



BROWN UNIVERSITY  
NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Organization and Policies

2016-17

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## **1. General Description and Program Goals**

The Graduate Program in Neuroscience, as part of the Division of Biology and Medicine at Brown University, provides advanced study for academic and research careers in neuroscience. Students receive broad, multi-disciplinary training in neuroscience with a strong foundation in core concepts, skills, methodologies, and advanced comprehension of the scientific literature. Students undertake a core curriculum that encompasses multiple level analyses including genes, cells, systems, cognition, translational neuroscience, and diseases of the nervous system. At all stages of instruction, we integrate skills considered essential for successful, independent research careers in neuroscience. These include critical thinking and reasoning, effective science writing and oral presentation, knowledge of scientific review processes, and training in ethics. Admission is limited to applicants for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Neuroscience.

To fulfill the Program's requirements, each student must pass all courses with a grade of "B" or higher, pass a comprehensive examination, propose and defend a thesis topic (Preliminary Exam), and complete and successfully defend a doctoral dissertation. The thesis, which describes the student's original research, should contribute significantly to the field of study and be of sufficient quality to merit publications in a peer-reviewed journal. Each student serves as a teaching assistant within one of the Program's departments for one semester, and participates in other Program activities (See Section 6). Funding is guaranteed for students in good standing, making appropriate progress towards a degree, for at least 5 years (see Letter of Admission).

## **2. Admission to the Neuroscience Graduate Program**

The Admissions Committee is comprised of the *Director or Co-Director* of the Program, one senior faculty trainer and one junior faculty trainer and the graduate student representative. At least one member of the committee will have a primary appointment in a department other than Neuroscience. The Admissions Committee reviews all applications and all Program faculty have access to graduate student applications. The Admissions Committee generates an interview short list based on their assessments along with solicited comments and rankings from all faculty. Applicants are interviewed and recommendations for admission are made based on post-interview rankings and availability. The Program Director keeps all faculty informed at the various stages of the admissions process.

The Program web site posts application information. Application materials are due to the Graduate School by December for entry in September of the following year. Matriculating students are expected to have an undergraduate degree in a scientific discipline such as Biology, Psychology, Neurobiology, Chemistry, Physics, Applied Math, Engineering or Computer Science. Candidates whose undergraduate training does not include certain topics critical to their research interests can take additional courses as part of their program of study.

Assessments are based on academic progress, research experience and recommendations. In addition, the Committee values recruiting a diverse group of graduate students to enhance the Program.

## **3. Coursework**

All students take the following core courses in their first year of study:

|          |        |   |        |
|----------|--------|---|--------|
| NEUR2030 | Fall   | Advanced Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology I  | ABC/NC |
| NEUR2050 | Fall   | Advanced Systems Neuroscience                   | ABC/NC |
| NEUR2040 | Spring | Advanced Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology II | ABC/NC |
| NEUR2060 | Spring | Advanced Cognitive Neuroscience                 | ABC/NC |
| NEUR2010 | Fall   | Graduate Proseminar in Neuroscience             | S/NC   |
| NEUR2020 | Spring | Graduate Proseminar in Neuroscience             | S/NC   |
| NEUR2980 | Both   | Graduate Independent Study                      | S/NC   |

To satisfy any course requirement, a student must receive a grade of A or B. Lower grades (C and NC) will trigger a meeting of the student's Advisory Committee to discuss remedial or other action.

All first-year students take a two part *Comprehensive Exam* (see Section 8) based largely on the content of the core courses.

Second and third year students take the following courses:

|          |        |                                     |      |
|----------|--------|-------------------------------------|------|
| NEUR2010 | Fall   | Graduate Proseminar in Neuroscience | S/NC |
| NEUR2020 | Spring | Graduate Proseminar in Neuroscience | S/NC |
| NEUR2980 | Both   | Graduate Independent Study (I/II)   | S/NC |

In addition, all second-year students must be proficient in Statistics. Students may take one of several graduate level (2000 level) statistics courses offered at Brown. The most popular courses are offered by the Department of Cognitive, Linguistic and Psychological Sciences (CLPS2906 - Experimental Design), the School of Public Health (PHP2510 - Principles of Biostatistics and Data Analysis), and the Department of Applied Mathematics (AMPA2610 - Recent Applications of Probability and Statistics). Students who enter the Program with substantial background knowledge in statistics may petition the Program Director to waive this requirement.

Second year students and beyond may also select from a large number of courses and seminars offered by the major departments in the program including Neuroscience, Cognitive, Linguistic and Psychological Sciences, Applied Mathematics, Engineering, Molecular Biology, Cell Biology and Biochemistry, and Molecular Pharmacology, Physiology and Biotechnology. These courses are chosen to enhance students' laboratory research experience.

The University requires 24 **course credits** for graduation, and it is recommended that students try to complete these credits by the end of their third year of study.

#### 4. Advising

Students start laboratory rotations in the fall of their first year. The faculty advisor from that laboratory serves together with the Director, Co-Director, or a designated faculty member as the student's first-year Advisory Committee. The faculty advisor meets with the student at the beginning of the first semester to provide general training oversight. The Advisory Committee meets in early March to discuss progress in course work, laboratory rotations, fellowship applications and general program

information. Advisors summarize the student's progress after each advisory meeting, using an electronic form which can be found at <http://neuroscience.brown.edu/graduate/forms/>.

Typically, students select their dissertation advisor prior to the start of their second year of study. This decision must be approved by the Program Director. The Thesis Advisor is the first member of the student's Thesis Committee. The student and Thesis Advisor then select two additional faculty members to serve as the Thesis Committee. These additional faculty members must be approved faculty trainers in the Neuroscience Graduate Program, and at least one of the additional committee members must be an Associate or Full Professor. In addition, the chair of the Thesis Committee must be someone other than the Advisor. Students and Advisors may invite faculty who are not trainers in the Neuroscience Graduate Program to participate in committee meetings. These faculty members can add to the scientific discussion, but are not voting members of the committee. The Program Director may serve as an *ad hoc*, *ex officio* committee member for any student's Advisory Committee.

In the student's second year, the Committee focuses primarily on helping the student prepare for the Preliminary Exam (see Section 9), which should occur before the start of the third year of study. After the Preliminary Exam, the Thesis Committee primarily guides the dissertation plan. All students are strongly encouraged to publish, present their findings at the Society for Neuroscience annual meeting, take summer methods courses and apply for individual predoctoral fellowships. The Thesis Committee must meet with the student annually to evaluate the progression of the thesis research. After each meeting, the Thesis Committee chair must complete and submit an update form: <http://neuroscience.brown.edu/graduate/forms/>.

At least once each year, the graduate students will meet informally as a group with the Program Director. These meetings are intended to keep the students informed about the development and organization of the Program and Department. They also provide an opportunity for student feedback and suggestions concerning financial support, teaching responsibilities, Program requirements and other issues of mutual concern. Additionally, each student is encouraged to meet individually with the Director or Co-Director to discuss progress in the program and general programmatic affairs.

## **5. Laboratory Rotations and Research**

A crucial responsibility for new graduate students is to choose a research area and a Thesis Advisor from the current Training Faculty. In order to gain sufficient knowledge to make an informed thesis lab selection, students interview with faculty, attend seminars and lab meetings, and complete lab rotations. A lab rotation consists of a one semester research project under the supervision of a Program faculty member. Students are required to complete two lab rotations (and encouraged to do a third rotation during the summer following their first year). Students wishing to rotate in labs outside of the Neuroscience Graduate Program must submit a written request to the Program Director who will review the request in consultation with other faculty trainers. If appropriate, the faculty member can be added to the list of faculty trainers after review by the Steering Committee (see Section 13). Only faculty approved by the Neuroscience Graduate Program Steering Committee can serve as full-time thesis advisors.

Laboratory research should be arranged and underway by the first semester of the first year. In rare instances it may be appropriate for a student to delay the onset of laboratory work until after the first semester, but the delay must be explicitly approved by the Program Director. Even in such cases, the student is expected to have established a meaningful scientific relationship with a member of the training faculty in preparation for their rotation in the second semester. All students are expected to work in a lab during the winter intersession and each summer, except for a reasonable vacation

interval to be arranged with the Program Director or Thesis Advisor. All students beyond 3<sup>rd</sup> semester must be actively undertaking research under the direct supervision of a Program trainer, unless otherwise approved by the Program Director.

## **6. Graduate Program Activities and Events**

A number of special Graduate Program activities and events are integral to graduate training, and students must arrange their schedules so they participate. In cases of unavoidable conflicts or special hardship, students may be excused from individual events by the Program Director.

Retreat All students attend a one-day retreat for the Neuroscience Graduate Program. The Retreat is held every year, usually during the week preceding the beginning of the academic year. The purpose of the retreat is to acquaint the graduate students with the research of the Neuroscience faculty, particularly the faculty trainers. The retreat is organized and arranged by a committee consisting of the Graduate Student Representative, one faculty member, and several graduate students.

Neuro Practicum First-year students attend an eight day session held in January at the Marine Biological Laboratories intended to introduce early-stage graduate students to cutting edge methods and experimental approaches used in neuroscience research. Small groups move through multiple lab stations, led by participating NSGP faculty, associated postdocs and advanced graduate students.

The Graduate Proseminar in Neuroscience (NEUR 2010) is intended to expose all graduate students to the latest work in key fields of neuroscience. All students must attend weekly seminars that occur every Thursday at 4 PM, followed by an informal social with the speaker. All graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend these socials. Each year, the outside speakers are chosen by the Colloquium Committee with input from graduate students who can select two speakers to invite and host. Also, two students are assigned each week to set up and operate the audiovisual equipment for the seminar and assist with refreshments. The Colloquium Committee is appointed by the Chair of the Steering Committee.

In-House Seminars and Journal Clubs: Beginning in their second year, all students are required to present at the In-House Seminar Series and are expected to join one of the ongoing Journal Clubs in the topic of their choice. First-year students can attend a Journal Club if their schedule permits.

Weekly Laboratory Meetings: Nearly every research laboratory conducts weekly meetings; students in these labs must attend. Students must inform their advisor if, for any reason, they cannot attend.

Ethics and Skills Workshops: All 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students are required to attend the Ethics and Skills Workshops offered by the Program, and the Ethics of Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR), a six- or seven-week series conducted by the Division of Biology and Medicine. These workshops are designed to foster skills necessary for a successful career in research.

Graduate Student Recruitment: Recruitment is essential for Program vitality. Students assist in recruiting new students to the Program each year. The Graduate Student Representative helps to coordinate recruitment efforts and establishes a committee of students responsible for organizing

social events.

## **7. Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Professional Development**

An Individual Development Plan is a tool to assist graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in achieving their career goals and becoming contributing members of the biomedical research workforce. As of July 1, 2014, the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Brown University requires that all graduate students and postdoctoral researchers must complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The National Institutes of Health has mandated that the IDP's be a regular part of their training. All incoming graduate students must complete and submit an IDP to the NSGP Program Directors and to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS), by the end of their first semester. All graduate students must submit an updated IDP to the Graduate Program Directors or mentors, respectively, as well as the OGPS, every 4 years, if not sooner. An IDP template may be downloaded from the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website:

<http://www.brown.edu/about/administration/biomed/graduate-postdoctoral-studies/>. There will also be training in creating an IDP through the Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) classes offered by the OGPS in the fall semester. A file copy should be printed upon completion and given to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Distinctive professional development opportunities include advanced teaching opportunities, Global Mobility grants and research travel funds, interdisciplinary scholarly opportunities at Centers and institutes, communications workshops and public research talks, and a series exploring careers in higher education administration.

Publishing is another measure of student development. Graduate students are welcome to work with peer mentors in the Writing Center. The Graduate School is always pleased to celebrate and acknowledge publishing success: please email your accomplishments to [graduate\\_webmaster@brown.edu](mailto:graduate_webmaster@brown.edu).

## **8. First Year Comprehensive Exams**

The Comprehensive Exams are taken at the end of each semester during the first year of study and must be passed to qualify for Ph.D. candidacy. The exams are designed to ensure that students have attained core knowledge in neuroscience and incorporate all the material covered in the first-year coursework, including neuroanatomy, ionic basis of excitability, synaptic transmission, neural development, systems neuroscience and cognitive neuroscience. All first-year students in a given class sit for the same closed-book essay exams. Committees of at least two faculty members grade each exam. This grading system maintains uniformity in the evaluation process from year to year and provides a better overview of the students' mastery of the course material. The Comprehensive Exams are also used to diagnose and recommend additional readings or electives for the second year of study. The Committee may call for an oral examination of those students whose written answers reveal a serious deficiency. If students provide adequate answers in this oral exam, they pass the Comprehensive Exams. However, students who fail the oral exam must re-take the Comprehensive Exam or re-take the associated course or an approved substitute course. Failure of one or more courses can result academic warning, and repeated failure may lead to possible dismissal.

## **9. Teaching**

Students serve as a teaching assistant (TA) for one semester in their 2nd year. A second semester serving as a TA is optional. This teaching requirement ensures that students understand the importance of, and challenges associated with, teaching in the academic setting. Students do not teach courses on their own, but are paired with a Program faculty member who has responsibility for the course. Students spend approximately 6-8 hours/week during the semester (approximately 15 weeks) as a TA. The student must have a substantive teaching experience (conducting discussion or laboratory sections, giving lectures) beyond simply the grading of examinations or supervision of course paperwork. The Program Director makes assignments for teaching assistant positions taking into account, as much as possible, the preferences of the graduate students. Other substantive teaching must be approved by the NSGP Director, the Thesis Advisory Committee and the Thesis Advisor.

## **10. Preliminary Examination / Thesis Proposal**

The Preliminary Examination is administered by the Thesis Committee. Before the beginning of the fifth semester, students must present a written research proposal to the Thesis Committee. This written research proposal should be formatted as an NIH R01 grant application. The proposal must include the following: Specific Aims, Background and Significance (a critical review of the relevant literature), Innovation, and Approach (with this last section including experimental or analytical design, any preliminary data and detailed methods of the proposed research); all within a maximum of 50 pages, double-spaced, excluding literature cited. The student must arrange a mutually-convenient time to schedule the Preliminary Exam, and the written document must be submitted to all Committee members two weeks before the scheduled exam. The Thesis Committee chair is responsible for notifying the student if the written proposal is not acceptable, at which time the Preliminary Exam is postponed.

At the Preliminary Exam, the student will present a 20-30 minute talk to the Thesis Committee that summarizes their proposal and experimental plan. Students should be prepared to answer many questions from their Thesis Committee and defend their experimental plan. A successful project defense constitutes passage of the Preliminary Examination. When students complete all required courses and pass the Comprehensive and Preliminary Examinations, they advance to candidacy for the Ph.D. Students who have not completed the Preliminary Examination by the beginning of the sixth semester will be placed on academic warning. The Dissertation Defense cannot take place within one year of the Preliminary Examination.

## **11. Dissertation Preparation and Defense**

Upon the completion of their thesis research, each student will write a doctoral dissertation to submit to their Thesis Committee for evaluation and minor revision. The appropriate format for the written dissertation is described at the Brown University Dissertation Guidelines web site (<http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics/rules-regulations/dissertation-guidelines>). Before the thesis is submitted to the Committee, the student and Thesis Advisor must ensure that the thesis is complete and the Committee has adequate time to read it. At this stage, a qualified outside reader with relevant expertise is invited to join the Thesis Committee. The outside reader may be a



faculty member from another University or hold an equivalent position in a research institution (e.g. Senior Investigator at the NIH) other than Brown and its affiliated institutions. The student has the responsibility to schedule the defense and must submit the final document to all Committee members at least two weeks before the scheduled thesis defense. The NSGP Program must also receive a copy of the thesis that is sent to the outside reader, no later than two weeks prior to the student's scheduled defense date.

The thesis will form the basis for a public seminar that must take place at Brown University. A closed oral examination attended by the Thesis Committee and other interested Neuroscience Graduate Program faculty will follow the seminar. This final examination or defense must be scheduled by the candidate at the convenience of the readers. At least four weeks' notice must be given to all faculty and students prior to the final defense date and at least two weeks must elapse between submission of the written thesis to the Thesis Committee and the final defense.

Three weeks prior to the defense, candidates must provide the Neuroscience Graduate Program with appropriate dissertation defense information so the Thesis Defense Form can be completed and returned to the Graduate School. The following information is required:

- The names of the dissertation advisor and all readers (with contact information for anyone who is not at Brown University).
- The date, time, and place of the final examination. In some departments this information will come from the manager or the director.
- All of the candidate's previous academic degrees, with institutions and dates of conferral.
- Date of preliminary examination.

On the day of the thesis defense, the candidate will need at least two copies of their signature page printed on archival-quality paper. Immediately following a successful thesis defense, the candidate must obtain the signatures of the Thesis Committee members to complete the Thesis Defense Form and signature page.

After the thesis defense, the final doctoral dissertation and all associated forms and documents related to the completion of a Ph.D. must be submitted to the Graduate School by the first business day of May in order to graduate in the current academic year. Please consult the Dissertation Guidelines from the Graduate School for forms, documents, and additional information regarding the thesis defense process.

## **12. NIH/Graduate Partnership Program**

A handbook that addresses information specific to NIH-GPP program is available and should be reviewed by all GPP students and their respective committees.

### 13. Governance

The Graduate Program in Neuroscience is supervised by the Program Director, a senior faculty member appointed for a three-year term by the Steering Committee in consultation with the Department of Neuroscience Chair. The Director works with students, the Co-Director if there is one, the Steering Committee, faculty trainers and Advisory Committees to operate the Program. In consultation with the students, the Program Director annually appoints a Graduate Student Representative to serve as a liaison between the student body and the Program. The Co-Director, if there is one, is a tenured faculty member who is also appointed for a three-year term by the Steering Committee in consultation with the Department of Neuroscience Chair.

The **Steering Committee** serves as an advisory board to the Director and Co-Director of the Neuroscience Graduate Program and is comprised of at least five members: The Chair of the Department of Neuroscience, the PI of training grants designed to support NSGP students, a former Director or Co-Director of the NSGP, a current or former Chair or Graduate Program Director of a Department other than the Department of Neuroscience, and a representative of the junior NSGP training faculty. The Steering Committee has a number of responsibilities including advising the Director and Co-Director, reviewing the status of current faculty trainers, reviewing applications from potential new trainers, selecting the External Advisor, considering complaints and concerns of trainers related to programmatic issues and considering trainee-mentor problems that are not readily resolved by the Program Director.

Four committees oversee admissions and the graduate curriculum. Appointments to these committees are for three years. Faculty from at least two different departments will have representation on each committee. Committee composition will include at least one senior faculty trainer, one junior faculty trainer and a graduate student representative.

- The **Admissions Committee** receives and reviews applications for the annual admission process to the Graduate Program.
- The **Curriculum Committee** oversees proposed changes to the graduate curriculum.
- The **Special Events Committee** has responsibility to organize the annual events that bring together all members of the Program. The three major events are the annual NSGP retreat at the start of the academic year and the two recruitment weekends.
- The **Colloquium Committee** selects speakers for the NSGP Seminar series held every Thursday at 4 PM during the academic year.

The *External Advisor* is a senior faculty member from another University that serves as an external reviewer of the Graduate Program. The External Advisor will visit Brown to review the Program no less than once every two years. Annual visits may become required, and ad hoc consultations may occur at any time. During on-site visits, the External Advisor meets with students, faculty, post-doctoral fellows and selected Administrators in the Division of Biology and Medicine and the College. The goal of the visit is to identify areas for improvement and areas of success in training graduate students. The External Advisor provides a written report of the visit.

## 14. Faculty Trainers

Individuals are designated as Program Faculty Trainers by the Steering Committee. Faculty members seeking such designation should submit a Curriculum Vitae, a description of their current research interests, current funding sources and an account of their past training history to the Program Director for review by the Steering Committee. Appointment as a Program Faculty Trainer is based on an assessment by the Steering Committee of the faculty's potential to contribute to the Program. Continued membership as a Program Faculty Trainer is contingent upon a visible contribution in the areas of teaching, advising, training or Program administration.

There are two categories of trainers: Full Trainers and Provisional Trainers. Full Trainers meet all criteria listed below and can serve as a mentor to a graduate student. Provisional Trainers meet most but not all criteria below. For example, a faculty member may hold provisional trainer status if they have not yet secured stable funding to accept a graduate student into their lab full time. Provisional trainers can accept graduate students for laboratory rotations only and cannot serve as full-time mentors. A provisional trainer may request full trainer status from the Steering Committee once they meet the criteria listed below.

The training program maintains strict requirements for the inclusion of faculty as trainers while at the same time encouraging the participation of junior faculty and other senior faculty distributed throughout the University system. The Steering Committee will annually review all current and prospective trainers and add or remove trainers according to the criteria below. A full trainer in the NSGP must:

- Have an active, ongoing basic neuroscience research program;
- Actively participate in training activities;
- Have a record of successfully training graduate students. Junior faculty members with no prior training experience have eligibility, provided that they show exceptional promise as independent scientists and trainers. In these cases, a mentor will be assigned as a junior faculty sponsor.
- Have adequate research support to provide stable funding for the trainee;
- Have ability to provide instruction in the Core Curriculum or otherwise participate in a Neuroscience-related course in the Brown course offerings.

Individuals denied membership in the Program Faculty or approval as a Thesis Advisor by the Steering Committee may appeal this decision, by way of the Program Director to the active Training Faculty of the Program. The Training Faculty can override the Steering Committee's decision by a majority vote of those present; this vote to be reflected in the written minutes of the meeting at which it was taken. Sixty percent of the active training faculty will constitute a quorum for such a vote. Members unable to attend this meeting may vote by means of a written statement to the Program Director; in this instance the faculty member not attending the meeting will become counted for quorum purposes.

## 15. Resources and Academic Support

Brown University provides numerous wellness and support resources for graduate students, such as:

- Diversity Initiatives provides assistance with recording a lived or chosen name change into University systems to support T\* students (Graduate Center, 4th floor)
- Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) coordinates and facilitates services for students with physical, psychological, and learning disabilities, and temporary injuries (20 Benevolent Street, 1st floor). Please inform the Program Director if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodation or modification of any course procedures. As part of this process, you should be registered with SEAS and provide the course instructor with an academic accommodations letter. For more information, contact SEAS at (401) 863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free confidential counseling (J. Walter Wilson, Room 516, 401-863-3476). CAPS offers Saturday appointments for graduate students from 9 am to 4 pm during the academic year at Health Services, 13 Brown Street.
- Maria Suarez, Associate Dean of Student Support in the Graduate School, is dedicated to serving master's and PhD students (Horace Mann 110, maria\_suarez@brown.edu, 401-863-1802)

## 16. Leaves of Absence

Students seeking more information about Medical, Personal or other leaves of absence should contact Student Support Services (Graduate Center, 4th floor) and the Program Director. Further information can be found in the Brown Graduate School handbook. Return from leave requires permission of the Neuroscience Program, as stated in the Graduate handbook.

## 17. Academic Standing

The Program follows policies defined by the Graduate School handbook, as follows: Students' academic standing can be classified in four ways: good, satisfactory, warning, or termination. Each program's director of graduate study is required to maintain an updated and comprehensive census of the status of each student in his/her graduate program. DGSs are also required to update students on a regular basis regarding their academic status; requirements for the scheduling of these notifications are below.

Students who are in *good standing* are making both good and timely academic progress. No more than one incomplete can be carried on a student record in good standing.

*Satisfactory standing* indicates that a student has encountered difficulties of some kind – inadequate performance or slow progress in coursework, research, writing, etc. Since TA or RA assignments form part of a student’s professional training, performance in those areas can also affect academic standing (see [Financial Support for Graduate Study](#)). Two or more incompletes will, at minimum, result in a shift from good to satisfactory standing. This status level has no immediate impact on funding. If the concerns impacting a student’s status are not resolved, the student will move on to *warningstatus*.

*Warning status* signals chronic or severe problems. Students on warning must be given a written notice of their deficiencies and the consequences of those deficiencies. Students must also receive clear, written instructions of the steps to be taken (if possible) to regain good or satisfactory standing, and date-specific deadlines (typically one semester) for recovery. Such notice must come at the end of every semester that a student is on warning status.

If the deficiencies are not resolved by the specified deadline, the student on warning moves to *termination*. Students will typically continue to receive funding in a probationary state during the specified time period. Warning can lead to an immediate removal of funding depending on the severity of the problem, but this occurs only in rare circumstances and only with the express approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

*Termination status* signals severe and irrevocable problems. Termination indicates an immediate removal of matriculation/enrollment status, as well as all forms of financial support.

## **18. Graduate Student Grievance Procedures**

### Mediation:

Every graduate student is entitled to a fair and prompt hearing of grievances. Before invoking this procedure, however, a student who believes himself or herself to be aggrieved must first attempt to resolve the difficulty through discussion with the other person or persons involved.

If no resolution can be achieved by direct discussion, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, he or she must then address either the Program Director, a senior faculty member (Representative), or the Chair of the appropriate department with the aim of securing clarification and advice. The Program Director, Representative, or Chair shall then discuss the matter informally with the several parties and attempt to resolve it by mediation.

The Program Director, Representative, or Chair shall also prepare a memorandum outlining the problem, the steps taken and the proposed resolution. Copies of the memorandum shall be given to all persons involved.

If a mutually-satisfactory solution is not achieved by mediation, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, then the Program Director, Representative, or Chair shall make a determination as to whether the question at issue is or is not departmental in nature.

If it is determined to be departmental, the student may then file a written request for a review with the Chair of the department (see below - #2 Grievance Procedure); if not, no further action is taken at the

departmental level.

A student who disagrees with such a determination may appeal it to the Dean of the Graduate School, whose decision shall be final.

A student who has been unable to resolve a non-departmental question by personal effort may also make appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School; in this case with a view to securing advice and direction.

#### Grievance Procedure:

- If an unresolved grievance has been determined to be departmental, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further, he or she must, within a reasonable period of time, file a written appeal with the Chair of the appropriate department. This appeal must ask for review of the question and must specify the alleged injury, the reasons for the student's belief that he or she is aggrieved and the remedy sought.
- The Chair, within a reasonable period of time after receiving an appeal, shall refer it depending on its nature, either to a committee of review or to the departmental Faculty (see the following paragraphs). A student who believes that any procedure outlined in this section has not been carried out within a reasonable period of time may appeal to the Associate Dean for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for a determination of this allegation.
- If the grievance involves any question except that of a change in the degree for which the student is enrolled, it shall be referred to a committee of review, to be named by the Chair. This committee must include the Chair (unless he or she is the object of the appeal), at least two other faculty members and at least one graduate student member; when the exercise of academic judgment is required, the student member or members shall be non-voting.
- As expeditiously as possible, this committee of review shall hear the student, consider the evidence, confer with other persons concerned, and prepare a comprehensive report of findings and a majority vote of the members. It shall be the Chair's duty to carry out, so far as may be, the directions of the committee for the official record; either by the Chair or by a designated member of the committee, with a copy given to the student.
- If the grievance involves the question of a change in the degree for which the student is enrolled, it shall be referred to the regular faculty of the body to present his or her case, and may request the support of such witnesses or advisers as are deemed necessary by the student and the presiding officer. At the invitation of anyone personally involved in the appeal, the Dean of the Graduate School may at his or her discretion appoint members of the Graduate Council to act as observers. If a student's record is to be discussed in the presence of people other than officers of the University, the student must supply such waivers and take such steps as are necessary to satisfy the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act when the subject-matter requires confidential treatment.

- Minutes consisting of a summary of the proceedings of the appeal shall be kept, and copies supplied to the student and the Dean of the Graduate School. Decisions shall be by simple vote of the majority and shall be taken in a closed session; they shall be made known in writing to the student by the Chair of the department as soon as possible after a decision has been reached.
- Subsequent appeal of the decisions of the committee of review or of the Faculty of the department may be made to the Graduate Council on the ground that the grievance was not given an impartial and proper hearing. The Council shall consider such an allegation within a reasonable period of time after receiving it. If the Council determines that the student's complaint is justified, it shall ask to have the matter reconsidered by the department, itself monitoring if necessary the procedure.

Definitions and general provisions:

- Whenever the word "department" is employed herein, it shall be understood to include Divisions and Programs where applicable.
- Whenever the word "Chair" is employed herein, it shall be understood to include Divisional Deans and Program Directors where applicable.
- Whenever a Chair or a Graduate Representative is the object of an appeal, he or she should step aside and request the department to name a locum tenens.
- When an appeal is made in a department which by reason of insufficient number of available faculty finds that it cannot carry on the described procedure, this circumstance shall be made known by the Chair to the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council, which shall devise a special procedure for hearing the appeal, following as closely as practicable the model of the regular procedure. The special procedure may involve the ad hoc enlistment of faculty members from other departments or from the Graduate Council itself.