilitate this, all students, starting in their 4th year, are required to complete a formal review of student's graduate study before every Supervisory Committee meeting. This review evaluates the advancement of students toward the completion of their studies, and assesses the alignment of mentor, student and committee on achieving this goal. For the Advanced Student review:

a) The student and mentor meet and create a dissertation outline and realistic timetable to graduation.

b) The student provides the following to their Supervisory Committee at least 3 days prior to the ASR meeting:

- An outline of the dissertation, including a summary of each chapter
- A summary of dissertation research progress, less than one page
- A proposed timetable for completing the dissertation

c) During the Supervisory committee meeting, the committee, student and mentor discuss the student's accomplishments and trajectory toward completion of studies.

d) The committee may request a revision to ASR documents. The final revision must be provided to the Neuroscience Program Director and all committee members via email.

## 2.9 Final Examination

**2.10 MD/PhD Requirements only:** The MD/PhD program requires each student to take 9 credits of graduate coursework. For students joining the Neuroscience Program this must include:

a) 1 Neuroscience core course

b) 1 other semester of didactic course work. (Minimum 3 credits)

c) 1 research ethics class – e.g. MBIOL 7570 (1 credit)

d) Students are required to attend the weekly RIP/Journal clubs in their department.

e) If the supervisory committee deems additional coursework to be necessary then the student will be asked to do this.

f) Two student research presentations are required as described in section 2.5 above.

g) One member of the supervisory committee must be a member of the MD/PhD Advisory Committee.

h) The lecturing requirement (section 2.6 above) is waived.

i) The teaching requirement (section 2.7 above) is waived.

### 3. Academic Progress and Student Evaluation

**3.1 Grading Policy:** Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Two successive semesters of insufficient GPA constitute grounds for dismissal from the program. Grades of C+ and lower are not accepted for credit toward a graduate degree; grades of B- or better are required for passing all courses. Students will be allowed to repeat a course only once. Students failing to pass the repeated course will be dismissed from the program.

**3.2 Selection of Mentor:** Each graduate student must formally join a faculty member's research laboratory by the start of Fall semester of the 2nd year of training. Students are required to complete a faculty agreement provided by the program that must be signed by the mentor, department chair, student advisor, and Program Director. This form must state the student's academic record and any deficiencies and/or achievements prior to joining the lab. The student and mentor will also read, sign and submit to the program office the [AAMC "Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Mentor Research Advisors" form](#). If a student-mentor match has been made early in training, the student must still complete all three rotations in three different laboratories. The dissertation mentor is responsible for providing an adequate research environment leading to a successful dissertation project. Both the student and the mentor have responsibilities in the mentoring relationship that should be discussed when the student chooses to join the laboratory, using the AAMC "Compact" as a basis for the discussion.

If, upon completion of the first 3 rotations, the student has not identified a laboratory with financial support in which to perform dissertation work, the student must notify their First year Advisor and Program Director's office no later than March 31st to arrange for a meeting to discuss the potential for further support by the program. If the student fails to identify a funded laboratory for their dissertation research after a 4th rotation, the student will be dismissed from the program unless a compelling case for a 5th laboratory rotation can be made to the Program Directorate by the student in consultation with the Program's Student advisor.

**3.2.1 Process for Addressing Student-Mentor Difficulties:** If, once a student has begun dissertation research in a laboratory, either the student or the mentor feels that the responsibilities of the other are not being met, the following steps should be taken.

First, the student or mentor should schedule a meeting with the other to discuss the nature of the difficulties being encountered. In this meeting, the student and mentor should agree on specific steps needed to ameliorate the problem AND a specific time frame in which those steps are to be completed or reevaluated. The steps to be taken and the time frame should be documented in writing and signed by both the student and the mentor. A copy of this documentation should be provided to the Program Administrator for placement in the student's file. It is also encouraged that the student or mentor notify and engage the supervisory committee (or student advisor if no committee is yet established) in resolving the issue at hand.

Second, if the student or mentor feels the problem is not resolved within the established time frame, they should engage a student advisor/Supervisory Committee to work with the student and mentor toward resolving the situation, which may include the student moving to another laboratory and starting a new dissertation project. If the student is unable to identify another funded laboratory in which to do dissertation work, the student will be dismissed from the program.

If the mentor initiated the process regarding difficulties with the student in the laboratory, and the specific steps and time frame from the initial meeting have not been met, the mentor should notify the student in writing of dismissal from the laboratory to be effective 15 days from the date of the letter of dismissal (as per U of U Policy number 6-309). A copy of this letter should be sent to the Neuroscience Program Director and the Program Administrator so that a copy can be placed in the student's file. The Program Director and Student Advisor (if one has been involved) will meet with the student within two days to discuss the basis for the dismissal from the lab and subsequent steps on the part of the program. Those steps may include moving the student to another laboratory/having the student start a new dissertation project or dismissal from the program.

**3.3 Supervisory Committee:** The Supervisory Committee is charged with monitoring the progress of a student's training from year 2 until the Dissertation defense. The subsequent charge to the Supervisory Committee is to shepherd the student towards the completion of a formal dissertation proposal, to evaluate and approve/disapprove that proposal, to monitor the progress of dissertation research and preparation of the dissertation, to conduct the final examination and approve/disapprove the dissertation, and to ensure that all academic requirements of the Neuroscience Program have been met. The committee is configured by the student and the mentor and emailed to the Neuroscience Program office for approval by the Program Director no later than September 30th of the 2nd year of training. Final approval resides with the Graduate Dean. Prior to this time, the student is advised by their first-year faculty advisor.

The members of Supervisory Committee are:

- A tenured IPN faculty member, who serves as Committee Chair. Preferably with no direct scientific collaboration with the student's mentor.
- The student's faculty mentor.
- A faculty member from outside the mentor's and student's specific research area (This person can also serve as the Committee Chair)
- Two or three other faculty members for a total of 5 committee members

Student's wishing to form a Supervisory committee that does not fill these criteria can petition the Program Director for an exemption. Any student joining the lab of a mentor that has never graduated a PhD student from the University of Utah must designate a co-mentor. This person may serve as the Committee Chair or one of the other members of the committee. Non-Program faculty from within or outside the University of Utah may serve on (but not chair) the Committee but IPN program faculty must comprise a majority of the committee. Students may change the composition of their committee at any time by emailing the Program Director, Program Manager, and all committee members to inform them of the change and why. If approved, the change will then be entered in the Graduate School's Grad Tracking Program. Common reasons to change a committee member include a change in the student's research direction or if a faculty member leaves the University of Utah. All decisions of the Supervisory Committee are by majority vote.

All decisions of the Supervisory Committee are by majority vote. The composition of the committee may be changed by filing a Request to Change Supervisory Committee Personnel form subject to the approval of the Program Director.

Requests for approval sent to the Curriculum Chair and Program Director should briefly describe how the above requirements have been met (e.g., identify the mentor; the program representative and when and how they served; and the committee member outside the research area), and shall briefly (~ 1 sentence) describe the qualifications of the committee members and/or how they will contribute to the student's dissertation.

**3.4 Committee Meetings:** The student must meet once every year (but they are encouraged to meet every 6 months or as needed) with their Supervisory Committee beginning with the Fall semester of the 2nd year of training. At the beginning of each committee meeting, students will meet for 5-10 minutes with their committee members without their chair. This will give the student time to speak with committee members freely. The committee members will also meet at the beginning of each meeting without the student. Also, the first part of each committee meeting should begin with the career path goal for the student. After each meeting, the student and mentor pair must complete a Report of Supervisory Committee. This form is to be completed and signed by both the student and mentor. The completed form should be submitted to the Neuroscience Program Office and copies of at least the first page should be sent to each committee member. A hold will be placed on Fall/Spring Semester registration of students who do not meet with their committees annually.

### **Additional Guidance on Committee Meetings**

Establishing: The student must have their Supervisory committee selected, established and reported to the Neuroscience office no later than September 30th of year 2. The first meeting of the student with their Supervisory committee is due before the end of the Fall semester of year 2.

Frequency: The student must meet once per year (they are encouraged to meet every 6 months or more) with their Supervisory Committee beginning with Fall semester of year 2.

Scheduling: Students are strongly encouraged to schedule the meeting as early as possible (months in advance) to facilitate finding a time when every committee member is available. If reasonable attempts cannot find a time when all committee members are available, students should seek committee approval to hold a meeting without a committee member. Students are required to schedule a separate meeting with the missing member within one month of the official meeting.

Format: At the beginning of each committee meeting, the student and advisor will take turns leaving the room to give both the student and the advisor a chance to update the committee without the other person present. If an issue is raised by one or both parties (the student or advisor) during this time, the committee should take steps to resolve the issue. Each situation is different, but these guidelines are suggested. A committee member that is not the student's direct advisor should assume a lead role. This "assistant" chair position can be chosen by the student. If an issue arises at this time, the committee should directly ask the student/advisor if they would like to discuss the issue with the other party present in the room. The committee should follow up after the meeting by emailing information about appropriate campus resources (i.e. mental health resources, writing resources, OEO reporting, etc) and scheduling a follow up meeting, private or as a group, as appropriate. Remember that issues raised here may include protected health information (PHI). See the formal policies and procedures section for dealing with mentor/student difficulties, which may or may not overlap with issues raised during the confidential part of the committee meeting. If no issues are raised, the committee should simply remind the student that they are available for individual meetings anytime that an issue should arise.

At the start of each committee meeting, the student should present a slide indicating which program requirements are completed vs not yet complete, and how they plan to fulfill the requirements. This is the time to discuss which electives the student plans to take, meetings/conferences to attend, and how they will fulfill any lecturing and speaking requirements. Next, the student should discuss their IDP with the committee. The IDP or Individual Development Plan is the specific training tailored to the students' future career goals. If the student is in their 4th year or above, they are required to complete an "Advanced Student Review" prior to the meeting and that should also be discussed with the committee at this time. It is essentially a plan to graduation. Finally, the student should present their research results and plans.

Any of the above points can be revisited toward the end of the meeting if knowledge of the students' research progress is required for an adequate discussion (i.e. time to degree, etc). After each meeting, students must complete Form 3: <https://neuroscience.med.utah.edu/forms.php>. This form is to be completed and signed by both the student and mentor. The completed form should be submitted to the Neuroscience Program Office and copies of at least the first page should be sent to each committee member. A hold will be placed on Fall/Spring Semester registration of students who do not meet with their committees annually.

### 3.5 Formal Evaluations

There are four formal stages of evaluation in the Neuroscience Program:

The First Year Capstone Examination

The Qualifying Examination

The Written Dissertation

The Final Examination

**3.5.1 First Year Capstone Examination:** This is an original, written research proposal developed in the Guided Grant Preparation course and is used as the basis for an oral examination by a faculty committee. This exam ensures that students mastered material from the core curriculum and meet academic standards for dissertation work. Students will develop a short NIH-style research proposal as instructed by the course syllabus. Students will present and defend the proposal in front of a 3-member capstone exam committee. Passing this exam is required to pass the Guided Grant Preparation Course, which is a core course. As with any core course, a student is allowed to retake the course the following year if a passing score is not achieved.

**3.5.2 The Qualifying Examination:** (also referred to as the Preliminary Examination) is an evaluation of the student scholarship, particularly with respect to the fundamentals of neuroscience and concepts relating to their proposed research project. It is conducted by the Supervisory Committee. The written part of the examination consists of a formal research proposal written in accordance with current NIH/NRSA format and length guidelines. The Qualifying Exam must be completed by the end of the Spring semester of the second year of graduate study.

To complete the Qualifying exam, the student must prepare a full-length research proposal on their thesis topic following the current NIH/NRSA format and length guidelines including an Aims Page and a 6-page proposal with citations. The written proposal should be sent to the committee no less than one week before the qualifying exam. At the qualifying exam meeting the committee will

determine whether the written proposal is adequate and ready for oral defense. If there are serious problems with the written proposal, then the committee may request that the proposal be revised before it is defended and will determine what is required and how long this should take.

At the Qualifying exam meeting, the student will present the proposed research orally with visual aids (e.g. Powerpoint). The committee will examine the student through in-depth questioning during the presentation. The oral defense should last no more than 2 hours. At the end of the meeting the committee will determine whether the student has successfully defended the proposal and has demonstrated sufficient knowledge of neuroscience to be advanced to candidacy. This proposal is used as the framework for evaluating the student's knowledge in depth and breadth, as well as organizational abilities, knowledge of the literature, analytical skills, and ability to generate a testable research hypothesis.

Who conducts the Qualifying exam? The student's supervisory committee conducts the Qualifying exam with one exception. For the Qualifying examination only, the student must replace their dissertation mentor with a substitute committee member. The substitute member must be approved prior to the exam by the Program Director. This can be done by sending an email describing the change to the Program Manager, Program Director, the student's mentor, and the substitute committee member. The committee will choose a new Examining chair for the duration of the exam. The student's mentor may be present during the Qualifying exam but may not participate in the exam.

The Role of the Dissertation Advisor during the Qualifying Exam. The student is encouraged to consult with their dissertation advisor about the concepts and principles of the study they will undertake. The dissertation advisor can have conversations with the student about specific aims and provide guidance and recommendations on the development of the experimental approach. However, the student is responsible for developing a detailed proposal and crafting a document that speaks in their voice. The dissertation advisor should not read or edit the student's written proposal before it is submitted to the Committee. The dissertation advisor will be asked at the beginning of the oral exam to comment on how much of the proposal includes details and ideas synthesized by the student, rather than taken verbatim from the advisor and lab members. The dissertation advisor shall be allowed to be present at the Exam but is not part of the Exam Committee and may not participate in the examination process (questions, voting or scoring).

Qualifying Exam outcomes: The results of the examination are determined by majority vote and are to be reported in writing to the Neuroscience Program Office for review by the Curriculum Committee and Director. Final approval of the examination results resides with the Program Director. [Report of Qualifying Exam](#)

Pass: If the student passes the qualifying exam, they officially advance to candidacy pending completion final approval of the exam results by the program director as stated above.

Conditional Pass: If the committee identifies a specific weakness in the student's performance on either the written or oral exam, they can grant a conditional pass. If so, the committee should provide clear guidelines to the student describing the conditions that must be met prior to receiving a final "pass". This could include re-writing the proposal, redoing the oral defense of a section of

the proposal, or taking an additional class. All conditions must be clearly stated in the report to the curriculum committee and program director and must be met within 9 months of the first examination date or as determined by the committee. If the student fails to meet the stated conditions, they will not advance to candidacy and will be dismissed from the program.

**Fail:** If the committee identifies serious weaknesses in several aspects of the student's performance on the written or oral exam, the student will receive a failing grade. In this case, the student will not advance to candidacy and will be dismissed from the program. Alternatively, the committee may allow the exam to be retaken one additional time. If so, the committee should provide clear guidelines to the student describing the conditions that must be met and whether a change of topics is required. All conditions must be clearly stated in the report to the curriculum committee and program director. The student must pass the re-examination within 9 months of the first examination date. If not, they will not advance to candidacy and will be dismissed from the program.

**3.5.3 The Final Examination (oral dissertation defense)** follows the standard University of Utah guidelines for evaluating dissertation research. Prior to scheduling this exam, a majority of the Supervisory Committee must formally indicate that the student is approved to proceed with the Final Examination. This must be documented in writing in an email or in a Supervisory committee meeting form (Form 3) and sent to the Program Office. Failure to gain approval to proceed with the Final Examination will result in failing the Final Examination and dismissal from the program. The Supervisory Committee announces and schedules a public examination chaired by the mentor at which the student must defend the dissertation. The outcome of the Final Examination will be reported to the Program Director and the Graduate Dean for final approval. The Final Examination may be repeated once only at the discretion of the supervisory committee.

NP students are also required to present their dissertation in a seminar open to the University of Utah community and the public. The oral presentation of the dissertation proposal should include a formal presentation of the Background and Significance of the project, relevant Preliminary Data, and the major elements of the Experimental Design and Methods. Students should prepare approximately 45 minutes worth of slides but should expect to answer questions from the committee and public throughout the presentation and participate in a discussion at the end. NP students will defend their dissertation research in a private meeting with the Dissertation Committee following the public presentation.

**3.5.4 Dissertation.** The general policies for a doctoral dissertation follow those of the University of Utah Graduate School. The dissertation is held to the highest academic standards of quality and integrity. It must represent a substantive contribution to the scientific community and reflect a mastery of a field. The dissertation should include data chapter(s) written by the candidate that have appeared (or will appear) as first-author or co-first-author publications in supervisory-committee-approved journals, plus introductory and concluding chapters that provide a scholarly review of the field and context for the work, and an assessment of work's contributions. At a minimum, one first-author or co-first-author manuscript shall have been submitted for publication by the time of the Final Examination in order for the candidate to pass the Final Exam unless an extension has been granted by the Program Director. An acceptable draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the mentor no less than 3 weeks and to the remaining Supervisory Committee members no less than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled Final Examination. The [Handbook for Theses](#)

[and Dissertations](#) provides directions for dissertations using both published and unpublished materials. The student should adhere to the instructions provided in the handbook. The final dissertation must be submitted and the Final Examination completed prior to end of the student's 6th year unless an extension has been granted by the Program Director.

### 3.6 Typical Timetable

Year 1: Core courses & rotations

End of Year 1: Pass Capstone Examination

Prior to the Fall Semester of Year 2: Select mentor

No later than September 30th of Year 2: Select Supervisory Committee

No later than December 31st of Year 2: First of annual meetings with Supervisory Committee

No later than then end of Year 2: Pass Qualifying Examination.

By the end of the 4th year: Complete Teaching Assistant (TA) requirement

By the end of the 4th year: Complete an Advanced Student Review

6 months prior to completion of dissertation: apply for graduation.

<https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/graduategraduation.php>

End of 5th year, pass oral and written Dissertation Defense and submit manuscript to the Thesis Office

### 3.7 Dismissal Policies

Students may be dismissed from the program under the following conditions:

- Failure of any course twice (grade of C+ or below)

- GPA lower than 3.0 for two successive semesters

- Failure of the Qualifying examination or Final examination

- Academic or behavioral misconduct

- Failure to find a dissertation laboratory after completing 4 rotations

- Failure to make sufficient progress toward completion of the doctoral degree, as determined by Supervisory Committee.

Dismissal of a student from the program, and any appeal by the student, will be carried out in compliance with University of Utah Policy 6-400. Funding will be discontinued at the end of the pay period during which the dismissal takes place. Any financial support provided beyond that point must be reimbursed to the University. The timing of dismissal may impact the student's eligibility for Tuition Benefit support, due to the amount of stipend support received and the ability to drop registered courses. As described on the Graduate School website: "Students adding and/or dropping courses after the semester's published add/drop deadlines are responsible for any and all charges incurred, including withdrawals. Tuition benefit will not pay for withdrawn credit hours, and if registration falls below nine credit hours at any time during the semester, a student becomes ineligible for TBP participation and will be billed the full tuition for that semester."

The Program does not offer an M.S. degree option for students who fail to complete their training. Students completing all requirements besides the final dissertation and defense may petition their committee to receive an M.Phil. as described in the Graduate School catalog (<http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/degree-requirements/>). The M.Phil. is a terminal degree and cannot be rescinded.

**3.8 Appeals:** Should a student disagree with the outcome of any stage of evaluation (i.e. an academic action), the student may appeal the academic action by following the process outlined in University Regulation 6-400 Section IV. If a student desires an extension on the time to degree beyond the 6th year, the student should submit a request in writing to the Program Director for consideration. The request should detail the reason for the need to extend time in the graduate program and the expected length of the extension. If approved by the Program Director, such approval will be transmitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for final consideration/approval of the request.

#### **4. Professional Standards and Ethical Concerns.**

**4.1 Student/Faculty/Staff Behavior:** Neuroscience Program policy will follow University policy, e.g., Policy 6-400: Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (“Student Code”), Section III: Student Behavior, <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>.

“The mission of the University of Utah is to educate the individual and to discover, refine and disseminate knowledge. The University supports the intellectual, personal, social and ethical development of members of the University community. These goals can best be achieved in an open and supportive environment that encourages reasoned discourse, honesty, and respect for the rights of all individuals. Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.”

“Students at the University of Utah are members of an academic community committed to basic and broadly shared ethical principles and concepts of civility. Integrity, autonomy, justice, respect and responsibility represent the basis for the rights and responsibilities that follow. Participation in the University of Utah community obligates each member to follow a code of civilized behavior.”

Except as otherwise specified by sections below, any person directly aggrieved by an alleged violation of the Standards of Behavior (whether they be a student, faculty member, or staff member) may submit an oral or written complaint to the Neuroscience Program Director or to another member of the Neuroscience Program Directorate. The Neuroscience Program Directorate will review all reports of such activity and as appropriate will transmit them to the University Student Behavior Committee in the case of potential student misconduct, or to the relevant Department Chair in case of potential faculty or other staff misconduct.

**4.2 Safety and Wellness:** Your safety is our top priority. In an emergency, dial 911 or seek a nearby emergency phone (throughout campus). Report any crimes or suspicious people to 801-585-COPS; this number will get you to a dispatch officer at the University of Utah Department of

Public Safety (DPS; [dps.utah.edu](https://dps.utah.edu)). If at any time, you would like to be escorted by a security officer to or from areas on campus, DPS will help — just call them.

The University of Utah seeks to provide a safe and healthy experience for students, employees, and others who make use of campus facilities. In support of this goal, the University has established confidential resources and support services to assist students who may have been affected by harassment, abusive relationships, or sexual misconduct. A detailed listing of University Resources for campus safety can be found at <https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/campussafety.php>

Your well-being is key to your personal safety. If you are in crisis, call 801-587-3000; help is close. The university has additional excellent resources to promote emotional and physical wellness, including the Counseling Center (<https://counselingcenter.utah.edu>), the Wellness Center (<https://wellness.utah.edu>), and the Center for Student Access & Resources (<https://studentresources.utah.edu/>). Counselors and advocates in these centers can help guide you to other resources to address a range of issues, including substance abuse and addiction.

**4.3 Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct:** Neuroscience Program policy will follow University policy, e.g., [Non-Discrimination Rule 1-012A](#) and [Complaint Process Rule 1-012B](#). Special policies and reporting procedures apply for potential violations involving discrimination or sexual misconduct.

Discrimination means treating someone differently, i.e., disadvantaging the person, on the basis of being a member of a protected class described in [University Policy 1-012](#) when: such conduct adversely affects a term or condition of an individual’s employment, education, living environment, or participation in a University program or activity; or a person’s membership in a protected class is used as the basis for or a factor in decisions affecting that individual’s employment, education, living environment, health care, or other participation in a University program or activity. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term used to encompass a range of behaviors including Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment, Intimate Partner Violence, Sexual Exploitation, Stalking, Nonconsensual Sexual Contact, and Nonconsensual Sexual Penetration. Sexual Misconduct also includes the crimes of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking as defined by state and federal law. Sexual Misconduct is a form of Sex Discrimination. As indicated in Rule 1-012: “The University of Utah (“University”) is committed to providing and fostering an environment that is safe and free from prohibited discrimination and harassment... “This Rule applies to all academic and administrative units of the University, and to all members of the University community, including all faculty, staff, students, and participants in University programs or activities...” “All allegations of discrimination raised by or against students or employees of the University shall be resolved pursuant to this Rule and its accompanying Rules and Procedure. Allegations of discrimination that do not involve Sexual Misconduct shall be resolved pursuant to Rule 1-012A, Discrimination Complaint Process Rule <https://regulations.utah.edu/general/rules/R1-012A.php>. Allegations of Sexual Misconduct shall be resolved pursuant to Rule 1-012B, Sexual Misconduct Complaint Process Rule <https://regulations.utah.edu/general/rules/R1-012B.php>.

**4.4 Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:** Neuroscience Program policy will follow University policy, e.g., Policy 6-400: Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (“Student Code”), Section V: Student Academic Conduct, <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>. The misrepresentation of another’s written materials, data or other intellectual property as one's own is unethical and is grounds for potential dismissal from the Neuroscience Program. If a sanction for academic misconduct imposed by the faculty member is less than a failing grade for a course, the faculty member shall, within ten (10) business days of imposing the sanction, report the misconduct and sanction in writing to the Neuroscience Program Director and the Chairs of the Neuroscience Program Curriculum and Advising Committees. If a faculty member imposes a sanction of a failing grade for the course, the faculty member shall in addition also report the misconduct and sanction to the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences.

Incoming students are asked to sign the Neuroscience Program Honor Code and Policy Statement on Academic Standards. These copies are kept in the student’s file.

**4.5 Confidentiality:** Security of personal information dealing with human subjects must follow University Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines.

**4.6 Conflict of Interest:** All faculty and students must comply with appropriate disclosure policies regarding possible financial interests in organizations that may have a substantial fiscal relationship with the University. Disclosure materials are available from the Office of the Vice President for Research.

**4.7 IRB Approvals:** Mentors and students are responsible for obtaining IRB approval for activities involving human subjects.

**4.8 IACUC Approvals:** Mentors and students are responsible for obtaining IACUC approval for all activities involving experimental animals.

**4.9 Laboratory Safety:** Mentors and students are responsible for appropriate safety training and conducting research according to standard safety practices. Written laboratory safety policies and material safety data sheets must be available. University radiation safety training should be arranged for all students using isotopes.

## **5. Financial Support**

Students accepted into the Neuroscience Program under regular admission procedures will be financially supported by the Program for 9 months. Students wishing to take a leave longer than 2 weeks must obtain permission from the Directorate. The Graduate School provides qualifying students a Tuition Benefit Program which covers the cost of mandatory tuition fees (as defined by the University) for a maximum of 12 credit hours for each of the Fall and Spring semesters and requires a minimum 9 credit hours. All students are expected to enter a mentor's laboratory after the first year and receive financial support from that laboratory or departmental resources after their 9 months in the program. Students are encouraged to submit proposals for predoctoral support. The current level of support for 2026-2027 will be \$39,254 per annum for the first year plus health, dental and vision insurance. To encourage students to apply for non-Neuroscience

Program support, students that are awarded a competitive individual fellowship are allowed to receive a stipend supplement for the duration of the award.

Eligible students (trainees) with qualifying fellowships (external to the University and at least \$18,000 per year) in labs from the Health Sciences will receive a \$3,000 annual supplement. Please read the Health Sciences supplement policy ([Graduate Student Fellowship Incentive Program](#)) carefully for details. If a student receives a fellowship that qualifies for the Health Sciences supplement but is in a lab that is not part of the participating Health Sciences campus, the PI may choose to provide the same supplement (\$3,000) at their own expense.

This supplement policy is effective July 1, 2022, for all students regardless of their starting year.

**5.1 Notice of Award:** Students that receive a notice of an award (NOA) should notify the Program Manager and Director promptly with all the NOA materials. Some fellowships/grants specify the purpose of the award and do not allow stipend supplementation, and students must be aware of such limitations.

## **6. Family and Parental leave policy**

The Graduate School has a new minimal policy on parental leave that is described here:

<https://gradschool.utah.edu/navigating-grad-school/graduate-policies/parental-leave-policy-for-graduate-students.php>

Neuroscience Program Policy: It is IPN policy that new parents are entitled to a total of six weeks of leave with full pay and benefits following the birth or adoption of a child. The leave may be taken by either parent or split between parents. New parents are also entitled to take up to an additional six weeks of leave without pay, if they so choose, although this could reduce their tuition benefit. The parental leave should be completed within six months of the arrival of the new child and may only be taken for purposes relating to childcare. Under normal circumstances students should arrange the leave time with their advisor and Program Director at least 30 days in advance. This policy might be superseded by an external agency, such as University policy or by the requirements of a funding organization.

Students who experience a medical condition associated with pregnancy and need accommodations recommended by their medical provider should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator, who will work with the student, cognizant faculty, and administration to determine what accommodations are reasonable and effective.

## **7. Vacation Policy**

Vacation time must be negotiated between the student and their Advisor.

## **8. Program Forms and Instructions (PP Forms) <https://neuroscience.med.utah.edu/forms.php>**

**8.1 Neuroscience Rotation Evaluation:** The rotation mentor must submit this form to the Neuroscience Program Office prior to the reporting date for semester grades. [Neuroscience Rotation Evaluation](#)

**8.2 Request for Supervisory Committee:** Request for supervisory committee must be submitted via email to the Neuroscience Program Office. (Online form is optional; a committee proposed in the body of an email to the Program Manager will suffice.) Upon review and approval of the Neuroscience Program Curriculum Chair, it will be approved by the Program Director and filed with the NP office for transmission to the University of Utah Graduate Records Office for final approval. Curriculum Chair can add members, if deemed necessary.

**8.3 Report of Supervisory Committee/Annual evaluation:** The advisor/student submits this form to the Neuroscience Program Office after each committee meeting. [Report of Supervisory Committee form](#)

**8.4 Report of Qualifying Examination for the Ph.D.:** The Chair of the Examining Committee sends the original report to the Neuroscience Program Office. [Report of Qualifying Exam](#)

**8.5 Online Application for graduation:** With the guidance of the Supervisory Committee, the student completes the Application for Graduation at least 6 months prior to completion of the dissertation and files it with the Office of the Registrar.  
(<https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/graduategraduation.php>)

**8.6 Report of the Final Oral Examination:** The advisor sends one copy to the Neuroscience Program. [REPORT OF THE FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION](#)