

Graduate Student Handbook

2007-2008

**Department
of
Biological Sciences**

The University of Toledo

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INTRODUCTION

This is an effort to present useful information to all new graduate students. This handbook covers issues that students may experience on a daily basis and policies that govern their academic maturation. Most information a graduate student needs is not contained in a single document or university department. By combining information from these various sources, we hope to answer questions that may arise during your time at the University of Toledo.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Please see the graduate catalog and Biological Sciences degree requirements for complete information and current policies. Call the Graduate School (x4723) or the Biological Sciences Office (x2065) for specific questions.

Plan of Study

This should be one of the first things that you and your major professor discuss. A Plan of Study lists all the courses that you intend to take, the number of credit hours, and when the course is to be taken. It should contain all the required courses as well as any courses that would aid in your own research. Plans should be submitted early so your schedule can be set, as some courses may not be offered every semester or every year. The Plan needs to be approved by your major professor, committee, the department, and the Graduate School. The form should be updated when any significant changes occur (i.e., M.S. to Ph.D. switch). Blank forms are available in the Department Office. M.S. students must submit their Plan of Study by the end of their first year. Ph.D. students typically submit their DPP (Doctoral Program Plan) during their second or third year (about the same time they schedule their oral comprehensive exam).

One suggestion: only place courses on the form that you actually intend to take. Any courses not taken by graduation have to be explained. So if you think you might like to take a course, but are not sure, leave it off. It is easier to explain that you have taken more than expected than it is to explain why you did not complete the submitted and approved Plan.

Grades

As a graduate student, you must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher at all times. Should you fall below this standard, you will be placed on academic probation. Failure to be removed from academic probation within one semester can result in loss of your teaching assistantship and removal from the graduate program. All classes reported on your Plan of Study form must have a grade of "B" or better. The Graduate School considers grades of "B-" or less unacceptable. There is no academic forgiveness policy for removing grades below "C-" upon retake of the class.

Comprehensive Examination

Graduate students at the M.S. and Ph.D. level are required to pass a suite of examinations as part of the degree requirement. M.S. level students must complete a comprehensive Oral Examination if their GPA in the “required course load” is below 3.0. The exam should be taken as early as possible, following the completion of the required courses. The exam is administered by the Thesis Committee and will test the student’s understanding of fundamental biological concepts. The Oral Examination may also include specific questions relating to the area of research the student is pursuing. Ph.D. students must pass both oral and written examinations. The written Ph.D. qualifying examination must be passed before the beginning of the third year of the program. Information about the format and timing of the written Ph.D. qualifying examination is available from Drs. Leisner and Shemshedini. The Oral Examination is a defense of the student’s dissertation proposal. Students may confer with Committee members for information regarding expectations and format.

Additionally, Master’s and Ph.D. candidates must pass an oral defense of their thesis or dissertation. This defense is typically done in the final semester of the student’s tenure. The exams and defense must be passed before receiving a graduate degree.

Teaching

As a teaching assistant you will be expected to teach each semester. Master’s students typically teach two introductory biology labs each semester and Ph.D. students typically teach one upper division lab each term. TA’s are expected to attend their TA meetings and hold five hours of office hours, at least one of which is held in the Biology Help Center (BO 1013). Graduate students must be present and available in the Help Center during their assigned times (arriving late, leaving early or sitting in any other place than the Help Center is not acceptable). Everyone has different teaching styles; however, if you are teaching a lab for the first time, seek out a graduate student who has taught the lab before. They can give you ideas, notes, past quizzes, exams, and general advice on what did and did not work in the past. In most cases, lab formats are very similar from one year to the next, even if changes in content do occur. Most graduate students will be more than willing to talk to you about their past teaching experiences. Make use of this valuable resource!

Grading and Proctoring

Graduate students who receive financial assistance from the Department are required to serve as proctors or graders, as well as teaching assistants, each semester. During the first week of classes, a form for times when one is available will be distributed. Turn this form in by the required deadline. Students who are required to proctor or grade and fail to complete the form will be scheduled at the Department Chair's discretion.

Policy on Off-campus Work

Graduate students who receive a stipend are not allowed to work outside of the University during the semesters of the award. This includes any weekend and after-hours jobs. The Department, as well as the Graduate School, maintains that students who are TA's or RA's, taking full time credit, and keeping up their GPA, are working full-time. The Department can take away stipends from students. Outside employment takes the most valuable asset a graduate student has ...TIME!

Immigration regulations do not permit international students to be employed outside of the school at any time. However, international students may work between semesters, but only at on-campus jobs. For specific questions, please talk to the Graduate School (UH 3240, ext. 4723, also on the web at <http://www.utoledo.edu/grad-school/>) or someone in the Department Office.

Registration

Registering for classes can be done by one of two methods. The first option is to register over the Internet (Web for Students at myut.utoledo.edu); it is convenient and requires no paperwork. Certain classes may require the signature of the instructor. Registration after the first week of classes or when a signature is required must be done at Rocket Hall. Add/Drop forms can be found in the Biological Sciences Office BO 1025. The second method is to register in person at Rocket Hall. Students who choose this option will need to fill out the registration form and have an advisor's signature. One can opt out of parking and legal service fees by either registration method.

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Teaching Assistant Duties

As a new teaching assistant there are many new things for you to learn. Although we will be unable to tell you how to teach or deal with difficult students, we can lend some advice on the daily issues like supplies, photocopying, and finding help.

Teaching Supplies

Brenda Leady is the lab coordinator (x2181) and is responsible for coordinating all of the department's teaching labs. She is the primary resource for the introductory labs (BIOL 2160 and 2180) and is responsible for writing the lab manuals, syllabi and quizzes, and will provide you with all of your supplies, including a copy of the textbook. If you are teaching a lab other than 2160 or 2180, you and the faculty member will be responsible for obtaining and setting up

the necessary supplies for each lab. If you have any comments/concerns, please see Brenda first. Please note that Brenda can also help you find equipment that is shared among several labs (forceps, gloves, seine nets, aquatic chemistry kits, chemicals). Do not remove any supplies from BO 1005 without asking Brenda or John Arnold (lab technologist).

For any problems that arise with lab instruction after hours you may contact Brenda on her cell phone (419-277-1896).

Overhead Transparencies

Transparencies for overheads to be used in copiers can be found in the desk drawer under the fax machine in the Biosciences office. Please only take as many as you need. Should you need a color transparency, check with the returning graduate students as to the protocol. In general each color transparency costs \$2.00, so please print these sparingly.

Photocopies

Each semester you will have to make photocopies for your students. You may use the photocopier in the department office. Should you require more than 30 copies, fill out a copy request form in the office and give Carol 24 hours notice. If you have an “emergency”, ASK. Carol may be able to run copies on the Lanier copier in the back room. NOTE: Only office staff may operate the Lanier. If Carol is unavailable, ask Linda Hegedus. Please do not send students to the office to make individual copies.

Secretarial Duties

Currently, the two departmental secretaries are Linda Hegedus and Carol Hepner. Although both can help you with any departmental problem, they perform different duties. Carol will be your primary contact person for most day-to-day issues, while Linda serves as the secretary to the Chair and handles budget and personnel issues. Below is a guide for you to use to obtain answers to questions and solutions to problems that will occur. Remember, it is only a guide. Feel free to ask either Carol or Linda a question, should the other be unavailable. But please remember to give our secretaries the respect they deserve - they make the department run!

Carol:

- Facility problems (overflowing toilets, flooding ceilings, broken doors, etc.); she will submit work orders
- Keys (for when you need to order your own, or you need to borrow one)
- Office equipment dilemmas (how to work the fax, photocopier in need of toner, copy machine malfunctions, etc.)
- Graduate School forms (Plan of Study, Registration, etc.)
- Mail

Linda:

- Personnel paper work (including department appointment forms, tuition waivers)
- Financial reimbursement (seminars, travel expenses) from the department

Business Services Officer

Currently, Donna Braswell is the Business Services Officer for Biosciences and Environmental Sciences. If you are in a research lab with grant support, you may need to interact with her on grant purchases or travel reimbursements. Typically she interacts with the Principal Investigator(s) on the grant, or their designees (i.e., technician/postdoc). Her office is located in the Arts and Sciences Instrumentation Center in the Bowman Oddy basement room 205B (Ext. 7861).

Seminar Duties

During the course of fall and spring semesters, the department invites researchers for seminar presentations on Friday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. (day and time is subject to change). Forty-five minutes before seminar, time is made available for all Biosciences graduate students to meet with the speaker. In addition, there is a small reception with snacks that is to be prepared by one of our graduate students prior to the seminar.

Each Biosciences graduate student is assigned at least one day per year to prepare the snacks. The BGSA president is responsible for assigning these duties. If you are unable to fulfill your assigned task, it is your responsibility to make certain someone else will take over your place and inform the BGSA president and the professor in charge of seminar (not the speaker) who will be taking over your responsibility.

If you are assigned for snacks you must purchase, set-up, and clean up the food and beverages. Linda Hegedus will prepare a form to **reimburse you up to a maximum of \$30**. Make sure you give Linda your **itemized receipts, signed on the back**. If you exceed this amount you can consider it a donation. **All food and beverages should be ready by 3:15 p.m.** Coffee, tea, sugar, cream, cups, napkins, and coffee pots are kept in WO 3246. Ice can be obtained from the ice machine on the fourth floor. Responsible students should check the supply in advance. You can be as creative as your \$30 maximum and time allow. Please be mindful of the dietary needs of others (diabetics, vegetarians, Kosher, etc.). Below is a list of suggestions. Provide enough for about 30 people.

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Cookies | Seasonal foods | Fresh fruit | Fresh vegetables |
| Hummus | Chips/Dips | Chicken wings | Cheese trays |
| Cake | Brownies | Cupcakes | Ethnic dishes |
| Pizza | Tacos/Burritos | Bagels | Swedish meatballs |

Pop, juice, coffee & hot water for tea

COMPUTER CLUSTERS

Departmental Computers

Either MacIntosh or PC computers are available to graduate students in their research labs. In addition, the former undergraduate student cluster (BO 1014), which had 12 Dell computers, has been relocated to BO 1099 which is in the north wing of Bowman Oddy near the lecture halls). However, this will no longer be a Biosciences room. It will be the Arts & Sciences Videoconferencing classroom. These computers are intended for work-related use. As a professional and common courtesy, students working on schoolwork and research have priority over those surfing the Internet and playing in chat rooms or games.

Currently, there are two computers in the Graduate Student Lounge in B0 1013. There is one printer. There is also a scanner on one of the computers, and those that need to use this for scanning have priority.

Paper and toner cartridges for the printers can be obtained from Carol Hepner or Linda Hegedus. Dr. Creutz (B0 1015) can help if you have any software or hardware problems with the Macintosh computers.

Public Computer Clusters

There are several public computer clusters that serve the entire campus. The closest clusters to the BO-WO complex are in BO 2051 and BO 3051, in the basement of Carlson Library and the Student Union. The Student Union clusters are open 24/7. You will need your UTAD account in order to use these facilities. An individual UTAD account can be created at no cost at myUTaccount.utoledo.edu.

Keys

Be sure to contact Carol as soon after arrival as possible to complete a key request card for each key you will need. Only request keys for the rooms to which you will need access; i.e. your lab, office, teaching lab, and front entrance to BO. It may take several weeks before you will receive your new keys. Please safeguard their security, as you are responsible for the replacement cost of any lost keys (a charge of \$25 per lost key). When you graduate you must return all your keys to Plant Operations; any unreturned keys will cost you (not the department) \$25.

BGSA/ GSA

Biology Graduate Student Association (BSGA)

All graduate students in the department of Biological Sciences are expected to give service to the BSGA by attending at least one meeting/semester and helping in each of the following areas.

1) Picnics/Parties

Participating in one of the following capacities for a least one departmental picnic or party: cooking, clean-up, set-up, shopping, entertainment.

2) Organization

BGSA administration: taking attendance at meetings, proctoring and snack/slide assignment scheduling, or taking care of the graduate student lounge.

Graduate Student Association (GSA) – located in Student Union Room 3514

All graduate students are members of the GSA, and as members are eligible for travel grants. Students presenting papers or posters at a conference are eligible for \$175, while those who attend a conference are eligible for \$75. Deadlines for submission are near the middle of the semester; the BSGA will notify graduate students of the deadlines as soon as the dates become available. It is important to remember that the monies will not be released until the semester after the application has been submitted. More information can be obtained by contacting the GSA at ext. 2373 or visiting the GSA web site <http://utgsa.utoledo.edu>

Other Funds

The Biosciences department awards up to \$250/year for students who give paper/poster presentations at conferences. Grants can also be used to pay for travel expenses. Talk to your advisor about applying for grants and obtaining other sources of funding. Travel grants from the host society can often be awarded to graduate students presenting at national/international meetings; be sure to apply early for these.

STUDENT PERKS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Biology Graduate Student Lounge/Tutoring Center

The Department of Biosciences Graduate Student Lounge is located in BO 1013 and is available for students to gather, eat, and relax. The cleanliness of this lounge is dependent on all of us. The custodians will empty the trash and occasionally mop the floors, but we are all responsible for cleaning our own dishes, the microwave, tables, and refrigerator. This room also has a designated area in the front for tutoring Biology undergraduates.

E-Mail

E-mail is available free of charge to all registered UT students. To access accounts, you must first go to email.utoledo.edu. Check on Secure Access and enter your utad login and your password.

Student ID Cards and Account

For many different services (library, athletic events, computer clusters, registration, etc.) you are required to present your student ID card and/or account. You will be issued one free card at Parking Services, Rocket Hall 1610, ext. 5843. If you lose or have your card stolen, you will need to purchase a new one. Similarly, an individual fee account can be created at Rocket Hall.

Student Recreation Center

All UT Students are entitled to use the Student Recreation Center free of charge once you have your ID. The facilities include a half Olympic-sized pool, a diving well, swirly slides, sauna, hot tub, nautilus machines, indoor soccer, basketball, volleyball, squash and racquetball courts, running track, climbing wall, foosball, pool and table tennis, as well as many other activities. Memberships are available at reduced rates for family members, spouses, and significant others. You can call x3700 for information on these memberships and to find out times of operation that vary through the year.

Library Services

The Carlson Library (CL) offers several different services to students. In order to check out books and use facilities you will need your student ID card. The library has a web page with an electronic card catalog serving books, journals, and audio-visual materials. One feature is free Interlibrary Loan services. To obtain a book that our library does not have, you can order it over the Internet on the library home page <http://www.cl.utoledo.edu/>. To obtain a journal article that our library does not from the Northwest Ohio Depository you must file a request through the CL website.

Our Department of Academic Support will also make 2 x 2 35mm slides from your Power Point presentations. They will also make and laminate a poster for you. There are fees involved, so ask your advisor if there is money available for these services before dropping off your materials. Contact Sue, ext. 4404 or Terry, ext. 4481 with questions.

For further questions regarding Carlson Library call at ext. 2324, or visit the information desk.

The University of Toledo's Health Science Campus also houses many resources that may be of particular interest to our graduate students. These include updated textbooks, online journals and other resources, which can be found at the Mulford Library. Mulford Library's phone number is 419-383-4225 and it is located at 3045 Arlington Ave.

Payroll Deductions

Any graduate student receiving a paycheck from the University is entitled to two types of payroll deductions: 1) University of Toledo Student Health Care Insurance; and 2) Housing (if stipend is sufficient). Depending upon the deduction plan you choose (and yes, there are several choices), you may have to re-register for the deductions every semester, just before summer only, or not until the following school year. Proper forms can be obtained from the Graduate School at UH 3240 or contact Terri Hayes (Administrative Secretary) at Ext. 5253, or go to the web site www.gradschool.utoledo.edu/

Health Insurance

Health insurance is now mandatory for domestic students with 6 or more on-campus credit hours and one credit hour for international students, unless you show proof of insurance on a waiver form. The waiver form is available on the Web for Students on the Registration page by clicking on "Health Insurance Waiver Form," following the instructions and clicking on "Submit." To waive you will need to provide the following information: Policy Number (Subscriber ID), insurance company name and their telephone number. The deadline for waiving health insurance is the last day of add/drop. This form will be available on the website until September 4, 2007, for fall term. International students with health insurance must contact the Insurance Coordinator, Tish Fournier Ext. 3466 or Ext. 3474, at the Student Medical Center, to obtain a waiver. On-line waivers will not be accepted for international students. **Health insurance deductions are based on a 12-month policy.** Only Graduate Assistants attending both in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 may enroll in the payroll deduction plan that carries strict cancellation rules regarding insurance. You may not change levels of insurance or cancel the insurance until the beginning of the next term. The insurance is illness/injury insurance only and does not cover any other types of preventative care (i.e. yearly exams). Spouses and dependents can also be under the insurance. However, only students enrolled at the university can use the Student Medical Center. The website address for the Student Medical Center is www.shs.utoledo.edu where applications and specific information can be found.

The UT policy does not cover dental care, but there is a local dental hygiene clinic run by Owens Community College that is very reasonable. Cleanings are usually \$25 and include a full

exam with both regular and panoramic x-rays. The clinic's staff is final year dental hygiene students supervised by dentists. They will also do discount fillings, reconstructions and repair. They do not perform oral surgery. The only draw back is that visits take longer than a regular dentist. For more information or to set up an appointment call (567) 661-7294.

Parking

Parking on campus can be challenging, especially if you come to school in the middle of the day. The best times to find a spot are early in the morning, late in the afternoon, 10 minutes before the hour and 5 minutes after any hour.

You will be issued a parking permit through the Student Information System (SIS) by default and the amount of \$107.75 per semester with 12 credit hours or more, or \$60.00 for under 12 credit hours will automatically be added to your student invoice. To not receive a student permit you must either "OPT-OUT" when you register, or, if a permit is received, return the permit to the Parking Services Office RH 1610 before the end of the Add-Drop grace period for a full refund.

Graduate Assistants are initially classified by SIS as a "student" and they will automatically receive a student parking permit. This student permit may be exchanged for a staff permit, which will allow you to park in any faculty/staff lot, if you are listed on the University Human Resource System (HRS) with a current job assignment for the fall term. The exchange may be done at Parking Services RH 1610 and will be at no cost to you.

Parking Services can be contacted at Ext. 5843, RH 1610. The website for Parking Services is <http://parkingservices.utoledo.edu/students.asp>.

There is a shuttle service available on campus as well. For schedules and fare information call the Transit Services Office at Ext. 1026, or visit their website at www.transit.utoledo.edu.

Housing

The Office of Residence Life now offers housing for graduate students in the East wing of the Horton International House. The Horton International House offers suite-style living, private baths, kitchens and no meal plan requirement. Payroll deduction is also available for housing. For more information on this living option, contact the Office of Residence Life (ext. 2941) or refer to the website at www.residencelife.utoledo.edu.

Textbooks

There are various places to buy and resell your textbooks. The UT Bookstore is located on the first floor of the Student Union and lists books by course number, carries supplies and has reasonable prices. Your second choice is the off-campus Bancroft Student Bookstore. A third option may be found on the Internet at any of the bookstore sites. You will need to have the correct title and it is helpful to have the authors and edition numbers. You can easily get these

by asking the professor who is teaching the class. Books ship within 1-5 days after the order is placed and usually cost less than or the same as the UT Bookstore.

Website

Additional information about the Department, BGSA, graduate programs, and faculty research can be found on our website <http://www.biosciences.utoledo.edu>.