Procedures and Policies for Students Pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy Degree** in Medical Science

Interdisciplinary Graduate Program
Spring 2017

**And other associated degree programs such as the MS (thesis option)
Distributed to IBT Graduate Students – February 2017
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Introduction

This booklet summarizes the requirements for the completion of degree requirements for the PhD degree in Medical Science through the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program at the Institute of Biosciences & Technology (M.S. degree requirements are summarized at the end). The IBT Graduate Program offers specialization in the following areas:

Biochemistry and Structural Biology: The Biochemistry and Structural Biology track provides graduate students with the training and state-of-the-art biophysical tools to define the structure, function and detailed mechanisms of molecules that drive biological processes.

Cardiovascular and Lymphatic Biology: The Cardiovascular and Lymphatic Biology track provides graduate students with extensive and advanced training in basic and translational medical research in the focused field, and bridges the students to become independent scientists with creative and exploratory thinking.

Cellular and Molecular Biology: Research in this area spans a wide range of biological processes occurring in the systems of macromolecules, organelles, cells, tissues, organs or organisms using approaches of biochemistry, molecular biology, genetics and cell biology.

Clinical and Translational Science: The overall educational goal of this track is to prepare future biomedical researchers to identify and translate discoveries in the basic biomedical sciences into preventative, diagnostic and/or therapeutic applications that directly impact the health of patients and the community.

Microbial and Molecular Pathogenesis: Research in this track focuses on understanding the molecular details of the dynamic interactions between pathogenic microorganisms and their hosts, with the goal to prevent and treat infectious diseases and their sequela. This track provides graduate students with training opportunities in microbiology, biochemistry/biophysics, molecular biology, immunology, and structural biology.

General requirements for the Medical Science degree are reviewed initially and specific requirements for the individual tracks are presented in detail.

Overview of the Program

The Medical Science graduate program provides students with formal course work and experimental research leading to the PhD degree. Students are expected to demonstrate professional level knowledge and research skills in their chosen area. The first-year curriculum is meant to provide a broad-based foundation for students in the Medical Science program through course work in Medical Science and through research rotations leading to the selection of a faculty research advisor. In subsequent years, students must complete their formal course work, pass a preliminary examination, conduct an independent research project and prepare a dissertation. It is expected that research worthy of a PhD will constitute a significant contribution to the field in general and should be publishable in a peer-reviewed journal. Evaluation of the quality and quantity of the student’s research will be the responsibility of the student’s Advisory Committee. A general timeline for the program is shown below. Details and specific stages are discussed in the following sections, and more detail can be found in the Graduate Catalog available online through the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) http://ogaps.tamu.edu/.
Yearly Steps to Fulfill Doctoral Degree Requirements

**Year 1**
- Initiate Graduate Training with the **Individual Development Plan (IDP)**
- Core Courses
- Complete lab rotations (minimum of 3). Lab rotation forms must be submitted before rotations
- Presentations at the end of each rotation (3)
- Choose Research Advisor – Finalize lab choice by the end of first year and submit a letter of agreement/Laboratory Compact

**Year 2**
- Choose Advisory Committee Members – no later than 90 days prior to preliminary examination (*Preliminary Examinations are encouraged to be taken in the summer of year 2 and must be completed no later than spring semester of year 3.*)
- Meet twice yearly with Advisory Committee
- File Degree Plan (OGAPS requires degree plan by the end of the 5th semester)
- Discipline-Specific Courses
- Start Research Project

**Year 3**
- File Proposal – **no later than Spring of third year**
- Preliminary Exam – **must be completed no later than spring semester of year 3**
- Meet with Advisory Committee
- Admission to Candidacy – see details below

**Year 4-5**
- Research
- Meet with Advisory Committee
- Final Defense and Final Examination – **Must submit request to OGAPS no less than 10 days prior to scheduled examination/defense date**

**Academic Requirements**
Successful completion of the PhD degree requires 96 credit hours beyond a baccalaureate degree (64 credit hours beyond a master’s or professional degree). Within the Medical Science program, 24 of the 96 hours will typically be in formal course work and the remainder in research hours. Some latitude is possible, however, between formal course hours and research hours. Consult the Track Advisor and the Director of Graduate Programs for specific cases. Full-time graduate students supported by Graduate Assistantships must enroll in a minimum of 9 credit hours for fall and spring semesters and 6 credit hours for the summer (either 6 hours for the ten-week session or a combination of hours for both 5-week sessions). Students are required to remain in good academic standing with a minimum average GPA of 3.0. Failure to maintain this standard will result in the student being placed on academic deficiency, potential loss of stipend and can lead to dismissal. In addition to the formal graded course work, students are required to maintain adequate progress in their research endeavors and to participate in departmental functions such as seminars, journal clubs, lab meetings and any other professional activities.
**Coursework Requirements**

- IBT students are required to take IBST 681 – “Seminar- Medical Sciences”, which is held in the Fall & Spring Semesters. Students are required to report on four seminars per month during the semester. Once students complete/pass the Preliminary Exam, they will only be required to report on 1 seminar per month during the Spring/Fall semesters.

- 1st year grad students are exempt from taking the IBST 681 – “Seminar-Medical Sciences” course their 1st year.

- IBT students are required to take IBST 605 – “Biomedical Research of Professional Development” class held in the Fall or Spring semester, until they have passed their Preliminary Exam.

- IBT students are required to take the Ethics Course or Responsible Conduct of Research course.

**Graduate Student Roundtable**

The Graduate Student Roundtable is a new program to allow graduate students to meet with each other and the Director of the Graduate Program in an informal format to discuss the program and other student driven issues. The roundtable will meet once a month at noon (date to be determined) and a lunch will be served. The students will have the chance to suggest topics before each lunch and a significant portion of time during the hour will be devoted to questions, suggestions, discussion from the students.

The goal is to enhance dialog among students and between students and the Graduate Program. Further a goal is to have the students help drive the Graduate Program to meet their career needs.

This roundtable will be available TTVN for IBT grad students.

**Residence Requirement for Degrees Awarded by the Texas A&M Health Science Center**

A major purpose of the residence requirement for graduate study is to ensure the advantages of the university environment. These activities include, among others, accessibility to libraries, laboratory experiences, seminars and colloquia presented by faculty and other professionals, and numerous cultural events. The requirement also provides the faculty the opportunity to properly evaluate the student and their development, to guide and direct studies, and to determine competency. The Director of the Graduate Program may consider exceptions to this policy under special circumstances. Please see the student rules in the Graduate Catalog for details.

**Progress Towards the PhD**

**Year 1**

**Role of the Track Advisor**

The Track Advisor serves as the general program advisor to Medical Science graduate students and as academic advisor to first-year students. Questions about policies, procedures, and program requirements should be directed to the Track Advisor. First-year students should consult with the Track Advisor about their academic curriculum, and must obtain approval from the Track Advisor before registering for courses. Once a research advisor is identified, academic advisement becomes the responsibility of the Research Advisor.
IDP
The IDP (Individual Development Plan) is a tool through NIH that allows you to identify and map your career goals. The IDP will assist you with:

- Developing an Individual Development Plan customized to your needs
- Identifying, clarifying, and committing to goals based on your priorities and professional goals
- Creating and developing strategies for goal achievement
- Tracking progress toward your goals
- Understanding, evaluating and strengthening your technical and non-technical competencies
- Practicing confidently discussing strategies for aligning expectations with those of your supervisor
- Making the most out of a recent promotion, job opportunity, or other developmental prospect
- Analyzing alternatives and solutions.

Go to their website to utilize these tools: [http://trainingcenter.nih.gov/idp_consulting.html](http://trainingcenter.nih.gov/idp_consulting.html)

First Year Curriculum
The first year should be directed primarily towards meeting the core course requirements of the Medical Science Program. Each student should consult with the Track Advisor to develop a specific curriculum, which is most appropriate for that student and that meets the requirements for that track.

Choosing a Research Advisor – Laboratory Rotations
Students should select a faculty mentor (Research Advisor) by the end of their first academic year (generally by the start of the Summer Session for students entering the previous Fall). To facilitate this process, first year students supported by the Institute of Biosciences & Technology assistantships must participate in a minimum of three laboratory rotations during the academic year. A fourth rotation (summer) may be completed if a lab has not been found after the minimum rotations. The laboratory rotations provide the student an opportunity to become acquainted with the faculty, other graduate students, the available research projects, and specific laboratory techniques.

Students are encouraged to contact faculty members individually to discuss further specific projects and research opportunities in each lab. Track advisors are also a good source of potential rotation labs. Rotation forms should be completed and returned to the Graduate Program Office after deciding the labs in which the student will rotate.

During rotations, it is the student’s responsibility to arrange sufficient time to participate fully in lab activities. Typically, this will include discussions with the faculty member, contribution to ongoing research projects, attendance at lab meetings, and acquisition of specific technical skills specified by the faculty member. By the end of the Spring semester, the student should be prepared to make a final decision regarding a choice of faculty mentor. When choosing faculty to rotate with, it is important to ask the individual faculty members if they are planning to take students that year and also, whether he or she has available funding. Faculty members are not obligated to take students into their programs and may be unable to do so due to lack of space, funding, or time constraints. It is the student's responsibility to initiate discussions with faculty members about the availability of research positions in laboratories.
Finalizing Lab Choice
A letter of agreement should be submitted from the faculty mentor through the Center Director to the Graduate Office stating their willingness to take this student. The proposed track for matriculation should be indicated at this time. This agreement will be consummated with the completion and submission of the Laboratory Compact to the Program Coordinator of Graduate Studies.

Year 2

Advisory Committee Structure

Students should have their 1st committee meeting by the end of their 2nd year.
Each student is required to form an Advisory Committee that will oversee the student’s progress toward the PhD. Members of the committee will be determined by the Research Advisor in consultation with the student. The Advisory Committee should be formed no later than the end of the second semester in the second year of study. The Advisory Committee is required to meet with the student twice yearly to review the student’s progress. The committee will consist of no fewer than four members. Three IBT faculty members, of which one will be the student’s Research Advisor, and one faculty member outside of the IBT. The Research Advisor will be the chair of the committee unless the advisor is not a member of the Institute of Biosciences & Technology Faculty. In that case, a member of the IBT Faculty must serve as chair and the student’s advisor will serve as co-chair.

The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, the preliminary examination, the Dissertation or record of study and the final examination. The committee members’ signature on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS).

Degree Plan

Students are required to file a Degree Plan with the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) by the end of their 2nd year. The Degree Plan lists the courses, including research hours, which the student will complete as part of the PhD degree, and the total hours listed should equal 96 unless the student has a M.S. or professional degree in which case, the hours listed should total 64. This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) located on the website ogsdpss.tamu.edu. It is recommended that students consult with their Research Advisor about the content of the proposed Degree Plan prior to initiating the electronic submission. The Degree Plan will be electronically routed for approval by the Advisory Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies at COM prior to submission to the OGAPS. The Degree Plan should be filed during the second year of study (by the end of the 5th semester) and must be filed no later than 90 days prior to the preliminary examination. Any changes in the Degree Plan require approval by the student’s Research Advisor and Advisory Committee, and the student must file a Petition for Course Changes form through the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS).

Year 3

Preliminary Examination
The Preliminary Exam has two parts: written and oral.
Guidelines:

- Each student will prepare a written dissertation research proposal in the form of a federal research grant proposal (R21 or R01 formats) that includes the goals, aims, significance and experimental approaches to be addressed in the proposed dissertation research project.
- This proposal will conform to all relevant page limitations and format requirements of the specific federal research grant application selected for the proposal.
- The dissertation research proposal will be submitted to the members of the advisory committee prior to the initiation of the written preliminary examination.
- Students are strongly encouraged to work with the chair and the members of their advisory committee in the design and development of the dissertation research proposal prior to its submission as a component of the preliminary examination.
- Once the dissertation research proposal has been approved by the student’s advisory committee, as a part of the oral examination, it will be submitted for review and approval (for regulatory issues) by the TAMU Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS).

Written Exam

- The members of the student’s advisory committee will develop a joint written examination of at least 5 questions designed to evaluate the student’s level of mastery of all fields related to his/her graduate studies program (as reflected in the student’s Degree Plan).
- To promote consistency in the IBT preliminary examinations, a GPC Examination Review Panel comprised of at least two members of the IBT GPC and the chair of the student’s graduate advisory committee will review the questions submitted and select 5 questions that provide a fair evaluation of the student’s field of study. The Panel may work with the members of the advisory committee to modify and/or add additional questions to insure a fair and balanced written preliminary examination.
- The questions will be provided to the student who will have two weeks to provide written responses to three of the five questions (open book format).
- The answers prepared by the student should demonstrate mastery of the subject, an appropriate knowledge of the literature and an ability to conduct bibliographic research.
- The answer to each question should be 3 pages or less (Arial 11, 0.5 inch margins) excluding bibliographic references.
- The answers to the examination will be returned to the chair of the advisory committee who will distribute to the committee members for grading. All members of the committee (but not the chair) will evaluate the student’s responses to the questions with respect to evidence of mastery of the subject matter and knowledge of the relevant literature. All grades will be recorded as Pass or Fail.
- The grade for each question will reflect the majority vote of the committee members (a tie will be considered a pass). Students are required to achieve a passing grade on all questions answered to pass the written portion of the preliminary examination.
- All grading must be completed and the student notified of the results of the written examination within one week of the submission of the answers to the examination.

Oral Exam

- Within three weeks of the written preliminary examination (as reflected in the submission of the answers to the examination questions), the student will have an oral preliminary examination.
- All members of student’s advisory committee must participate in the oral preliminary examination.
• The oral preliminary examination will be based on the student’s dissertation research proposal and will be conducted in such a way as to provide a fair and balanced evaluation of the student’s mastery of the subject matter of the proposal, the design and implementation of the proposed research project, the analysis and interpretation of the anticipated results and the feasibility of the proposed research.

• A positive vote by all members of the committee with at most one dissention will be required for a student to pass the oral preliminary examination.

• The passing of the oral examination will constitute approval by the student’s advisory committee of the dissertation research proposal.

Prior to scheduling the preliminary examination with the other committee members, the committee chair will review with the student eligibility criteria, using the Preliminary Examination Checklist to ensure the student is ready for the examination. The following list of eligibility requirements applies:

• Student is registered at Texas A&M University for the semester or summer term during which any portion of the preliminary examination may fall. If the entire examination falls between semesters, then the student must be registered for the term immediately preceding the examination.

• An approved degree plan was on file with the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) at least 90 days prior to the first written examination.

• Student’s cumulative GPA is at least 3.000.

• Student’s degree plan GPA is at least 3.000.

• All committee members have scheduled or waived the written portion and agreed to attend the oral portion of the examination or have found a substitute. Only one substitution is allowed, and it cannot be for the committee chair.

• At the end of the semester in which the exam is given, there are no more than 6 hours of coursework remaining on the degree plan (except 605, 681, 691 & 601). The Director of Graduate Studies has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

• The time span from the first written examination to the oral is no more than three weeks. The Director of Graduate Studies has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

The IBT Program Coordinator will report the results of the Preliminary Examination to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, using the Report of Doctoral Preliminary Examination form and the Preliminary Examination checklist. Both forms must have the appropriate signatures (Original signatures of each committee member, the Director of the IBT Program and the Assoc. Dean of the IBT Graduate Program). These forms should be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) within 10 working days of the scheduled examination.

After passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for the doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination.

**Dissertation Proposal**

Students are required to submit a detailed proposal outlining their research project. The proposal should include relevant background information and sufficient description of the experimental
approaches so that the merit and feasibility of the project can be evaluated. The proposal must be approved by the Advisory Committee, and the Director of Graduate Studies prior to submission to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS).

The proposal should be approved and submitted no later than Spring semester of the third year. Please refer to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies' site for instructions on how to prepare your document.

The Dissertation Proposal is a description of proposed research and defines the scientific problem to be studied for the dissertation research. The Dissertation Proposal can be prepared as soon as the overall research plan is developed. There is no requirement or even expectation that a Proposal will contain significant preliminary data.

The Proposal should explain the rationale or approach and the methodology to be used. The final copy of the proposal should be at most 10 pages, single-spaced (not including Preliminary Data and References). A well-written proposal is organized according to NIH Grant Guidelines and should include 4-5 sections: 1) Specific Aims, 2) Background and Significance, 3) Preliminary Data (optional), 4) Experimental Design and Methods and 5) Literature Cited.

Specific Aims
The Specific Aims answer the question “What do you intend to do?”. The proposal should state the broad, long-term objectives and list concisely and realistically what the specific research described in this application is intended to accomplish and the hypotheses to be tested. One page is recommended.

Background and Significance
This section should answer the questions “What has already been done?” and “Why is the work important?”. Provide a brief sketch of the background for the present proposal, and also critically evaluate existing knowledge and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. State concisely the importance of the research described in this application by relating the specific aims to the broad, long-term objectives. Two to three pages are recommended.

Experimental Design and Methods
Explain how you will do the work. Students may use figures and diagrams to explain the background material or how certain kinds of experiments will be performed. Clearly outline the experimental design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the Specific Aims of the project. The Experimental Design and Methods section of the proposal should NOT be the kind of detailed description of protocols used in the Materials and Methods section of a paper. Rather, it should focus on how the data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the Aims. Provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the investigation. The inclusion of Preliminary Data is encouraged to support feasibility, but it is not required. If Preliminary Data is included (title the section Preliminary Data), it should be brief (3 pages at most). Although no specific number of pages is recommended for this section of the application, the total for Sections 1,2 and 4 may not exceed 10 pages.

Literature Cited
Use references to support statements or concepts. List references at the end of the proposal rather than throughout the text. Each citation must include the names of all authors, the title of the article or book, the name and volume number of the journal, page number and year of publication. The list should be relevant and current; it need not be exhaustive.
Students are expected to have read and understood all, or the pertinent parts, or each reference listed. References may be organized in any consistent fashion; for example, list in order of appearance and number consecutively in the text, or cite the authors in the text and list the references alphabetically by author.

**Admission to Candidacy**
To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have: (1) completed all formal coursework on the degree plan with the exception of any remaining 605, 601, 609, 681, or 691, (2) a 3.0 Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than C in any course on the degree plan, (3) passed the preliminary examination (written and oral portions), (4) submitted an approved dissertation proposal, (5) met the residence requirements. The final examination will not be authorized for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

**Dissertation Research**
The dissertation work must be the original research performed by the candidate. With the counsel of the Research Advisor and the student's committee the candidate will work on the research project until such time as the scholarly merit has been met. This will vary depending upon the research topic, but it is the student's responsibility to present and discuss the research with the Advisor and the committee, both formally and informally, so there is an assessment of progress. It is the responsibility of the Committee to determine when the research goals are met and to proceed with writing the dissertation.

**Year 4-5 – Completion**

**Dissertation**
The dissertation is a scholarly document which presents the research findings of the student in the context of the field of study. The format of the document is directed by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS), and guidelines for the preparation of the document can be found on the OGAPS website – ogaps.tamu.edu.

After successful defense and approval by the student’s advisory committee and the head of the student’s major department, a student must submit his/her dissertation in electronic format as a single PDF file. Additionally, a signed approval form must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS). Both the PDF file and the signed approval form are required. All forms are submitted by the IBT Program Coordinator to OGAPS.

**Final Examination**
Candidates for the PhD degree must pass a final examination administered by their Advisory Committee. The examination consists of two parts: 1) a public seminar where the student presents his/her research findings to an audience of faculty, students and staff and 2) an oral defense of the dissertation conducted by the Advisory Committee. As the final examination represents a culmination of the student’s graduate program, all faculty and students are encouraged to attend the public seminar. The **Request and Announcement of the Final Examination Form** must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date. Examinations/Defenses that are not completed and reported as satisfactory to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) within 10 working days of the scheduled examination/defense date will be recorded as failures. The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) must be notified in writing of any cancellations.

The Advisory Committee will submit its recommendations on the appropriate **Report of the Final Examination for Doctoral Candidates** form to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.
(OGAPS) regarding acceptability of the candidate for the doctoral degree. A student must be registered in the University in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken.

Exam results must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS). If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS). The student should consult the academic calendar for the deadlines to schedule a defense for that semester and for the last day that a student can defend to qualify for graduation that semester.

Additional Policies and Procedures:

Students Entering with Advanced Degrees – students entering with an MS, MD or DVM are required to complete 64 credit hours, where approximately one-third will be course work.

Transfer Credits - Up to 12 hours may be transferred with Approval by the Advisory Committee, IBT Graduate Program Manager, and Assoc. Dean of the IBT Graduate Program. Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPR. An official transcript from the university at which transfer courses are taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Petitioning to Waive Required Classes – A letter should be written from the student, through the advisor to the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in the COM-Office of Graduate Studies in College Station.

Stipend – The Institute of Biosciences and Technology will provide stipend support for first-year graduate students at an amount indicated in the offer letter. Beyond year 1, stipend support will be the obligation of the student’s Research Advisor. Students’ Research Advisors will provide full support for tuition/fees.

Requirements for Master of Science

The College of Medicine has established a Master of Science Degree in Medical Science. The curriculum for the MS Medical Science is designed to develop new understanding through research and originality. Progression to the MS degree is well defined in the Graduate Catalog on the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) website. [http://ogaps.tamu.edu/](http://ogaps.tamu.edu/)

The steps are summarized here. There are two options for the MS in Medical Science: the thesis and non-thesis.

MS Thesis option - A minimum of 32 semester credit hours of approved courses and research is required for the thesis option Master of Science degree.

Requirements for MS (non-thesis) – A minimum of 36 semester credit hours of approved coursework is required for the Non-Thesis Option. Ordinarily the student will devote the major portion of his or her time to work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest.

Degree Plan

The student’s advisory committee, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan. The degree plan must be completed and filed with the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) prior to the deadline imposed by the student's college or interdisciplinary degree program, if applicable, and no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination or thesis defense. A student should submit the degree plan using the online Document Processing Submission System (DPSS) located on the website [ogsdpss.tamu.edu](http://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/).
A student submitting a proposed degree plan for a Master of Science degree should designate on the official degree plan the appropriate program option. Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student’s academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student’s Request for Final Examination is received by OGAPS.

**Graduate Committee**

The student’s advisory committee for the Master’s degree will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty, representative of the student’s fields of study and research. The chair or the co-chair of the advisory committee must be the student’s major department (or intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), and at least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student’s major department. The outside member for students in an interdisciplinary program must have an appointment to a department different from the chair of the student’s committee. The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student’s advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair) with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student’s research and thesis, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

For more information on the Masters in Medical Science Program, please refer to the [Graduate Student Catalogue](mailto:clewis@ibt.tamhsc.edu) or e-mail clewis@ibt.tamhsc.edu.

**Additional Policies and Procedures**

**Academic Standing** – Maintaining a 3.0 GPA is considered to be satisfactory academic standing. If a student falls below this minimum, two long semesters (excluding summers) are allowed to achieve satisfactory standing. If a student fails to meet satisfactory academic status at the end of this time, loss of stipend or dismissal from the program may be recommended by the Director of the program and be expected.

**Absence during the semester** – Students are obligated to inform the program if, for any reason, they are unable to participate in classes, rotations, or other programmatic activities for any significant time (typically more than 1 day). In such cases, the student should notify the advisor, if he or she has chosen an advisor.

**Leave policy** – If extended leave (over two weeks) is requested for any reason, the student must have this approved by the advisor or have an approved Leave of Absence (LOA) on file with the IBT Graduate Program Office. Students on LOA are not eligible for stipend support.

**Family Medical Leave Act**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a benefit that allows qualified employees to take up to twelve weeks of leave per fiscal year for his or her own personal illness, for the birth or adoption of a child, or to care for a family member. Employees may also take FMLA leave to take care of personal and family matters in the event a spouse or another eligible family member is called to active duty in the Armed Forces. Please see [website](mailto:clewis@ibt.tamhsc.edu) for more information.

**Student Resources:**

Visit these websites for more information on the PhD program in Medical Science.
Office of Research and Graduate Studies
Visit the College of Medicine website
https://medicine.tamhsc.edu/rgs/

Institute of Biosciences & Technology
http://www.ibt.tamhsc.edu/education/

Registrar
The Office of the Registrar has the responsibility to maintain and store student records. Importantly, this office is the contact for degree audits and for transcripts.

College Station: 979-845-1031
http://registrar.tamu.edu/Home

IBT Grad Program Coordinator: 713-677-7612
clewis@ibt.tamhsc.edu

Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS)
OGAPS serves the Texas A&M Graduate and Professional student community. They have many programs to facilitate interdisciplinary research and help graduate students with career development. Their website has links to calendars, deadlines, forms, the graduate catalog and student life.

ogaps@tamu.edu
http://ogaps.tamu.edu/Home

International Student Services
Assistance with visas, ELPE information, legal issues, writing center, etc. Visit their website for a full list of resources.

http://iss.tamu.edu/
iss@tamu.edu
979-845-1824