



**St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital**  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

**Biomedical Sciences PhD Program  
Student Handbook  
2024-2025**

*Effective August 2024*

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# Introduction

## BMS PhD Program Leadership

Name	Office Location	Email Address	Phone Number
<b>Wilson Clements, PhD</b> Associate Dean	DTRC D3022E	wilson.clements@stjude.org	901-595-5940
<b>Cassandra VanDunk, PhD</b> Assistant Dean	MTC IA1219	cassandra.vandunk@stjude.org	901-595-1503
<b>Alex Frawley, MS</b> Program Specialist	MTC IA1217	alex.frawley@stjude.org	901-595-4581

Students may direct program-related questions, concerns, or other information to [BMSPhD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPhD@stjude.org). This account is monitored by the Assistant Dean and Program Specialist.

Please reach out to the St. Jude Graduate School (SJGS) staff below if you have questions about the following:

- [BMSPhD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPhD@stjude.org)
  - General BMS program questions, student advising, courses and curriculum, BMS events, BMS-specific policies, recruitment, and other miscellaneous BMS concerns: [BMSPhD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPhD@stjude.org)
  - Program milestones and requirements
  - Notification of awards publications, grants, or other major accomplishments
- Graduate School requirements: SJGS Registrar, Tiffany Polk-Young
- Financial matters (stipends, tuition, funding sources, reimbursements): Operations Coordinator, Dayna Baker, or Finance Contractor, Jim Keith
- General Technology issues – Contact IS Service Desk
- SJGS Issued Technology issues or software needs – Dell Clemons

## Program Requirements and Milestones

### Program Overview

The Biomedical Sciences doctoral program centers on performance of original biomedical research with formal coursework and trial laboratory rotations in the first year leading to selection of a thesis laboratory and advancement to candidacy by the end of the second year. Successful completion of the program and conferral of the doctoral degree requires successful completion of a minimum of 90 credit hours, satisfactory academic progress, publication of first author or co-first author original research, and defense of the doctoral thesis.

### Student Learning Objectives

SLO 1: Demonstrate mastery knowledge of central biomedical concepts and competency in biomedical research methods and strategies.

SLO 2: Critically evaluate the scientific literature in the biomedical sciences, including the choice of methods applied to problems and the interpretation of results.

SLO 3: Develop the ability to think critically and work collaboratively to design rigorous and reproducible experiments in order to solve scientific questions.

SLO 4: Communicate clearly, accurately, and professionally to disseminate scientific concepts and research results in visual, oral, and written form to diverse audiences.

SLO 5: Plan and execute, with independence, original and extensive laboratory research that advances knowledge in the selected area of concentration in the biomedical sciences.

SLO 6: Demonstrate advanced ability to effectively write and publish technical documents

### **Curriculum Goals**

- Establish essential background knowledge
- Discuss in the context of state-of-the-art research
- Expose students to the full spectrum of basic translational to clinical research
- Develop skills to critically interpret current literature
- Cultivate ability to develop and test hypotheses
- Build discussion and presentation skills
- Develop advanced multidisciplinary thinking

## **Program Curriculum**

# PhD – BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES 2024-2025 CORE CURRICULUM

Term	Year	Course No.	Course	Credits
Fall	1	BMS8011	Genes to Proteins	3
Fall	1	BMS8101	Cell Biology	3
Fall	1	BMS8201	Developmental Biology	3
Fall	1	BMS8312	Biostatistics	3
Fall	1	BMS8511	Topics in Clinical & Translational Research I	1
Fall	1	BMS8951	Laboratory Rotation I	3
Fall				16
Spring	1	BMS8702	Cancer Biology	3
Spring	1	BMS8832	Immunology and Infectious Diseases	3
Spring	1	BMS8902	Pharmacology & Chemical Biology	2
Spring	1	BMS8512	Topics in Clinical & Translational Research II	1
Spring	1	BMS8952	Laboratory Rotation II	3
Spring	1	BMS8953	Laboratory Rotation III	3
Spring	1	BMS8301	Computational Biology	1
Spring				16
Summer	1	BMS8994	Dissertation Research Y1 and YR2	4
Summer				
<b>Credits Earned Year 1</b>				
Fall	2	BMS8971	Scientific Writing & Communications I	1.5
Fall	2	BMS8994	Dissertation Research YR1 and YR2	9
Fall	2	BMS8411	Core Facilities I	0
Fall				
Spring	2	BMS8994	Dissertation Research YR1 and YR2	9
Spring	2	BMS8972	Scientific Writing & Communications II	1.5
Spring	2	BMS8422	Core Facilities II	0
Spring				
Summer	2	BMS8994	Dissertation Research YR1 and YR2	4
Summer				4
<b>Credits Earned Year 2</b>				
Fall	3	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	9
Fall				
Spring	3	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	9
Spring				
Summer	3	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	4
Summer				
<b>Credits Earned Year 3</b>				
Fall	4	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	9
Fall				
Spring	4	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	9
Spring				
Summer	4	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	4
Summer				
<b>Credits Earned Year 4</b>				
Fall	5	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	9
Fall				
Spring	5	BMS9304	Dissertation Research	9
Spring				4
<b>Credits Earned Year 5</b>				
<b>Minimum Credits Required</b>				<b>90</b>

Note: The Doctoral Degree is awarded at the successful completion of a minimum of 90 credit hours and the student's dissertation.

## Overview of Major Milestones

The Graduate School will award the doctoral degree upon the successful and satisfactory completion of the following requirements:

- Required coursework with a minimum 3.0 GPA;
- Three unique laboratory rotations;
- Identification and acceptance into a dissertation laboratory;

- Attendance and participation in required journal clubs, seminars, and laboratory meetings;
- Candidacy Qualifying Examination;
- Responsible Conduct of Research training;
- Submission of an extramural grant application;
- A minimum of one first author or co-first author primary research manuscript published, in press, or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal;
- Written dissertation; and • Oral dissertation defense.

Students are encouraged to track milestone achievement utilizing the BMS PhD Program Milestone Checklist (see Appendix 1).

## First Year of Study

### First Year Coursework

First year courses survey a series of fundamental biomedical concepts particularly relevant to investigation of basic biology and catastrophic pediatric disease. Course lectures are recorded via WebEx and uploaded to the Canvas site for students to have access to later if needed. Required coursework includes:

- Fundamental topics in biology: Genes to Proteins, Cell Biology, and Developmental Biology;
- Biological insights into disease and therapy: Cancer, Immunology & Infectious Diseases, Pharmacology and Chemical Biology;
- Topics in Clinical and Translational Research, which includes human subjects' protection training and six sessions including experimental and conceptual components. Clinical shadowing is embedded in this course throughout the first year;
- Biostatistics and Computational Biology, with sections on Biostatistical Methods and Introduction to Research and Clinical Genomics.

### Laboratory Rotations Requirement

An important component of students' first year training is three rotations in the laboratories of graduate faculty. Students can learn about potential dissertation labs through 1) Website profiles of faculty (<https://www.stjude.org/education-training/st-judegraduate-school-of-biomedical-sciences/academics/phd-biomedicalsciences/dissertation-mentors-for-phd-in-biomedical-sciences.html>) 2) Orientation week poster sessions where faculty accepting students will present research and be available for questions 3) Lunch & Learn Research+ Talks scheduled throughout the first year.

Students are encouraged to contact faculty directly to discuss potential rotations, and to learn more about the research, mentoring style, expectations of students, and the possibility of doing a rotation in the lab. Students are encouraged to review Laboratory Fit Considerations (see Appendix 2.1) when thinking about possible rotation and dissertation labs.

When the student and faculty member agree to schedule a rotation, the student and mentor should complete the **Laboratory Rotation Agreement Form** (see Appendix 2.2) specifying rotation terms. The completed form should be sent directly to the Associate Dean for final approval and signature. Each rotation will be six weeks long with limited overlapping coursework to ensure that students become fully immersed in the research of their chosen laboratories. Students will formally present rotation project results to

faculty and colleagues at the conclusion of the rotation. During the rotation, students should participate in laboratory activities and demonstrate collegiality, professional behavior, and enthusiasm. Students should communicate absences from lab with the rotation mentor and/or partnered in-lab supervisor. Potential interest in permanent laboratory membership should be discussed and explored with the PI, and continuing communication is recommended. At the conclusion of the rotation, students should complete the **Laboratory Rotation Reflection Form** (see Appendix 2.3), the rotation advisor should complete the **Laboratory Rotation Evaluation Form** (see Appendix 2.4) and discuss their evaluation with the student prior to submission.

### **Dissertation Laboratory Selection**

By the end of the third rotation, students should identify a permanent dissertation laboratory. Relevant considerations might include scientific interest, mentor/student compatibility, laboratory and social environment, funding, publication history, and recommendations of trusted advisors. Students are encouraged to review their previous Laboratory Rotation Reflection Forms and to use the Laboratory Fit Considerations Document (see Appendix 2.1) to help make decisions.

In extenuating circumstances, approval of a fourth rotation will be considered, if warranted. Interested students should first meet with the Assistant Dean.

### **Joining the Dissertation Laboratory**

After you and a potential permanent faculty mentor agree that you will complete your dissertation research under their mentorship, notify the Associate Dean of the selected laboratory no later than two weeks after Rotation 3 ends. Note that joining a permanent dissertation laboratory requires the approval of the Graduate School and the relevant Department Chair. You will receive a **Mentorship Agreement Form** (see Appendix 3.1) for you, your advisor, and the Department Chair to review and sign. Please submit the signed document to [BMSPHD@Stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@Stjude.org) and the Registrar no later than three weeks after Rotation 3 ends.

If you wish to have co-dissertation advisors for your dissertation both advisors will need to receive approval from the Graduate School and relevant Department Chairs, as well as complete the necessary **Mentorship Agreement Forms** (see Appendix 3.1) and a **Dissertation Co-Advisor Agreement** (see Appendix 3.2)

You should begin working in your dissertation laboratory following the spring semester of the first year with a start date agreed upon by you and your advisor.

Update your location information by submitting your new location information, building and room, to [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

## **Second Year of Study**

The main goals of the second year are focused on:

- Conceiving, initiating, and developing the dissertation project;
- Establishing the dissertation committee;
- Completing the Scientific Writing & Communication course, which will help you prepare the written portion of the Candidacy Qualifying Exam;
- Successfully completing the Candidacy Qualifying Exam;
- Working on submission of an NIH F31 or equivalent grant proposal.

Key to success in the second year is working closely with your dissertation advisor and committee members to develop knowledge of relevant literature, acquire necessary, technical skills, establish strong professional and collegial working relationships, and develop and generate preliminary data for your project.

### **Second Year Coursework**

Required coursework is designed to educate you on existing St. Jude resources and to prepare you to write your thesis. Coursework includes:

- Core Facilities, which includes structured visits to the core research facilities at St. Jude to expose students to available technologies and capabilities;
- Scientific Writing & Communication, designed to teach students the basic writing skills needed to successfully publish manuscripts and obtain grant funding, as well as professional correspondence, peer reviews, meeting abstracts, and other central forms of scientific composition;
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course offered through the Research Education and Training Grant Office to develop, foster, and maintain a culture of integrity in science.

### **Individual Development Plan**

Complete an individual development plan (IDP) and discuss the results with your mentor. This is a useful exercise to evaluate your skills, interests, values and set strategic goals. There are many different versions of IDPs. [myidp.sciencecareers.org](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org) is a popular choice.

### **Dissertation Committee Selection and Composition**

The student and dissertation advisor(s) will work together to identify and select dissertation committee members based on relevant expertise, professional advising considerations, committee compatibility, and availability. After the committee members have been identified and confirmed, students must submit the ***Dissertation Committee Selection Form*** (see Appendix 3.3) to the Assistant Dean for review and approval by October 1.

The dissertation committee comprises four to five faculty members, including the dissertation advisor. A fifth member must hold a PhD, MD, or equivalent degree and can be either (1) a member of the St. Jude Graduate Faculty at any rank, (2) a member of the St. Jude Faculty who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty, or (3) a member of an outside institution with appropriate appointment and credentials.

Please additionally follow the below requirements for committee composition:

- More than one St. Jude department must be represented among the committee members.
- Only members of the Research Graduate Faculty and Clinical Graduate Faculty may serve as primary members of the Dissertation Committee.
- Only one Clinical Graduate Faculty member is allowed on the committee.

### **General Dissertation Committee Meeting Guidelines (see also Appendix 4.1)**

The student is responsible for organizing all dissertation committee meetings and the committee members should make every effort to abide by the agreed date/time. At least three members of the dissertation committee, including the dissertation advisor, must be present at each meeting. Remote participation is allowed but discouraged.

The student must prepare both an **Annual Student Progress Report** (see Appendix 4.2) and oral presentation in advance of each dissertation committee meeting.

The **Annual Student Progress Report** must be sent to the committee and the Assistant Dean at least one week in advance of the committee meeting.

- Students are responsible for completing Part I Academic Progress and Part II Research Progress and Goals.
- At the end of the committee meeting the committee members should complete Part III, providing recommendations, overall evaluation of progress, signatures and date.
- The form is complete once signed and dated by the student and advisor and sent to [BMSPhD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPhD@stjude.org) and [Registrar@stjude.org](mailto:Registrar@stjude.org).

The oral presentation should include an outline of progress and future goals towards the PhD and career.

Before each meeting, the dissertation advisor will leave the room, and the student will be given the opportunity to discuss their experience in the laboratory and any mentorship issues. Before and after each meeting, the student will leave the room to allow the committee to discuss the student's progress.

## **YR2 Dissertation Committee Meetings**

During the student's second year, the dissertation committee will meet one to two times in advance of the Candidacy Qualifying Exam to consult on development and appropriateness of the dissertation research, and again to conduct the Candidacy Qualifying Examination. Please refer to the **General Dissertation Committee Meeting Guidelines** above and Appendix 4.1.

The first dissertation committee meeting should be scheduled for 1.5 hours in the fall and take place **no later than the last Friday of December, prior to December 25th**. In advance of the meeting the student should complete and submit to the committee the **Annual Student Progress Report** (see Appendix 4.2) at least one week in advance. Focus of the report should be Part II.2 which summarizes the research goals for the upcoming year.

In addition, at this meeting,

- The student should:
  - Introduce themselves
  - Introduce their project including tentative aims planned for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam.
  - Set the date for their Qualifying Exam
- The committee should complete Part III of the **Annual Student Progress Report**, providing a written summary of what was discussed and including any recommendations. The document should be signed, dated, and returned to the Registrar and BMSPhD.

Proposed changes to the dissertation committee after the first committee meeting must be submitted in writing by the student, dissertation advisor, or the department chair with a full explanation for approval by the Associate Dean.

One-on-one meetings with committee members or an additional committee meeting should be scheduled if useful for project development, technical consultation, or professional advice.

See below for the details of the second YR2 Dissertation Committee Meeting – The Candidacy Qualifying Exam.

### **Candidacy Qualifying Examination Guidelines**

Successful completion of the Qualifying Examination is a major milestone and marks advancement to candidacy for the doctoral degree when the student becomes focused on independent dissertation research. During the examination, the committee evaluates a written proposal and explores candidate preparation and suitability through oral questioning to assess broad biological knowledge, expertise in the relevant specific field, technical ability, critical thinking, and the ability to formulate, develop, and adapt hypotheses and approaches. The two parts of the examination are a written proposal of dissertation research and an oral defense of the premise, importance, and approaches necessary to develop the investigations.

The Candidacy Qualifying Examination must be completed **by the last Friday of the Spring Semester of the second year**. Any exceptions to this deadline must be approved in advance by the Associate Dean. The full committee must attend the Candidacy Qualifying Exam except in emergency circumstances. Committee quorum requires three committee members and must include the dissertation advisor. Students should schedule a 2.5-hour window for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam, determining committee member availability well in advance, and securing all necessary room reservations and audio-visual technical support with the help of administrative staff within the home department if necessary and available.

Below is an overview of the Qualifying Exam. Please refer to Appendix 5.1 for the full **Candidacy Qualifying Exam Guide**.

### **Format of the Written Candidacy Qualifying Examination Document**

The student will compose the written portion of the Candidacy Qualifying Examination describing their proposed dissertation research following the format and guidelines for the Abstract, Specific Aims, Research Strategy and References sections of an F31 NIH research. When writing the research proposal, the student may consult with laboratory members, the dissertation committee, and colleagues (faculty, postdocs, research staff), but should not consult with the dissertation advisor. The dissertation advisor should not share their own grant documents that overlap with the student's project or proposal. Although the main idea(s) for the project can (and should) be initiated and developed collaboratively with the advisor and committee members, the written exposition of premise, importance, specific approaches, and likely outcomes and interpretations—as well as the oral presentation defending these elements—should be developed independently.

***\*\*The student must send the Candidacy Qualifying Examination document to all committee members, the Associate Dean, BMSPHD, and Registrar at least two weeks before the examination date.\*\* All committee members must read the written exam proposal before the exam.***

## **Format for the Oral Candidacy Qualifying Examination**

Prior to the commencement of the formal oral examination, an Examination Chair should be chosen from among the committee members other than the dissertation advisor. The Chair will be responsible for directing the oral examination, recording comments and recommendations, and submitting written feedback to the student and Graduate School. Before the formal presentation and question session, the Chair should provide a short opportunity for the committee members to meet separately with the dissertation advisor and the student to briefly discuss progress, concerns, and any urgent introductory questions. Following these two brief discussions, during which the student and advisor should sequentially excuse themselves, the formal oral presentation will begin.

During the oral portion of the Candidacy Qualifying Examination, the student will present and defend their proposed dissertation research. This defense should describe the importance and value of the research proposed, locate it in broader context of biological or biomedical value and the specific scientific field, explain the approaches that will be used and why they are particularly suitable for the questions under investigation, develop an exposition of what results are likely to be obtained and how they will be interpreted, prioritized and followed up, and conclude with what the overall transformative impact of the research will be presuming successful completion. Presentations supported by slides and preliminary data should be 25 minutes, uninterrupted by questions from the committee.

The question examination session immediately following the presentation of the proposed research is designed to test the student's general and field-specific knowledge related to their proposal, as well as critical thinking skills and synthesis. All committee members except the student's advisor should ask questions, and the committee should actively explore the limits of the student's knowledge. If the student does not know the answer to a question, they should attempt to reason a response. The student should respond to questions in chalk talk format and not use presentation slides for the question session. The question session will last up to 1.5 hours.

### **Scoring the Candidacy Qualifying Exam:**

Following the question session, the student should again be excused to allow the committee to discuss the outcome and decide on scores. Each committee member in attendance, except the dissertation advisor, is permitted to score individually; consensus is not required. Students are scored overall for the full exam, using the scoring categories:

- Pass – the student has successfully completed the examination.
- Reservations – many aspects of the exam performance were strong, but there was a fundamental weakness of central importance to the project or proposal.
- Fail – multiple areas of weakness raising concerns about whether the student qualifies to proceed to independent research needed for a doctoral degree.

The overall score will be determined based on expectations of an accomplished second-year graduate student who is ready to proceed to independent research. The score should reflect evaluations of the written proposal as well as student mastery of foundational knowledge, project-specific knowledge, critical thinking, presentation clarity and professional demeanor.

**Retake:** In the event of a score of reservations or fail, the committee will outline specifically what action the student will need to remediate the specific area(s) of

concern. Any remediation should be completed **within 30 days**. For reservations, correction might involve re-writing a section of the written proposal or revisiting an important topic for a focused oral presentation and question session. For fail, the student would need to retake the entire written or oral component. The score received on the second attempt is the final score for the exam. The student must receive an overall score of pass for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam.

### **Failure to Pass the Candidacy Qualifying exam:**

A student who does not successfully pass their Candidacy Qualifying Examination on the second attempt may not proceed in the PhD program. The student may request to be considered for a terminal Master of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences. Please refer to *Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences* below for more information.

### **NIH F31 Grant Submission**

Students are required to submit an NIH F31 or similar grant proposal. Typically, students should submit these by April 8<sup>th</sup> of Year 2, or August 8<sup>th</sup> or December 8<sup>th</sup> of Year 3.

### **Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences**

A student who does not successfully pass their Candidacy Qualifying Examination on the second attempt may not proceed in the PhD program. The student may request to be considered for a terminal Master of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences or a terminal Master of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences with Thesis.

To be considered for a terminal Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences, the student must:

- Complete the first- and second-year core curriculum, and
- Complete substantial full-time research, and
- Document completed research with explanation and contextualization of the significance of this research.

The Associate Dean and the Dean will consider the request for a terminal Master of Science degree. If the request is approved, the student will submit documentation of their research for review by their committee. The student's dissertation committee, the Associate Dean, and the Dean will assess the amount and quality of the student's work and determine whether it rises to a Master's level of research and academic accomplishment to award a terminal Master of Science degree.

To be considered for a terminal Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences with Thesis, the student must:

- Complete the first- and second-year core curriculum, and
- Complete substantial full-time research, and
- Complete sufficient body of research to write a Master's Thesis
- Successfully defend a Master's thesis

The "with thesis" designation would be noted on the official transcript.

Please refer to Appendix 7.3 and 7.4 for the relevant Master of Science final forms.

## Third Year of Study and Beyond

### Work in Progress (WIP)

Third-year students and beyond are required to give a yearly 30-minute presentation as part of the Graduate Student Work-in-Progress seminar series organized through the Academic Programs Office (APO). The seminar series is held on Tuesdays from 12-1 PM and should be regularly attended by all students YR2+.

WIP is a valuable learning opportunity for the student researcher to disseminate knowledge and cultivate presentation skills, whether on his/her research project or an additional focus area. It is also a valuable experience for those attending to learn information outside of their area and provides for a collaborative discussion in a peer setting.

### Dissertation Committee Annual Progress Meetings

The dissertation committee will continue to advise and mentor their dissertation student for the duration of PhD training. In years 3+, committee meetings should be held at least once a year and an **Annual Student Progress Report** (see Appendix 4.2) completed for each. Meetings should be scheduled for one hour and review professional development, research accomplished and anticipated next steps. Longer or more frequent meetings should be arranged as needed. **Dissertation Committee Guidelines** outlined in Appendix 4.1 should be followed for all committee meetings.

The student, dissertation advisor, and the dissertation committee decide together when a graduate student has successfully completed a sufficient body of work to proceed with submission of their written Dissertation and completion of the oral Dissertation Defense. The Graduate School, advisor, and committee will also evaluate whether the student meets the requirements to receive their PhD.

### Publication Requirement

To be eligible to graduate, the student must have published, have in press, or have accepted at least one first author or co-first author primary research manuscript in a peer-reviewed journal. A student may not schedule a dissertation defense until publication acceptance is confirmed (*in rare circumstances unpublished, submitted manuscripts may be reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee and the Dean to fulfill this requirement*).

### Dissertation and Thesis Defense

The dissertation and thesis defense are the culmination of a student's work.

#### Dissertation:

Students are required to write a dissertation and should refer to the Thesis/Dissertation Guides on the St. Jude Graduate School Website for formatting and content guidelines.

In brief, the dissertation should include:

- A scholarly Introduction to the field and the background/rationale for the specific questions addressed by the thesis research;
- A series of chapters presenting the original research;
- A final chapter discussing major findings/conclusions, recommendations for further study, and possible societal impact of the research presented.

The program allows published papers to be included in full or as part of a data chapter, but most commonly, they should be amended, abbreviated, or extended to logically cohere within the overall narrative of the dissertation. For any included work, the full citation should be included, and it should be stated whether the chapter is the published or an edited version. Any published work used within the dissertation should additionally be re-formatted to fit thesis guidelines and the contributions of the student and other authors to the scientific (design, experiments, analysis) and written work must be clearly stated. If editing content of a published work to include in the dissertation, it should be stated what edits have been made, the nature of the modifications (e.g. inclusion of additional relevant data acquired after publication, expansion of intro or discussion, etc.).

### Thesis Defense:

The thesis defense consists of a public presentation lasting one hour, including a ~50minute presentation followed by an open ~10 minute question and answer session. There will be a closed defense session immediately following the presentation with the dissertation committee and one of the Deans or a Dean designee. Students should allow two hours for the closed defense.

Please refer to *Timeline and Process for PhD Completion and Offboarding* section for a full guide on applying for graduation, scheduling the defense, and forms needed for completion.

## **Academic Progress**

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Students are required to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward degree completion. Academic progress is measured at the end of each academic semester. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 to graduate. Specific milestones required to comply with SAP for each program are described below. Overall performance will be assessed by the Assistant Dean or Associate Dean of each respective program and if a student fails to comply with SAP, a report of the findings will be discussed with the student and placed in the student's file.

Letter grades are associated with numeric values as follows, which are the same across all degree programs:

**A+ (4.0), A (4.0), A- (3.7), B+ (3.3), B (3.0), B- (2.7), C+ (2.3), C (2.0), C- (1.7), D+ (1.3), D (1.0), D- (0.7), and F (0.0).**

Students may also receive the following marks: Pass/Fail, S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory), W (Withdrawal), I (Incomplete), or O (No Grade Reported).

Only letter grades A+ through C as well as Pass and Satisfactory marks will count toward the degree requirements. Please see the 2024-2025 St. Jude Graduate School Academic Catalog for the entire SAP Policy.

### **Degree Completion Requirements**

- Complete all courses, minimum of 90 credit hours, and maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or better;
- Participate in non-credit bearing workshops and seminars;

- Complete three six-week laboratory rotations during the first two semesters. Make a final presentation at the end of each rotation;
- Select a dissertation advisor and laboratory to begin dissertation research by the end of the second semester (note: this is a key required milestone);
- Conduct original research in their assigned laboratory;
- Analyze and compile the research conducted in their assigned laboratory;
- Finalize the dissertation committee during the early part of the third semester;
- Pass the Candidacy Qualifying Exam by the last Friday of the Spring Semester of the second year. The examination includes preparation and oral defense of a grant application based on the proposed dissertation research;
- Schedule annual meetings with the dissertation committee;
- Publish (may be in press) a minimum of at least one first author or co-first author primary research manuscript based on the student's original research in a peerreviewed journal prior to completion of the Ph.D. A student will not be permitted to schedule a dissertation defense until they have demonstrated that this requirement has been fulfilled (in rare circumstances unpublished but submitted manuscripts may be reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee and the Dean to fulfill this requirement);
- Obtain approval of revised and final dissertation document from dissertation committee;
- Complete an approved dissertation that reports the results and significance of the original research;
- Before the end of the fifth year, conduct an oral defense of the dissertation.

## Advising

The Assistant Dean will host regular individual advising sessions with students throughout their first year in the program. These sessions are meant to check in with students on their transition to St. Jude and Memphis, coursework, selection of rotation labs, the laboratory rotations, and the process of selecting a dissertation laboratory. These sessions also ensure that any potential academic or research environment problems are identified and addressed early. Students are encouraged to schedule additional meetings with their assigned faculty mentor and Associate Dean as needed.

Yearly individual advising sessions will continue throughout the student's tenure in the graduate program and include discussions regarding student experiences, progress towards degree completion, questions and concerns, and more. Additional advising can be added as needed.

The Associate and Assistant Dean will hold Group Milestone Meetings open to the student body for relaying information about progress requirements and to address questions. These include Transitioning into YR2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year expectations and timeline, Candidacy Exam Overview, and Guidelines, and Process for Completing your Degree.

## Financial Support and Benefits

### Stipend

For the 2024-2025 academic year, YR1 BMS PhD students receive an annual stipend of \$41,485 and YR2+ students \$47,840. All students are on an academic scholarship and do not pay tuition.

Stipend and tuition are guaranteed for five years for all students who remain in good standing with the program. Refer to the 'Guidelines for 6<sup>th</sup> Year and Beyond' section for information on financial support and benefits beyond five years.

Beginning August 1, 2024, student stipends will be paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month for the month in which the stipend is received (August 1 = full monthly stipend for August). If the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month occurs on a Saturday or Sunday, then the stipend will be processed on the Friday prior. Also beginning August 1, partial months will be pro-rated daily and will be utilized for occasions such as program entrance/exit and an approved leave of absence.

## Research and Educational Support

Research and educational financial support are provided to all SJGS BMS PhD students in good standing throughout their five years of graduate training. This support is meant to help students support their own research, professional development activities, and further their education in consultation with their dissertation advisor. Support type and amount vary throughout the course of graduate studies as outlined below:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEARS 3-5
Lab Supplies	\$2,500/rotation	\$15,000	\$20,000
Professional Development		\$2,500	\$2,500
Continuing Education			\$5,000 (one time use)

Students are each provided their own individual **Student Allowance Project** for charging lab supplies and professional development costs. Each student is responsible for managing their own yearly Lab Supply and Professional Development budgets through regular monitoring of their Student Allowance Project balance.

The Continuing Education Allowance is available for one-time use during year 3, 4, or 5. Most commonly students use these funds to attend a Cold Spring Harbor or Marine Biological Laboratories at Woods Hole course; however, there are many options for using these funds in a meaningful way. Funds must be requested and approved by the Associate or Assistant Dean prior to use.

Please see Appendix 9 for the full **BMS PhD Financial Use Guide** which outlines the types of support provided and the process of using each category of funds as well as monitoring your Student Allowance Project.

## Taxes

The annual student stipend is considered reportable income, and federal taxes will be withheld based on your selected tax elections. For tax questions, please email [FTax@stjude.org](mailto:FTax@stjude.org).

## Insurance

All BMS PhD students may enroll in insurance, with all medical, dental, and vision premiums covered by the St. Jude Graduate School for student, spouse, and dependents.

Health insurance is BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Choice PPO through St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Dental and vision insurance are provided through the St. Jude Graduate School.

# Program Procedures

## Timeline and Process for PhD Completion and Offboarding

Event	Time	Fall Conferral:	Spring Conferral:
		Dec 16, 2024	June 6, 2025
Receive permission to write	Annual Student Progress Meeting prior to defense		
Submit <b>Intent to Graduate</b> form	Semester in which you plan to defend	09/16/24	02/10/25
Schedule defense	Minimum of 4 weeks before defense (may require earlier planning)		
Distribute Dissertation to Thesis Committee	Minimum of 2 weeks prior to defense		
PhD Thesis Defense Deadline		11/08/ 24	05/02/ 25
Submit <b>Dissertation Defense Form</b>	Within 24 hours of defense		
Written revisions (if needed)	Maximum of 3 weeks post defense		
PDF of final Thesis and <b>Dissertation Approval Form</b> submitted to Canvas under Dissertation Research course	Maximum of 3 weeks post defense	12/06/24	05/23/24
Grad School Off-boarding initiation	Maximum of 3 weeks post defense		
Grad School Off-boarding completion	Maximum of 4 weeks post defense		

At such a time as a student has completed all the required program milestones and feels they have created a body of work to write and defend as a Dissertation Thesis they should initiate the process by discussion with their advisor and receiving “permission to write” from their dissertation committee, outlining an appropriate timeline for thesis completion. Permission to write should be formally documented in Section III of the **Annual Student Progress Report** and submitted to [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org) and [Registrar@stjude.org](mailto:Registrar@stjude.org) once all signatures are complete.

To schedule their defense, students should work with their dissertation advisor and dissertation committee to identify a date. Schedule this date as far as possible in advance to accommodate busy faculty schedules. Once date and time have been selected, you may reserve a room via Outlook calendar invite, including a WebEx link for any virtual attendees. The Graduate School strongly recommends in person attendance for all committee members except in extraordinary circumstances.

Students should also provide formal notification of their Dissertation Defense date to [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org). The BMS Program Specialist will contact the student to request dissertation title, confirm PI name and credentials, provide information for visitors on campus, and assist with the IS AV request if necessary. Guests, including friends and family, are welcome on the St. Jude campus for the Dissertation Defense.

For the semester in which a student intends to defend they must complete the **Intent to Graduate Form**. If possible, include your defense date when completing the form. The intent to Graduate Form is completed through a survey distributed via email by the Registrar. Submission of the Intent to Graduate Form will trigger a programmatic prereview of required materials.

Physical and/or digital copies of the dissertation should be sent to the dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to defense. Students must cc Associate Dean and [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

The **Dissertation Defense Form** (see Appendix 7.1) must be completed and submitted to within 24 hours of completing the dissertation defense. The original form should be provided to the registrar and scanned copies should be sent to both the registrar and [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

Any needed written revisions to the dissertation must be completed within a maximum of three weeks after the defense (or before the end of semester deadline) and final approval provided by the dissertation committee, documented in the **Dissertation Approval Form** (see Appendix 7.2). Note that the **Dissertation Approval Form** should only be signed after the revised document is approved by the thesis committee. The final PDF of the Dissertation along with the **Dissertation Approval Form** should be uploaded to Canvas. The original **Dissertation Approval form** should be provided to the registrar and scanned copies should be sent to both the registrar and [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

In the case of an unsuccessful defense, an oral exam re-take must be completed no more than 4 weeks after initial defense (or before end of semester deadline). Only one oral examination re-take is allowed.

Students must complete the Graduate School Offboarding process within four weeks following successful defense. All tasks on the **BMS PhD Offboarding Checklist** (see Appendix 8) must be reviewed and the document signed by the Assistant Dean.

### **Guidelines for 6<sup>th</sup> Year and Beyond**

If prior to the conclusion of five years in the program, it is determined that a student has not successfully completed the requirements to receive a PhD, the dissertation advisor and dissertation committee will perform a full review of the student's academic record, research progress, comprehension and productivity to determine if the graduate student's level of achievement warrants additional time to complete the requirements for the PhD. If the dissertation committee, dissertation advisor, and student agree that additional time is needed for degree completion they must complete the **Dissertation Committee Recommendation for Extended Support Form** (see Appendix 6). The completed document signed by all committee members must be submitted to the St. Jude Graduate School Dean for consideration and approval. Once approved the finalized document should be sent to [Registrar@stjude.org](mailto:Registrar@stjude.org) and [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

The recommendation should be submitted at least 30 days before the extra year of support needed or further if possible.

The submission and approval of a **Dissertation Committee Recommendation for Extended Support Form** will be required in advance of any additional year needed.

# Graduate School Policies

## Course Attendance and Participation

Students are required to attend all lectures in each course, which are provided either inperson or online. A student who cannot attend a lecture for any reason must notify the Course Leader, Instructor, and the Assistant Dean as soon as possible.

In unusual and exceptional circumstances, students may request an excused absence in advance. Excused absences (such as for illness, bereavement, doctor's or medical appointments, dental appointments, provision of urgent family care, pre-arranged work responsibilities, and jury duty) can be requested from the Course Leader, Instructor, and the Assistant Dean of the respective program. Students should be prepared to provide documentation for their absence.

Adequate student participation during courses includes but is not limited to the following:

- Being fully prepared for class, such as completing pre-class reading assignments
- Being an active participant during lectures
- Answering and asking questions to further the discussion

Please see the 2024-2025 SJGS Course Catalog or website for the entire Attendance Policy ([80.20.003 Attendance](#)).

## Disability Accommodations

The Graduate School has an obligation under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide reasonable accommodations for students, who self-identify with having disabilities. The Graduate School offers qualified students with disabilities the opportunity for success through equal access and the means to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities. We provide individually tailored, comprehensive disability support services and programs in accordance with Federal and State disability law. We strive to create an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment for all students, and promote awareness and equity for all in our campus community.

A Graduate School Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Committee will be formed on a case by-case basis, to evaluate the provided disability documentation and determine eligibility for accommodations and implement reasonable accommodations for enrolled students.

Please see the 2024-2025 SJGS Course Catalog or website for the entire Accommodations Policy and procedure for requesting accommodations ([80.90.003 Accommodation Policy](#)).

## Absences/Vacation Leave

All St. Jude Graduate School breaks and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital holidays are listed below. Students are required to attend every course lecture unless they have a valid excuse, such as illness, family emergency, etc. Students may be asked to provide documentation of their absence. After joining a dissertation lab, it is the responsibility of the student to discuss all absences including vacations, professional development travel, illness, or other absences directly with their dissertation advisor.

## **Student Professionalism**

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (“Graduate School”) has developed guidelines designed to establish standards of professionalism and professional behavior for students at the Graduate School. The Graduate School expects students to conduct themselves in accordance with good professional and ethical standards at all times. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear understanding of expectations regarding professional conduct for students in all educational and non-educational settings. The entire Student Professionalism policy can be found within the 2024-2025 St. Jude Graduate School Academic Catalog and on the website under [80.40.004 Student Professionalism](#).

## **Research Misconduct**

The purpose of this policy is to protect scientific research integrity at St. Jude and to comply with federal regulatory requirements under 42 C.F.R. Part 93 regarding reporting and investigating allegations of Research Misconduct. The entire Research Misconduct policy can be found within the 2024-2025 St. Jude Graduate School Academic Catalog and on the website under [80.20.006 Research Misconduct](#).

## **Student Complaints**

The purpose of this policy is to define the student complaints process and describe the process for students to report complaints at the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (“Graduate School”). This policy applies to all graduate students who are enrolled, have previously been enrolled, and/or who have completed a degree program of the Graduate School, regardless of mode of instruction and physical location of the student. The entire Student Complaints policy can be found within the 2024-2025 St. Jude Graduate School Academic Catalog and on the website under [80.40.003 Student Complaints](#).

## **Sexual Harrassment**

In the spirit of the U.S. Department of Education’s implementing regulations for Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”) (see 34 C.F.R. § 106 et seq.), the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (Graduate School) prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its education programs and activities. Title IX and its implementing regulations also prohibit retaliation for asserting claims of discrimination based on sex.

In their educational programs and activities, the Graduate School, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Children’s GMP, and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Home Care, LLC. (collectively, St. Jude) are committed to providing a learning and working that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex. St. Jude has developed this policy to guide processes for complaints, Investigation, and resolution of Sexual Harassment in its educational programs and activities.

This policy prohibits Sexual Harassment as defined below and related retaliation occurring in a St. Jude educational program or activity. Such offenses constitute violations of this policy, are unacceptable, and will not be tolerated.

This policy prohibits such misconduct by students, trainees, alumni, faculty, employees, applicants for employment, sponsored organizations, outside programs, and all other

persons, including third-Party visitors (collectively, “St. Jude”) against anyone participating, or attempting to participate, in St. Jude’s educational programs or activities. This policy prohibits this misconduct when the complainant and respondent are members of the same sex and when they are members of the opposite sex. It applies regardless of national origin, immigration status, or citizenship status. St. Jude’s prohibition on Sexual Harassment and related retaliation extends to all aspects of its educational programs and activities, including but not limited to admissions, employment, academics, and student services.

The entire Sexual Harassment policy can be found within the 2024-2025 St. Jude Graduate School Academic Catalog and on the website under [80.90.009 Sexual Harassment](#).

## **Reporting Procedures**

The St. Jude Graduate School Reporting Procedures for violations of the Student Professionalism Policy, Graduate Faculty Professionalism Policy, Sexual Misconduct, Research Misconduct, or other Student Complaints are located within the 2024-2025 Academic Catalog and on the website under Policies and Procedures.

[80.20.006 Research Misconduct](#)

[80.40.003 Student Complaints](#)

[80.40.004 Student Professionalism](#)

[80.90.009 Sexual Harassment](#)

Students may also utilize the Ombuds Resource Program. The Ombuds Team for St. Jude is an independent, third-party informal resource that empowers individuals and organizations to navigate and overcome disputes, conflicts and other obstacles that hinder personal and professional growth. Ombuds help organizations by providing feedback to senior leadership about systemic issues and trends within the organization without disclosing the identities of or any confidential communications.

## **Grade Appeals**

Any student can formally request a final course grade appeal. The process and procedure can be found within the 2024-2025 St. Jude Graduate School Academic Catalog and on the website under [80.20.013 Grade Appeals](#).

## **Leave of Absence**

The St. Jude Graduate School Leave of Absence policy can be located within the 2024-2025 Academic Catalog. A leave of absence (LOA) is an approved temporary interruption of studies. Requests for LOA will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate School. LOA categories include Medical Leave, Parental Leave, Personal Leave, Bereavement Leave, Extended Leave, and Military Leave.

## **Withdrawal**

The St. Jude Graduate School Withdrawal policy can be located within the 2024-2025 Academic Catalog. A student may voluntarily withdraw from the Graduate School at any time. If a student is not certain about withdrawing from the entire program or even a semester, alternatives are available with the Dean’s approval. A student in the Graduate School who wishes to withdraw from the program for any reason should first meet with

their research advisor to discuss the withdrawal request, and then meet with the Dean to finalize the written and signed withdrawal notice.

# Student Resources

## First-Year Resources

### Study Carrels

To help provide a dedicated workspace for our first-year students prior to joining a lab, students are assigned their own study carrel, located within Inspiration4 ARC M1111. The study carrels are located directly across the hall from the St. Jude Graduate School classroom (M1109) for the convenience of our students. Entry to the study carrels is via badge scan access and only current first-year students and SJGS staff have access to the space.

Within each carrel, students can find a desktop monitor, keyboard, mouse, charging ports, study lights, drawers and other storage. Students are encouraged to utilize the carrels to complete their coursework and are expected to maintain a neat, tidy, and professional workspace. The study carrel space also has course textbooks, a lounge area, a printer, a mini refrigerator, and other resources.

Upon the conclusion of Laboratory Rotation III and subsequently the first year of the program, students must clear their individual study carrels. This includes removing all personal belongings, discarding any trash, leaving desk keys within the carrel, etc by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Peer Mentorship Program

First-year students are matched with a volunteer student in their second year or above in the BMS Peer Mentorship Program. Scheduled meetings will occur every two months with topic suggestions, but mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet and communicate as needed. The purpose of the BMS Peer Mentorship Program is for upperclass students to provide invaluable insight on their experiences within the Graduate School, in their labs, with coursework, and to serve as a resource to answer questions or connect students in need with the appropriate party.

If there are any issues or concerns with your Peer Mentor or Mentee, please inform the BMS PhD Program Leadership.

### Faculty Mentoring Program –

Each year, a select group of faculty will serve as a mentor to an incoming first-year graduate student in the BMS PhD program. These faculty members are available to provide guidance to new students in how to navigate graduate school, including thinking about how to select rotations, learning about St. Jude, resolving conflicts, growing their research, thinking about future careers, and many other topics. First-year students are matched by the Associate and Assistant Deans prior to students' arrival on campus.

Faculty mentors will meet with their first-year students with a frequency determined by personal schedules and the needs of the individual student. These meetings may consist of regular office visits, monthly coffee breaks, walks, and many other interactions. Faculty mentors may be informally available as needed.

While the faculty mentorship pair is official just for the student's first year, former faculty mentors sometimes remain engaged with their student beyond that time.

## Housing

Students in their first year of enrollment have the option of living in St. Jude subsidized housing at a rate of \$28/night, payable monthly via emailed invoice. For 2024-25, the two housing complexes are 1) Harbor Town located on Mud Island or 2) Parcels at the Concourse located within the Crosstown Concourse in Midtown. Units are fully furnished, and all utilities are included. Pets are not permitted. The end date for the housing agreement is June 30, 2025. If you need any reasonable accommodations covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please inform the Guest Housing Coordinator. Students living in St. Jude housing must abide by all policies listed within the Housing Agreement signed prior to move-in. For any issues regarding housing, students may contact the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Guest Housing Coordinator, Shelly Vaughn.

## Program Communication

The BMS PhD Program utilizes several methods to communicate announcements, events, and additional information.

**Donuts with the (BMS PhD) Deans** is a bimonthly opportunity for the entire BMS PhD student body interact with the Associate and Assistant Deans of the BMS PhD Program. These meetings allow an opportunity for students to discuss concerns and raise questions directly with leadership. These information sessions will be recorded via WebEx and will be sent out to any students unable to attend, along with the meeting slides, after the session has concluded.

**Monthly program emails** are sent out from [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org) with important information for students. These emails will consist of announcements, reminders, upcoming events, professional development opportunities, and more. Students are strongly encouraged to read through these emails in their entirety to have the most up-to-date SJGS and BMS PhD program information.

Additionally, The St. Jude Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences will host bi-annual Town Halls for announcements and discussion with the entire student body.

## St. Jude Graduate School Classroom

The St. Jude Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences has a dedicated classroom space located on the first floor of the Inspiration4 ARC in room M1109. This room can seat up to 40 individuals, has a projector, and WebEx capabilities. All first-year courses will be held in M1109 unless specified otherwise. While the classroom is intended for SJGS use first and foremost, it may be reserved by departments outside of SJGS. The classroom is located directly across the hall from the first-year Study Carrels.

## Student Activity Center

All graduate students on the St. Jude campus, including from St. Jude Graduate School, the Academic Programs Office, and other institutions, have access to the Student Activity Center located in the plaza level of the Danny Thomas Research Center in room DP038. Entry to the Student Activity Center is via code access; the code to enter is 4153. The Student Activity Center was designed to be a dedicated space for students to relax and socialize. Amenities include a refrigerator and microwave, two televisions, the Diversity Library, videogaming systems, a combination billiards/ping pong table, whiteboard tables, bulletin boards, and more. Students are expected to treat the Activity

Center with respect, which includes keeping it clean and neat, as well as informing SJGradSchool@stjude.org of any issues or repairs needed. Staff may enter the Activity Center as needed.

## **Graduate Student Association (GSA)**

The Graduate Student Association is a student-led group that represents and acts on behalf of St. Jude Graduate students to improve the satisfaction and scholarship of our students throughout the duration of their programs. The GSA serves graduate students by participating in student government, appointing students to standing committees, and developing internal programs to assist graduate students with research, professional development and outreach.

The purpose of the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Graduate Student Association (St. Jude GSA) is to; provide a structure to vocalize student needs, contribute to maintaining a strong graduate school community, and create opportunities to support deeper graduate school training.

The goals of the St. Jude GSA are:

1. To facilitate communication between the graduate school students and graduate school staff, faculty, and the greater St. Jude community.
2. To foster a strong graduate school community through scientific, professional development and social events.
3. To support our core value of diversity and inclusion by promoting respect and the inherent value of all students, faculty and staff within the graduate school community through honest conversations and student advocacy.
4. To give back to the communities that support the graduate school, especially St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the City of Memphis.

## **St. Jude Campus Resources**

St. Jude Graduate School students have access to many of the support resources available on the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital campus. Some of these are limited to students who have opted into the BCBST insurance. More information regarding the resources below can be found on the St. Jude Hub Intranet site.

- [Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion](#) ○ [Employee Resource Groups](#)
- [Living Well Health & Wellness Center and Pharmacy](#)
- [Living Well Fitness Center](#)
- [Community Fitness Discounts](#)
- [Mental and Emotional Health Services](#) ○ Resourcesforliving.com
- [Resilience Center](#)
- [Ombuds Resource Program](#)
- [Academic Programs Office](#)
- [Shared Resource Management System](#): Core Facilities
- [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee \(BCBST\)-supported Teladoc Health](#)
- [Financial Services](#)
- [Legal Services](#)
- [Campus Car Detailing](#)
- [Bike Share Program](#)
- [Massage-on-the-Go on St. Jude Main Campus](#)

## **Ombuds Resource Program**

This program is available to enrolled St. Jude Graduate students. The Ombuds Team for St. Jude is an independent, third-party informal resource that empowers individuals and organizations to navigate and overcome disputes, conflicts and other obstacles that hinder personal and professional growth. Ombuds help organizations by providing feedback to senior leadership about systemic issues and trends within the organization without disclosing the identities of or any confidential communications. An ombuds can help with conflict resolution, compliance concerns, and providing confidential guidance on taking action to address issues or concerns.

Ombuds help individuals who:

- Experience a conflict with a co-worker, peer or supervisor or faculty member/professor.
- Have compliance, ethical, legal or policy concerns about the workplace or academic environment.
- Need a safe place to go for information and confidential guidance before taking action to address their concerns.

The Ombuds team does not conduct investigations, make management decisions or policy, advocate or take sides, keep records of confidential communications, or serve as a substitute for more formal reporting channels. More information regarding the Ombuds Resource Program may be found [here](#).

## **St. Jude Graduate School Disclaimer:**

St. Jude Graduate School reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this publication concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses.

## **Appendix Documents**

1. BMS PhD Program Milestone Checklist

### **2. LABORATORY ROTATION INFORMATION**

- 2.1. Laboratory Fit Considerations
- 2.2. Laboratory Rotation Agreement
- 2.3. Laboratory Rotation Reflection
- 2.4. Laboratory Rotation Evaluation Form

### **3. DISSERTATION LAB FORMS**

- 3.1. Mentorship Agreement Form
- 3.2. Dissertation Co-Advisor Agreement
- 3.3. Dissertation Committee Selection Form

### **4. COMMITTEE MEETING INFORMATION**

- 4.1. General Dissertation Committee Meeting Guidelines
- 4.2. BMS PhD Annual Student Progress Report Form

### **5. QUALIFYING EXAM INFORMATION**

- 5.1. Qualifying Exam Guide
- 5.2. Qualifying Examination Evaluation Form

### **6. Recommendation for Extended Support**

## 7. DISSERTATION DEFENSE FORMS

- 7.1. BMS PhD Dissertation Defense Form
- 7.2. PhD Dissertation Approval Form
- 7.3. MS Thesis Approval Form
- 7.4. MS Thesis Defense Form

## 8. BMS PhD Offboarding Checklist

- 9. BMS PhD Financial Use Guide
  - 9.1. Non-Consumable Request Form



**St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital**  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

## Biomedical Sciences PhD Program Milestone Checklist

	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
	Completion of 3 unique laboratory rotations	N/A
	Completion of a minimum of 90 credit hours and a GPA 3.0	N/A
	Completion of first dissertation committee meeting and submission of Annual Student Progress Report	
	Successfully pass Candidacy Qualifying Examination	
	Completion of Responsible Conduct of Research Training	
	Submission of an extramural grant application	
	Completion of first dissertation committee meeting and submission of Annual Student Progress Report	
	Completion of YR3 dissertation committee meeting and submission of Annual Student Progress Report	
	Completion of YR4 dissertation committee meeting and submission of Annual Student Progress Report	
	Completion of YR5 dissertation committee meeting and submission of Annual Student Progress Report	
	Receive permission to write from dissertation committee	
	Completion of publication requirement - A minimum of one first author or co-first author primary research manuscript published, in press, or accepted for publication in a peerreviewed journal	
	Completion and approval of Written Dissertation	
	Successfully pass Dissertation Defense	

# Laboratory Fit Considerations

*Adapted from Washington University - DBBS*

## PI Academic Considerations

- **Mentorship track record** How many graduate students has the lab had? How many have graduated and how long has it taken them? What are they doing now?
- **Research area** Are you interested in the area? Will it fit with your career and life goals? Will there be a project that you will be able to complete in a reasonable period of time?
- **Publications** What journals does the PI publish in? Are the journals peer-reviewed and well respected? Is there a history of the lab publishing something every (or about every) year?
- **Scientific reputation** Is the PI well thought of by his peers? Are his or her scientific beliefs shared and/or respected by others in the field?
- **Collaborations and contacts** Does the PI collaborate with other groups? Does the PI have contacts that will help you further your career goals?

## PI Fit Considerations

- **Communication style** Does the PI communicate his or her expectations to you clearly? Can you discuss your expectations? Will the PI tell you if you are doing something inappropriate?
- **Trustworthiness** Does the PI do what s/he says s/he will? Can you trust that s/he will give you credit for the work you do? Will the PI look out for you professionally and personally? (Some people say things they don't really mean or promise the same project to multiple people.)
- **Mentorship skills** Will you learn about the aspects of being a good scientist i.e. planning a project, interpreting experiments, writing papers, grant process, grant writing, presentation skills, etc.
- **Expectations of graduate students** Ask both the PI and others involved in the lab what is expected of graduate students in the lab? Do the answers match? If they don't match be careful. Are the PI's expectations in line with how you see graduate school?
- **Involvement level in students' projects** How hands-on, hands-off, or micromanaging is the PI? Accessible or inaccessible Is the PI physically present or traveling every other week? Is the PI in his or her office, or the lab, or is s/he in meetings all day long?
- **Approachable or inapproachable** Do you feel comfortable talking with the PI?
- **Temperament** Does the PI put lots of pressure on students or is s/he more "go with the flow." Is the PI moody or even-tempered? Is s/he generally an optimist or pessimist? Does the PI play favorites or treat everyone the same?
- **Management competence** Does the lab run smoothly? How does the PI handle conflicts between lab members?
- **Motivational techniques** Does the PI motivate students by praise and encouragement or by criticism and blame? Are these done in public or private? (public criticism is not pleasant)

## Lab and Department Academic Considerations

- **People resources** (including ordering person, technicians, post docs, other grad students, and computer/network technical support)
- **Lab meetings** Does the lab have them? Are they regularly held? Are they effective in providing useful feedback from others on your project?
- **Departmental seminars with outside speakers** Does the department have them? Are the speakers relevant to your area of research?
- **Departmental journal clubs** Are they held? Are they on topics that are useful to your research?

## Lab and Department Fit considerations

- **Can you work with or around the others who are in the lab and department?**

- **Large vs. small** large and small labs or departments have different dynamics. Which are you the most comfortable with? Both have their pros and cons so try and understand the benefits and drawbacks of each.
- **Spread out vs. crowded** Does the lab have enough physical space for you to work in? How spread out is the department?
- **Social vs. antisocial** Does the department have well attended Happy Hours or holiday parties, etc.? Do the lab members socialize outside of lab work?
- **Collaborative vs. non-collaborative** If you run out of something you need can you borrow it from another lab? Do labs in the department share equipment? Do labs collaborate on projects? Do those in the lab work together or is it every person for him or herself?
- **Pro grad student vs. low grad student support** Does the department or lab treat grad students well or are they looked at as a cheap source of labor?
- **Safety conscience vs. safety lax** How safety conscious is the lab? Do you prefer a lab that is a super-scrupulous for every safety regulation or do you prefer a lab that is more relaxed about safety? Keep in mind that there are certain universal guidelines that every lab should adhere to including no food or drink in lab, A well-controlled hot room, and sharps containers. Beyond this, what else does the lab use? Lengthy viruses? Lots of radioactivity? Infectious agents? Are you comfortable with these practices and reagents?
- **Noisy vs. quiet** Some labs are absolutely silent. Some labs play music or the radio loudly. Will it drive you nuts if someone else in the lab likes playing music you hate loudly?
- **Neat vs. messy** Do members in the lab have cleaning duties or lab chores? Does everything in the lab have a proper place?
- **Considerate vs. inconsiderate** Do others in the lab order more if they take the last of something? Is lab work interrupted by having to borrow necessary items from other labs or visit on campus freezers?

**Characteristics to look for in a good advisor, mentor, or committee member** (*It is unreasonable to expect one person to have all of the qualities you desire. You should choose thesis committee members who are strong in the areas where your advisor is weak.*)

1. **Willing to meet with you regularly (at least 1 hour every week or every other week)**
2. **You can trust them to**
  - a. give you credit for the work you do
  - b. defend your work when you are not around
  - c. speak well of you and your capabilities
  - d. tell you when your work is or is not good enough
  - e. help you graduate in a reasonable time frame
  - f. look out for you professionally and personally
3. **Is interested in your topic**
4. **Has good personal and communication skills**
  - a. you can talk freely and easily about your research ideas
  - b. tells you when you are doing something wrong
  - c. patient
  - d. never feels threatened by your capabilities
  - e. helps motivate you and keep you unstuck
5. **Has good technical skills**
  - a. can provide constructive criticism of papers you write or talks you give
  - b. knows if what you are doing is good enough for a good thesis
  - c. can help you figure out what you are not doing well
  - d. can help you improve your skills

- e. can suggest related articles to read or people to talk to
- f. can tell you or help you discover if what you are doing has already been done
- g. can help you set and obtain reasonable goals

**6. Will be around until you finish**

**7. Is well respected in his or her field**

**8. Has good connections for the type of job you would want when you graduate**



## **Laboratory Rotation Selection Agreement Biomedical Sciences PhD Program**

**Rotation / Year** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Laboratory Group** \_\_\_\_\_

The faculty member below has agreed to host the student for the rotation period indicated. Student and mentor agree to cooperatively outline expectations for the laboratory rotation experience (hours in lab, participation in lab/departmental meetings, etc.), develop a rotation project, and present findings during end-of-the-rotation presentations. The faculty member agrees to assess performance and provide constructive feedback to the student at the conclusion of the rotation. Eventual permanent laboratory membership requires Graduate School and Departmental approval.

As a reminder, the primary goal for laboratory rotations is to introduce students to research conducted in potential thesis laboratories. The rotation experience is meant to familiarize students with a variety of laboratory procedures, scientific approaches, and research projects. Students have significantly reduced but not negligible program expectations during the rotation period and should not be considered full time laboratory personnel. The faculty member and the student should discuss rotation requirements and expectations in advance of the rotation start.

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rotation Faculty Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rotation Faculty Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Associate Dean Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return form to [BMSPHD@StJude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@StJude.org) and Registrar prior to the rotation start.





09/01/2023

Adapted from PiN Program

*Please upload to canvas and submit to BMSPHD*

## **Laboratory Rotation Reflection Biomedical Sciences PhD Program**

- 3) Please write a ½ page self-reflection on the rotation experience and laboratory “fit”. In writing your reflection, please consider the non-scientific aspects of the laboratory and rotation, such as lab size, lab environment, mentorship style of the PI, communication with the PI, and expectations of you as a graduate student. Please reference the attached ‘Laboratory Fit Considerations’ document. Again, *this document will not be shared with your rotation advisor and will only be seen by the assistant and associate deans (unless there is a conflict of interest) to help guide future rotation selections. The primary use of this document is for personal reflection.* So please be honest in your assessment of the rotation and laboratory fit.



St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

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*Please upload to canvas and submit to BMSPHD*



Rotation / Year \_\_\_\_\_ Student

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rotation Faculty Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Assessment (Check  
One)**

<b>Outstanding</b> (Satisfactory)	<b>Above Average</b> (Satisfactory)	<b>Average</b> (Satisfactory)	<b>Below Average</b> (Unsatisfactory)	<b>Poor</b> (Unsatisfactory)
--------------------------------------	--	----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------

**Identify area(s) of competency**

**Identify area(s) needing improvement**

**Additional trainings you would recommend prior to having the student join your lab**

**Please share any additional comments or concerns.**



**Laboratory Rotation Evaluation  
Biomedical Sciences PhD Program**

**Rate the student on a scale of 1 to 5**

**(1=Outstanding, 2=Above Average, 3= Average, 4= Below Average, 5=poor, N/A)**

**Research Skills**

	<b>Laboratory (bench) Skills</b>		<b>Ability to troubleshoot and problem solve</b>
	<b>Ability to Work independently</b>		<b>Acquisition of skills and techniques required for the projects</b>
	<b>Ability to design experiments</b>		<b>Understanding of Concepts</b>
	<b>Ability to interpret experimental results</b>		<b>Quality of lab notebook</b>

**Scientific Communication Skills**

	<b>Oral Presentation Skills</b>		<b>Ability and motivation to ask scientific questions</b>
	<b>Quality of written work (i.e. rotation report/poster)</b>		<b>Presentation Performance</b>

**Engagement**

	<b>Motivation, enthusiasm, and overall attitude</b>		<b>Seeks out and synthesizes background material relevant to lab/ project</b>
	<b>Participation in lab/ scientific discussions</b>		<b>Interaction with lab members</b>
	<b>Time spent in lab</b>		<b>Overall commitment to rotation</b>

**Would you consider accepting this student into your laboratory to pursue a Ph.D.?**

**Yes                      No**

**If you answered "No", please provide a brief explanation.**

**I have discussed this evaluation with the student. Yes**

**Faculty Signature \_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Date**



## Mentorship Agreement between Dissertation Advisor and Graduate Student

### Dissertation Advisor Commitment

I agree to accept \_\_\_\_\_ into my laboratory to pursue a doctoral degree in the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. I recognize that serving as a dissertation advisor represents a significant commitment of my time and my departmental Chair approves my involvement. I am fully committed to the successful completion of the student's doctoral degree and will seek advice and input from the student's dissertation committee regarding the committee's expectations for the student's training. I will abide by the rules of the Graduate School as described in the Catalog. I will notify the Dean of any changes in my position at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital that could adversely impact the student's progress. I accept that the student's annual support of stipend, tuition, travel and laboratory supply allowances, and continuing education funds will be funded by the Graduate School as noted in their annual budget. I am committed to providing on-going feedback and mentoring throughout the duration of the student's doctoral training. I will provide appropriate opportunities and will encourage the student to attend meetings, present and publish research, and participate in professional development.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Advisor Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Departmental Chair Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Graduate Student Commitment

I agree to accept \_\_\_\_\_ as my dissertation advisor in the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for successful completion of my doctoral degree. I will seek guidance on my research and career goals from my dissertation advisor and my dissertation committee and will seek additional guidance from my colleagues at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Graduate School, and from other appropriate individuals and resources within the institutions. I will abide by the rules of the Graduate School as described in the Catalog. I will immediately notify my dissertation advisor and the Dean of any personal circumstances that could adversely impact progress towards my doctoral degree. I acknowledge that my dissertation advisor is responsible for publications and presentations resulting from my research, and for granting permission to attend meetings and professional development events. I am fully committed to my graduate education and will demonstrate this by my efforts in the classroom and in research settings.

---

Graduate Student Printed Name

---

Signature

Date

## **Information For Advisors Accepting a SJGS Student**

Please find below selected information regarding SJGS Financials and PhD Program Milestones.

### **FINANCIALS**

#### **St. Jude Graduate School Tuition Scholarship**

A full St. Jude Graduate School tuition scholarship is awarded to each student upon enrollment. The tuition scholarship continues for 5 years.

#### **Fees**

Students have no additional fees or financial obligations for books, special equipment, or supplies. The graduate school provides all required items.

#### **Student Laboratory & Professional Development/Travel Budget**

St. Jude Graduate Students receive a yearly budget to directly support the students research and professional development.

Second-year students have a budget of up to \$15,000 for lab supplies directly related to their dissertation research and up to \$2,500 for travel to conferences, professional society memberships, and other professional-development-related expenses.

Students in their third year and beyond receive a yearly budget of \$20,000 for lab supplies and up to \$2,500 for travel.

Graduate Students also have a one-time budget of \$5,000 to use on an in-depth external course.

### **ACADEMIC MILESTONES AND REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Candidacy Qualifying Examination**

The Candidacy Qualifying Examination is a major milestone in Ph.D. training and marks the transition from coursework-associated learning to focused independent dissertation research. To evaluate student preparation and aptitude, the exam is designed to test mastery of foundational knowledge, particularly in the field relevant to the student's research, as well as familiarity with relevant literature, critical thinking skills and ability to apply knowledge in different contexts to address scientific questions or hypotheses. The student must be able to articulate immediate and long-term plans and goals for their project. The exam consists of two parts: a written document and an oral exam. The exam must be completed **by the last Friday of the Spring Semester of the second year.**

Students are given an overall score for the full exam, using the scoring categories Pass, Reservations, or Fail. In the event of a score of Reservations or Fail, the committee will outline specifically what action the student will need to remediate the specific area(s) of concern. Any remediation should be completed **within 30 days.** A student who does not successfully pass their Candidacy Qualifying Examination on the second attempt may not

proceed in the program but may request to be considered for a terminal Master of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences.

### **Submission of NIH F31 Application**

All students are expected to submit an NIH F31 grant proposal either for the April 8th deadline of their 2nd year or August 8 or December 8th of their 3rd year.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training**

Students working towards a PhD degree are required to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research Course (RCR) during their 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of the program. The RCR course is offered through the Research Education and Training Grant Office to develop, foster, and maintain a culture of integrity in science.

### **Individual Development Plan**

Complete an individual development plan (IDP) and discuss the results with your mentor. This is a useful exercise to evaluate your skills, interests, values and set strategic goals. There are many different versions of IDPs. [myidp.sciencecareers.org](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org) is a popular choice.

### **Participate in the Graduate Student Work-in-Progress (WIP) Seminar Series**

YR3+ students are required to give a yearly 30-minute presentation as part of the Graduate Student Work-in-Progress seminar series organized through the Academic Programs Office (APO). YR2 students are expected to attend the seminars. Specialized “Work-in-Progress” seminars will be scheduled in the Spring Semester for YR2 students to practice for their qualifying exam.

### **Dissertation Committee Composition**

The student and dissertation advisor(s) will work together to identify and select dissertation committee members based on relevant expertise, professional advising considerations, committee compatibility, and availability. After the committee members have been identified and confirmed, students must submit the **Dissertation Committee Selection Form** to the Assistant Dean for review and approval by October 1.

The dissertation committee comprises four to five faculty members, including the dissertation advisor. A fifth member must hold a PhD, MD, or equivalent degree and can be either (1) a member of the St. Jude Graduate Faculty at any rank, (2) a member of the St. Jude Faculty who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty, or (3) a member of an outside institution with appropriate appointment and credentials.

Please additionally follow the below requirements for committee composition:

- More than one St. Jude department must be represented among the committee members.
- Only members of the Research Graduate Faculty and Clinical Graduate Faculty may serve as primary members of the Dissertation Committee.
- Only one Clinical Graduate Faculty member is allowed on the committee.

## Dissertation Committee Meeting Guidelines

- At least three members of the committee, including the dissertation advisor, must be present at each meeting. Remote participation is allowed but discouraged.
- The student is responsible for organizing committee meetings and the committee members should make every effort to abide by the agreed date/time.
- The student must complete an **Annual Student Progress Report** for each committee meeting and send to the committee and the BMSPHD at least one week in advance of the committee meeting.
  - Students are responsible for completing Part I Academic Progress and Part II Research Progress and Goals.
  - At the end of the Committee meeting the committee members should complete Part III, providing recommendations, overall evaluation of progress, signature and date.
  - The form is complete once signed and dated by the student and advisor and sent to [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org) and [Registrar@stjude.org](mailto:Registrar@stjude.org).
- The student must prepare an oral presentation in advance of each meeting. The presentation should include an outline of progress and future goals towards the PhD and career.
- Before each meeting, the dissertation advisor will leave the room and the student will be given the opportunity to discuss their experience in the laboratory and any mentorship issues.
- Before and after each meeting, the student will leave the room to allow the committee to discuss the student's progress.

## Second-Year Dissertation Committee Meetings

- The first Dissertation Committee Meeting should be scheduled for 1.5 hours in the fall and take place no later than the last Friday of December, prior to December 25th. At this meeting, the student should:
  - The student should:
    - Introduce themselves
    - Introduce their project including tentative aims planned for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam.
    - Set the date for their Qualifying Exam
  - The committee should complete Part III of the Annual Student Progress Report, providing a written summary of what was discussed and including any recommendations. The document should be signed and dated and returned to the Registrar and BMSPHD.
  - Proposed changes to the Dissertation Committee after the first committee meeting must be submitted in writing by the student, dissertation advisor, or the department chair with a full explanation for approval by the Associate Dean.
- Optional one-on-one meetings with committee members or an additional committee meeting can be scheduled if necessary to revisit planned aims for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam.

- The committee will meet for 2-2.5 hours for the Candidacy Qualifying Examination which must be completed **by the last Friday of the Spring Semester of the second year** Any exceptions to this deadline must be approved by the Associate Dean. The full committee must attend the Candidacy Qualifying Exam unless there is an unforeseen crisis that prevents a committee member from attending.

### **Committee Meetings in Years 2-5**

- The Dissertation Committee will continue to advise and mentor the student for the duration of their PhD training.
- In years 2-5, committee meetings should be held at least once a year. Meetings should be one hour. Longer or more frequent meetings can be arranged as needed.
- Dissertation Committee Guidelines outlined above should be followed for all committee meetings.

### **First Author Publication Requirement**

As a minimum requirement for graduation, each student must have at least one peerreviewed, first author journal article published, in press, or accepted.

### **PhD Defense**

SJGS students must prepare a PhD dissertation, provide a public presentation, and a closed defense of the thesis research directly following in a private meeting with the Thesis Committee.



## Co-Advisor Conflict Resolution Agreement

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dissertation Co-Advisor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dissertation Co-Advisor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliated**

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

The above student will be advised by the Co-Advisors listed above. Conflicts between the Co-Advisors on scientific directions, priority, resource and budget allocation, publications, or intellectual property issues related to the student above will be mediated by the Associate Dean of Biomedical Sciences.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dissertation Co-Advisor Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dissertation Co-Advisor Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Associate Dean Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



**Dissertation Committee Selection Form  
Biomedical Sciences PhD Program**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last Middle First*

**Student email** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROPOSED DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

**Dissertation Advisor Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Advisor email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Member**       **Associate Member**       **Assistant Member**

**Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Member**       **Associate Member**       **Assistant Member**

**Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Member**       **Associate Member**       **Assistant Member**

**Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Member**       **Associate Member**       **Assistant Member**

**Optional Committee Member #5 Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

Institution (if external): \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Member**       **Associate Member**       **Assistant Member**

## Graduate School Approval

Associate Dean Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Effective: 07/01/2023

Please submit to Registrar

### General Dissertation Committee Meeting Guidelines

The student is responsible for organizing all dissertation committee meetings and the committee members should make every effort to abide by the agreed date/time. At least three members of the dissertation committee, including the dissertation advisor, must be present at each meeting. Remote participation is allowed but discouraged.

The student must prepare both an **Annual Student Progress Report** (see Appendix 4.2) and oral presentation in advance of each dissertation committee meeting.

The **Annual Student Progress Report** must be sent to the committee and the Assistant Dean at least one week in advance of the committee meeting.

- Students are responsible for completing Part I Academic Progress and Part II Research Progress and Goals.
- At the end of the committee meeting the committee members should complete Part III, providing recommendations, overall evaluation of progress, signatures and date.
- The form is complete once signed and dated by the student and advisor and sent to [BMSPhD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPhD@stjude.org) and [Registrar@stjude.org](mailto:Registrar@stjude.org).

The oral presentation should include an outline of progress and future goals towards the PhD and career.

Before each meeting, the dissertation advisor will leave the room and the student will be given the opportunity to discuss their experience in the laboratory and any mentorship issues. Before and after each meeting, the student will leave the room to allow the committee to discuss the student's progress.



Report purposes:

- 1) Report student accomplishments over the past year,
- 2) Strategize and prioritize student goals for the upcoming year,
- 3) Verify oversight of adequate professional and academic progress.

**Committee Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last*
*Middle*
*First*

**DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:**

**Dissertation Advisor Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Optional Committee Member Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I: ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

**Date of entrance into program** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current GPA** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of last committee meeting** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Qualifying Exam** \_\_\_\_\_

**Result** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of second qualifying exam (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Result** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of F31 submission** \_\_\_\_\_

**F31 funded?** \_\_\_ (Y/N)

**Part II: RESEARCH PROGRESS AND GOALS (to be completed by the STUDENT)**

1. Please write a few paragraphs highlighting your accomplishments, activities, and progress made toward the completion of your degree since the last committee meeting. Please include mention of conference presentations and publications. If you feel you are not making progress, explain why. Include perceived departmental/school obstacles that hinder your progress.



2. Please write a few paragraphs summarizing your research goals for the forthcoming year.



A large empty rectangular box intended for the student's progress report.

**Part III: COMMITTEE REVIEW (to be completed by the COMMITTEE on the day of the review)**





**St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital**  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

**Annual Student Progress Report  
Biomedical Sciences PhD Program**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Candidacy Qualifying Examination Guidelines

The Candidacy Qualifying Examination is a major milestone in Ph.D. training and marks the transition from coursework-associated learning to fully focused independent dissertation research. To evaluate the student's preparedness and aptitude for this important transition, the exam is designed to test the student's mastery of foundational knowledge, particularly in the field relevant to the student's research, as well as familiarity with relevant literature, critical thinking skills and ability to apply knowledge in different contexts to address scientific questions or hypotheses. The student must be able to articulate immediate and long-term plans and goals for their project. The exam consists of two parts: a written document and an oral exam. The exam must be completed **by the last Friday of the Spring Semester of the second year**

### I. Scheduling the Candidacy Qualifying Examination

The student will work with the research department administrative assistant to schedule a date for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam and reserve a conference room for at least two hours. This meeting room must have a projector screen and a whiteboard. The dissertation committee must all agree to the exam time, and the Dean, Associate Dean and Assistant Dean of the PhD program should also be invited to the exam so that one of the deans is available to attend the exam. The Registrar should be included on the calendar invite to record the upcoming exam. The student must begin the scheduling process **at least 3 months prior** to the desired meeting date.

### II. Format of the Written Candidacy Qualifying Examination Document

The student will write their Candidacy Qualifying Examination document following the format and guidelines for the Abstract, Specific Aims, Research Strategy and References sections of an F31 NIH research proposal. The topic is the student's dissertation research. It is important to provide a clear rationale for the proposed studies. The student should include their own relevant preliminary data. If the rationale is also based on data generated from others within the lab, it is acceptable to include this data with clear acknowledgement of the data source. References to work of others where relevant should also be included to support rationale for the proposal.

When writing the research proposal, the student may consult with members of their laboratory, dissertation committee, and department/collaborating department (faculty, postdocs, research staff), but may not consult with the dissertation advisor. The dissertation advisor should not share their own grant documents that overlap with the student's project or proposal. Proposed ideas should be those of the student alone with input from experts.

The Candidacy Qualifying Examination written document will have 4 sections (total maximum of 8 pages, including abstract, figures and tables, but excluding references):

- (1) Title and Abstract (1 page): The title and abstract should be descriptive of the total document – that is, the portion of the work that has been accomplished, and the portion of the work that is proposed for the next 2-3 years of research.

(2) Specific Aims (1 page – no more): an abbreviated version of the full grant that is central to the grant proposal. Provide relevant background, the purpose of the project, and 2-3 independent aims.

(3) Research Strategy (6 pages): describes the proposed research, stating its significance, innovation, and how it will be conducted including consideration of scientific rigor.

- Introduction, Background, and Significance of the Research: should include the “intellectual merit” of the project: what it will do to move the field forward and further fundamental understanding. It should also demonstrate the student’s mastery of the literature in their field.
- Preliminary Results (including figures and tables): a summary of progress on the research problem thus far.
- Proposed Research (including figures and tables): a research plan for the next 2-3 years, including general objectives and specific experimental or theoretical plans, expected results, potential pitfalls, and a brief description of contingency plans.

(4) References (as many as are appropriate; not included in the page count): references should follow guidelines provided in the most current version of APA style.

The student decides how to partition the document between text and figures but figures should not be seen as a replacement for text (i.e., the text must be a complete narrative). All text must be 11 point, Arial, at least one-half inch (1/2”) margins – top, bottom, left, right – for all pages, and single-spaced.

More detailed instructions are in the NIH guidelines for F31 applications and are discussed in the Scientific Writing & Communications course.

***\*\*The student must send the Candidacy Qualifying Examination document to all Committee members, the Associate Dean, BMSPhD, and Registrar at least two weeks before the examination date.\*\* All committee members must read the written exam proposal before the exam.*** If two or more committee members believe that the Candidacy Qualifying Examination document is not satisfactory to move on with the oral exam portion, then the Chair of the committee must inform the student that the exam will be postponed. The committee should give the student a general idea about why the written document was rejected but are not required to provide detailed feedback to the student. It is then the student’s responsibility to revise the document and reschedule the exam within two weeks’ time.

***\*\*Important note about the content of the written proposal:*** The proposal is in the format of a grant application. Like a grant application, it does not have to encompass all research activities of the student, and it is not a contract or list of experiments that must be completed for completion of the degree. Plans can and should change depending on emerging data from the student and others in the field and based on unexpected outcomes or new opportunities.

### **III. Format for the Oral Candidacy Qualifying Examination**

- A. **Designated Chair of the exam:** The Candidacy Qualifying Examination Committee is the Dissertation Committee with one member selected as the Chair. The Exam Chair cannot be the student's dissertation advisor. The student's dissertation advisor will not participate in questioning by the exam committee but will be present and may be consulted prior to/during the examination about the student's progress. At least four members of the committee, including the dissertation advisor, must be present at the Candidacy Qualifying Examination unless an unforeseen crisis prevents a committee member from attending. If a committee member is unable to attend, the Dean or Associate Dean may participate on the examination committee.
- B. **Review of exam rules:** The Associate Dean or an experienced delegate will review the rules and format of the exam with the student and committee. After review, the dissertation advisor should briefly leave the room to allow the student an opportunity to discuss their experience in the laboratory and raise any issues that should be brought to the attention of the committee. Following return of the dissertation advisor, the student will briefly leave the room to allow a brief preliminary committee discussion before the oral exam begins.
- C. **Oral presentation:** The student will give a presentation that conveys why the research topic is of value to the scientific community and summarizes the proposal. The presentation must be no longer than 25 minutes.
- D. **Question session:** The designated Exam Chair will direct the question session. This session is designed to test the student's knowledge specific to their proposal, general foundational knowledge of anything related to the project (broadly construed), and critical thinking skills and ability to apply knowledge. All committee members except the student's advisor may ask questions, and the committee should find the boundaries or limits of the student's knowledge. If the student does not know the answer to a question, they should try to reason their way to an answer using what they know. The student should respond to questions in chalk talk format and not use presentation slides for the question session. The dissertation advisor should refrain from contributing to the discussion and particularly should refrain from answering questions on the behalf of the student. The question session will last up to 1.5 hours. The Chair will announce the end of the question session.

#### IV. Scoring the Candidacy Qualifying Exam:

At the conclusion of the question session, the student will leave the room for the committee to discuss the overall score for the full exam, using the scoring categories Pass, Reservations, or Fail. The overall score will be determined based on expectations of an accomplished secondyear graduate student who is ready to proceed to independent research. The score should reflect each of the sections of the written proposal as well as student mastery of foundational knowledge, project-specific knowledge, critical thinking, presentation clarity and professional demeanor as assessed through the oral presentation.

All committee members except the dissertation mentor will participate in the discussion and provide comments and feedback about student performance. The dissertation advisor may respond to direct questions from the committee. Ideally, the committee will achieve consensus, but consensus is not required, and all members assign and record their scores according to

their conscience on the Qualifying Examination Evaluation Form. The dissertation advisor is non-scoring except in special circumstances described below. Possible scores are:

- Pass – the student has successfully completed the examination.
- Reservations – many aspects of the exam performance were strong, but there was a fundamental weakness of central importance to the project or proposal.
- Fail – multiple areas of weakness raising concerns about whether the student qualifies to proceed to independent research needed for a doctoral degree.

Each member of the committee records their score for the overall exam and should provide a brief summary of comments. For scores of reservations or fail, committee members should specify areas of weakness that must be remediated to the student in the form of written comments. In the event of a tied score, the student will respond to conditions for the lower score. In the event of three different scores, the dissertation advisor may cast the deciding vote and register their score as a fourth committee member. The completed form should be submitted to the Registrar and Assistant Dean at [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

**Retake:** In the event of a score of reservations or fail, the committee will outline specifically what action the student will need to remediate the specific area(s) of concern. Any remediation should be completed **within 30 days**. For reservations, correction might involve re-writing a section of the written proposal or revisiting an important topic for a focused oral presentation and question session. For Fail, the student would need to retake the entire written or oral component. The score received on the second attempt is the final score for the exam. The student must receive an overall score of Pass for the Candidacy Qualifying Exam.

After successfully passing the Candidacy Qualifying exam, the student should receive direct input from their advisor and committee members on ways to improve the proposal so that it is ready for submission to the NIH in August or December of the third year. Please note, there are a number of additional sections that must be written for submission to the NIH.

### **Failure to Pass the Candidacy Qualifying exam:**

A student who does not successfully pass their Candidacy Qualifying Examination on the second attempt may not proceed in the PhD program. The student may request to be considered for a terminal Master of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences or a terminal Master of Science degree in Biomedical Sciences with Thesis.

To be considered for a terminal Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences, the student must:

- Complete the first- and second-year core curriculum, and
- Complete substantial full-time research, and
- Document completed research with explanation and contextualization of the significance of this research.

The Associate Dean and the Dean will consider the request for a terminal Master of Science degree. If the request is approved, the student will submit documentation of their research for review by their committee. The student's dissertation committee, the Associate Dean, and the

Dean will assess the amount and quality of the student's work and determine whether it rises to a Master's level of research and academic accomplishment to award a terminal Master of Science degree.

To be considered for a terminal Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences with Thesis, the student must:

- Complete the first- and second-year core curriculum, and
- Complete substantial full-time research, and
- Complete sufficient body of research to write Master's Thesis
- Successfully defend Master's Thesis

The "with thesis" designation would be noted on the official transcript.



St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

## Qualifying Examination Evaluation Form Biomedical Sciences PhD Program

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifying Examination Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:

		Pass	Reservations	Fail
Exam Chair (print): _____	Date _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature _____				
Committee Member (print): _____	Date _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature _____				
Committee Member (print): _____	Date _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature _____				
Committee Member (print): _____	Date _____			<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature _____				

Effective 08/26/2024

*Please submit to Registrar and BMSPhD@stjude.org*



## Dissertation Committee Recommendation for Extended Support

**Student:**

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Research Advisor:

Research Committee Member:

Research Committee Member:

Research Committee Member:

Research Committee Member:

In consultation with the student, we have reviewed the student's progress toward the PhD degree and note the following as marked below:

**The dissertation committee agrees that the student continues to make sufficient progress on their research towards the PhD degree, but additional time is needed for degree completion. (Y/N)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The Biomedical Sciences PhD Program agrees, with above approval of the student's thesis committee, to extend support of student stipend, insurance, supply, and travel budgets for an additional year, not to extend beyond 08/11/2025 without additional recommendation and approval.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Dean

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, 262 Danny Thomas Place MS1500, Memphis TN 3810

07/14/2023 rev 2/24

Please submit to the Registrar and the [BMSPHD@Stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@Stjude.org)



**St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital**  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

## PhD Dissertation Defense Form

# Biomedical Sciences Program

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Defense Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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I, the undersigned, am a member of the above student's Dissertation Committee and participated in the defense of the dissertation with final assessment indicated.

Advisor Name(print): \_\_\_\_\_  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Effective 09/29/2022; Rev 10/19/203; Rev 02/29/24  
BMSPhD@StJude.org

Please submit to Registrar and

This dissertation by **enter name** is accepted in its present form

by the dissertation committee as satisfying the

dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation Title: **[Type dissertation title here]**

Date

**Enter name**, Advisor

Recommended to the Dean of the Graduate School

Date

**Enter name**, Committee Member

Date

**Enter name**, Committee Member

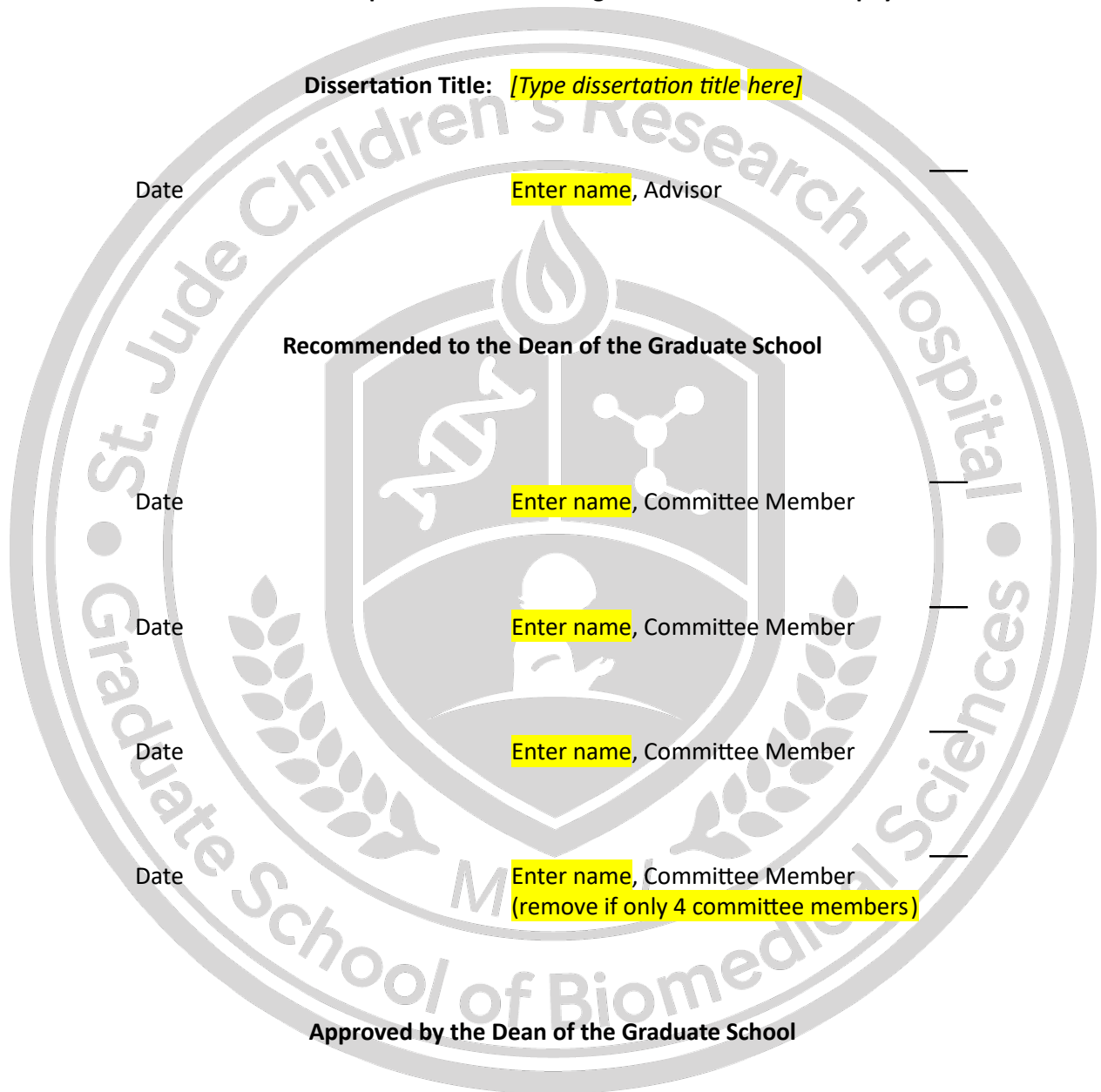
Date

**Enter name**, Committee Member

Date

**Enter name**, Committee Member  
(remove if only 4 committee members)

Approved by the Dean of the Graduate School



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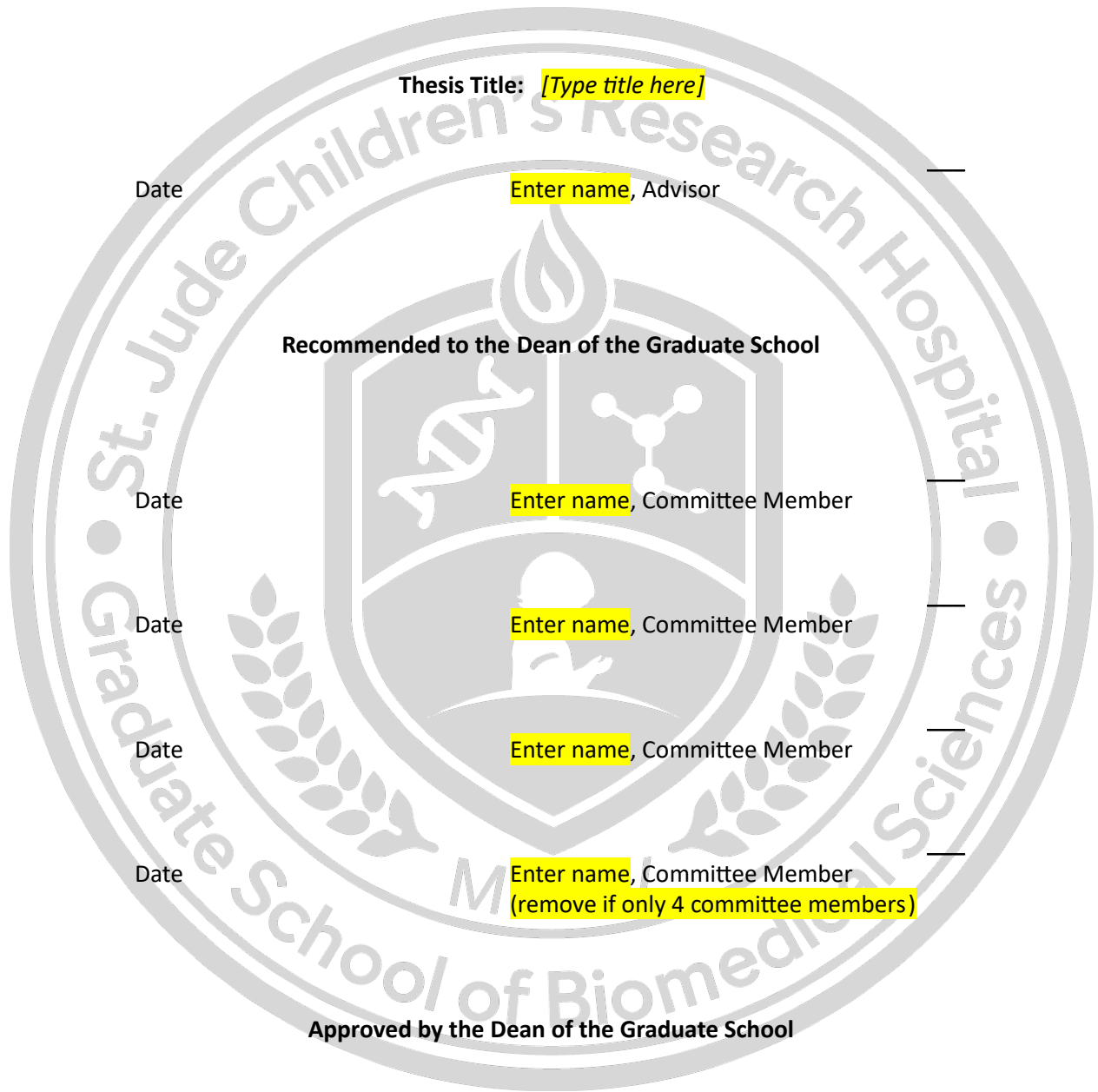
Date

---

Dr. Steven M. Varga, Dean

*Effective 10/13/2022; Rev 10/19/2023*

**This thesis by enter name is accepted in its present form  
by the thesis committee as satisfying the  
thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Science**



Thesis Title: [Type title here]

Date

Enter name, Advisor

Recommended to the Dean of the Graduate School

Date

Enter name, Committee Member

Date

Enter name, Committee Member

Date

Enter name, Committee Member

Date

Enter name, Committee Member  
(remove if only 4 committee members)

Approved by the Dean of the Graduate School

Date

Dr. Steven M. Varga, Dean

Effective 10/13/2022; Rev 10/19/2023



St. Jude Children's  
Research Hospital  
Graduate School of  
Biomedical Sciences

**MS Thesis Defense Form**

# Biomedical Sciences Program

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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I, the undersigned, am a member of the above student's Thesis Committee and participated in the defense of the thesis with final assessment indicated.

Advisor Name(print): \_\_\_\_\_  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_  Satisfactory  Unsatisfactory

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

Effective 02/29/2024

Please submit to Registrar and [BMSPHD@StJude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@StJude.org)



## Biomedical Sciences Offboarding Procedure

### Instructions

1. Complete below steps, as applicable, for each student who is offboarding from SJGS BMS Program.
2. Students have a maximum of 4 weeks post defense to complete off-boarding.

### Offboarding Student Information

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Program:</b>	
<b>Thesis Laboratory:</b>	
<b>Defense Date:</b>	
<b>Termination Date:</b>	
<b>Issued Technology:</b>	
<b>Laptop #:</b>	
<b>Desktop #:</b>	
<b>iPad#</b>	

### Student Responsibilities

Completed	
	Meet with Program Assistant Dean to discuss Offboarding process, termination date, extension request.
	Submit final forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intent to Graduate Online Form <a href="#">Intent to Graduate Form</a></li><li>• Dissertation Defense Form (Original to Registrar, copies to Registrar and <a href="mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org">BMSPHD@stjude.org</a>)</li><li>• Dissertation Approval Form (Original to Registrar, copies to Registrar and <a href="mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org">BMSPHD@stjude.org</a>) • If above is not applicable, complete Withdrawal form</li></ul>
	Upload PDF of final Dissertation to Canvas – Dissertation Research
	Contact Grants & Sponsored Programs office to submit termination notice for any external funding.

	<p>Meet with SJGS Administration Operations Coordinator to initiate termination of BCBS Dental/ Vision Insurance. Termination from Medical Insurance is initiated automatically once separation is entered in Workday by your Manager.</p> <p><i>Medical/Dental/Vision Insurance will terminate at midnight of the last day of the month of final separation. Medical COBRA Coverage is available, at the student's expense, for up to 18 months following separation from SJGS. COBRA coverage for dental/vision is not offered.</i></p>
	Turn in all St. Jude property:
	<p>Return to the SJGS Administration Operations Coordinator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Jude Badge, Parking Permit</li> </ul>
	<p>Return to SJGS Administration Information Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any issued devices (laptop, desktop, iPad) and charging cords</li> <li>• Associated tech accessories (wireless keyboard, mouse, headphones)</li> </ul>
	Submit outstanding expenses for reimbursement.
	Provide computer/file passwords, keys, notebooks, etc. as applicable to your home laboratory/department.
	Complete exit survey, if applicable, and provide new position and contact information to Registrar and <a href="mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org">BMSPHD@stjude.org</a> .

The signature below indicates that the student has completed all the necessary offboarding requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Dean Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Effective 10/13/2022 rev 6/14/24



## Biomedical Sciences Offboarding Procedure

Program Responsibilities	
Completed	
	As soon as possible after finalizing last day of work with student, submit the separation notice in WorkDay.
	Send email to Operations Coordinator, Information Services, and Registrar confirming the student has initiated the off-boarding process include termination date and request email sent to BMSPHD when processes are completed.
	Review and confirm program milestone completion. Send confirmation email to Registrar.
	Submit Extension request in NEMO, if applicable. Extension approved through: _____
	Submit website change request to move student bio on the website to Alumni.

## Graduate School Administration & Support Responsibilities

	Communicate termination to Payroll. (SJGS Administration, Operations Coordinator)
	Remove door access. (SJGS Administration, Operations Coordinator)
	Remove student from listservs. (SJGS Administration, Operations Coordinator)
	Deactivate software/license issued by SJGS. (SJGS Administration, Information Services)
	System access removal. (SJGS Administration, Information Services)
	Review student academic file for completion. (Registrar)
	Review Student SIS file for completion. (Registrar)

# **BMS PhD Financial Use Guide**

## Research and Educational Financial Support Overview

Research and educational financial support are provided to all SJGS BMS PhD students in good standing throughout their five years of graduate training. This support is meant to help students support their own research, professional development activities, and further their education in consultation with their dissertation advisor. Support type and amount vary throughout the course of graduate studies as outlined below:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEARS 3-5
Lab Supplies	\$2,500/rotation	\$15,000	\$20,000
Professional Development		\$2,500	\$2,500

Students are each provided their own individual **Student Allowance Project** for charging lab supplies and professional development costs. Each student is responsible for managing their own yearly Lab Supply and Professional Development budgets through regular monitoring of their Student Allowance Project balance.

The individual Student Allowance Project naming convention includes your first and last name along with your employee ID. The naming convention is:

SA [First Name] [ Last Name] [Employee ID]

Example: "SA Jane Smith 12345" for Jane Smith with employee ID 12345.

The individual Student Allowance Project and Cost Center 36120 must always be used in combination to utilize funds for lab supplies or professional development.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEARS 3-5
Continuing Education			\$5,000 (one time use)

The **Continuing Education** funds are available after approval for one-time use during either Year 3, 4 or 5. These funds are accessible through Cost Center 36110 (Student Allowance Project is not required).

**Note:** St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, LLC must be selected as the Company to access these accounts.

*This guide is aimed at directing students through the process of using each category of funds. If you have questions about your account or any of the below processes, please reach out to Operations Coordinator, Dayna Baker, or Finance Contract, Jim Keith.*

## **Laboratory Supplies Budget**

The lab supplies budget is intended to defray the costs of consumables for the student's research project during lab rotations in the first year and for dissertation research in years 2-5. These funds should specifically support the costs associated with the student's project and not general support for the dissertation lab.

### **Year 1 Rotations:**

The \$2,500 budget per lab rotation is available for use one week prior to the rotation start and ends with purchase orders placed prior to the last day of the rotation and that clear prior to the conclusion of the fiscal year. Unused rotation funds do not carry over into the next rotation. Please discuss with your rotation advisor what supplies you may need to order for your project, or re-stock the lab's inventory of supplies used during your rotation.

#### Acceptable charges include:

- Consumable lab supplies
- Animal costs
- Charges for experiments conducted in St. Jude's Shared Resources and cores such as Hartwell Center, Cell and Tissue Imaging Core, etc.

Refer to the links below to learn about Shared Resources with services in the shared resources management system (SRM2) and how to request PI group access. **Note:** If Shared Resources are used by first-year students, it will require adding/removing PI group access for each rotation, as necessary.

#### [Shared Resource Management System](#)

#### [Getting Started with SRM2](#)

The following charges are **not acceptable** for rotation supply funds, but rather should be supplied by the host lab:

- Small equipment such as individual or multi-channel pipetmen
- Software relevant to the students laboratory project
- Computers for students who are in computational based labs
- Large equipment

### **Year 2+ Budgets:**

Yearly budgets are available for use July 1-June 30 each year for students who have joined their permanent dissertation laboratory. Unused funds do not carry over into the next year.

Acceptable charges include:

- Consumable lab supplies
- Animal costs
- Charges for experiments conducted in St. Jude's shared resources and cores such as Hartwell Center, Cell and Tissue Imaging Core, etc.
- Specialized software licenses needed for the student's project such as Adobe Creative Cloud
- Subscriptions to educational resources such as DataCamp or Coursera
- Subscriptions to website data storage specifically for use with project-related data such as Dropbox
- Small equipment such as individual or multi-channel pipetman
- Books related to the student's project; maximum of \$250/year
- Membership dues to scientific organizations such as AACR or AAAS

Large and common use equipment needed for the dissertation project, especially items reaching the level of capital expenditure (i.e.  $\geq$  \$5,000), should be purchased under the dissertation advisor's budget, not the student allowance lab supplies budget (i.e. centrifuge, etc.). Exceptions for large and common use equipment under under \$5,000 can be requested through submission of the **Non-Consumable Request Form**. Purchased items would be the property of the Graduate School and returned after completion of the dissertation.

For students in "dry labs", supply money can be used to buy a workstation computer for the student's research. The workstation computer will be the property of the graduate school when the student completes their dissertation work. Submission of a **NonConsumable Request Form** is required.

### **Process Overview**

Supplies and services are requested by the student through submission of Requisitions in Workday. Through this process you will be able to search and request items available through an internal catalog, request non-catalog items, or connect to a supplier website to locate the needed items. Selected items will be moved to a cart.

**Note:** Edit the Requisition Details template prior to adding items to your cart (company - SJGS, requisition type, deliver to, project, and cost center) to ensure the information auto-populates to each line of your requisition. Rotation advisors or a lab contact can provide first-year students with the appropriate delivery location (building and room).

### **Job Aids:**

[Create a Requisition for Goods](#)

[Create a Requisition for Non-Catalog Goods](#)

[Create a Requisition for Science Market](#)

[Chart of Accounts and Spend Categories](#)

## Professional Development Budget

The professional development budget can be used in a variety of ways to enhance your training and skill development. Most common uses include conference/course registration and travel-related expenses (e.g., airfare, baggage, ground transportation, hotel, etc.).

### Process Overview

- 1) A **Spend Authorization** must be completed in Workday to gain approval prior to travel or use of funds. Within the authorization, you will provide a description of the request and detail the anticipated expenses and associated cost centers. The Spend Authorization will be sent to your manager for review and approval.

**Note:** Select Employee Travel as the Business Purpose when completing the authorization.

#### Job Aids:

[Create a Spend Authorization](#)

[Viewing and Editing Spend Authorization Requests](#)

- 2) An **Expense Report** must be completed in Workday to receive reimbursement for incurred expenses.

#### Job Aids:

[Creating and Managing Expenses](#)

[Create an Expense Report for Yourself](#)

[View and Edit Expense Reports](#)

Workday allows you to **Request Delegation to Start on My Behalf** allowing others to complete tasks and business processes on your behalf (i.e., create spend authorizations/expense reports).

#### Job Aid:

[Delegations](#)

## Monitoring Your Student Allowance Project

Each student is responsible for monitoring their own Student Allowance Project which can be accomplished by running a report in Workday. In Workday, your Laboratory Supplies and Professional Development budgets are viewed and managed as individual ledger accounts.

**Budget**

Laboratory Supplies  
Professional Development

**Ledger Account**

6600: Supplies  
6100: Employee Travel

**Job Aid:**[Viewing Graduate School Student Allowances](#)

The report provides an overall view of the Student Allowance Project budget, including commitments, obligations, actuals, committed spend, balance. The view can be expanded by selecting the carat to the left of the project name, allowing you to view the individual ledger accounts (6600: Supplies; 6100: Employee Travel); however, first-year students will only have one ledger account (6600: Supplies). Each ledger account can be expanded by selecting the carat to the left. Detailed expenses can be viewed by hovering over the budget dollars and selecting the carat to the right.

**Note:** Registration expenses will populate a separate budget line on your Student Allowance Project ledger; however, these expenses are considered part of the overall Professional Development Budget allowance. Expenses related to Dues and Memberships will also populate a separate budget line and these expenses are considered part of the overall Lab Supplies budget.

Beginning in Year 2, a **Workday Role Assignment** request to be a Project Financial Analyst can be submitted by or on behalf of the dissertation advisor and/or departmental admin allowing access to view the individual Student Allowance Project.

**Job Aid:**[Workday Role Assignment](#)

Tips for completing the form:

1. Role: Select Project Financial Analyst
2. Add or Remove Role: Add (remember to remove if advisors or admins change)
3. Describe where roles are to be added/removed: Provide Student Allowance Project name
4. Describe why roles are to be added/removed: View/monitor project balance and activity

## Continuing Education Allowance

Students have access to a **Continuing Education Allowance** of up to \$5,000 as a onetime use during either Year 3, 4, or 5. Most commonly students use these funds to attend a Cold Spring Harbor or Marine Biological Laboratories at Woods Hole course; however, there are many options for using these funds in a meaningful way.

## Process Overview

To request use of funds, send an email to Associate Dean Wilson Clements, Assistant Dean Cassandra VanDunk, and your advisor, and cc Dayna Baker, Jim Keith, and [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org). The request should include:

- Name of conference/course/event
- Dates of conference/course/event
- Justification for attendance
- Anticipated breakdown of costs (registration, travel, accommodation, other eventrelated expenses)

Email approval is required from the Associate or Assistant Dean to move forward. The email chain including the request and approval should be submitted as a support document when completing the Spend Authorization and Expense Report. Expenses associated with this one-time allowance should be charged to **Cost Center 36110** (Student Allowance Project is not required).

The Graduate School can assist in charging large expenses such as course registration on a SJGS Amex card, so you are not burdened with this expense. For assistance, please reach out to [BMSPHD@stjude.org](mailto:BMSPHD@stjude.org).

## Business-Related Travel

Business-Related Travel should be transacted by Travel Services via phone, email, or the Concur booking tool. To use the Travel Services, you must first complete the My Profile – Personal Information within Concur. See website for instructions.

**Note:** Air reservations made through a third party are not reimbursable.

[Travel Services](#)

[Concur Online Booking Tool - Domestic & Business Travel Only](#)

## Non-consumable Request Form

Submitted requests will be reviewed and approval provided by the program Dean. Please note that all nonconsumables purchased are owned by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and will need to be returned once no longer in use.

**Student:**

**Research Advisor: Date:**

**Complete the following information for approval and allowability check:**

1. Provide details of non-consumable(s) requested including estimated cost.

2. Provide strong justification on how the non-consumable(s) will contribute to your research training and be specific about what added value it would provide. If request is for a computer, please include justification for why an additional resource outside of the issued laptop is needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Program Dean Signature

Date

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, 262 Danny Thomas Place MS1500, Memphis TN 38105

07/20/2023

*Please submit to the Operations Coordinator, Dayna Baker*