



College of Pharmacy
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON • COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2026–2027

Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences • Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy • Pharmacy Leadership and Administration

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Arash Bashirullah, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor
Humana Chair in Pharmacy

Welcome to the University of Houston College of Pharmacy.

If you are joining us this fall, congratulations. We read your application, discussed your accomplishments and your potential, and we are glad you chose us. If you are returning to work already underway, welcome back.

Most of you traveled a long way to be here, from another state, another country, another life, leaving behind family and familiar routines. That is no small thing. If the practical parts of settling in prove difficult, tell us. We would much rather help early than learn later that you have been struggling.

You are joining a community united by a shared purpose: advancing human health through discovery and rigorous scholarship that reaches the people who need it. Our programs span pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, medicinal chemistry, health outcomes and policy, clinical and translational research, and pharmacy leadership. The people around you will ask different questions than you do, and answer them in ways that may not have occurred to you. Get to know them. Some of our strongest collaborations, and friendships, begin with an unplanned conversation.

Graduate work is measured in years, not semesters, and progress rarely follows a straight line. Every faculty member you meet here has been where you are. Here are a few things I

like to tell incoming graduate students:

- **Build your community.** Colleagues and mentors, inside your program and beyond.
- **Pace yourself.** This is a long road and you cannot sprint to the finish line.
- **Be kind to yourself.** The work is hard, and difficulty is not failure.
- **Focus on your own path.** Don't lose sight of the dreams that brought you here.

And ask questions early. Ask your advisor, your committee, and the Office of Graduate Studies. In my experience, students who ask early make steadier progress. Asking for help is not weakness; it is sound professional judgment.

Please read this handbook now rather than waiting until a problem arises. It brings together, for the first time, the requirements and milestones for all our graduate programs.

I look forward to meeting you, hearing about your work, and celebrating with you at commencement.

With warm wishes for the year ahead,

Arash Bashirullah, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor · Humana Chair in Pharmacy
University of Houston College of Pharmacy

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■ PART ONE

GRADUATE PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

IN THIS PART

- How to use this handbook
- Graduate degree programs and departmental homes
- How the college is organized
- Administration directory and key contacts

A WELCOME FROM THE ASSISTANT DEAN



Jason Eriksen, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean for
Graduate Programs

Dear Graduate Students,

On behalf of the Office for Graduate Programs, welcome to the 2026–2027 academic year. Whether you arrived this fall from across town or across the world, or you are returning to research already in motion, we are delighted you are here.

You have joined a college with an extraordinary depth of talent. Our faculty lead discoveries that span the full arc of pharmaceutical science: from the chemistry of new therapeutics, to the outcomes and policies that shape how medicines reach patients, to the leadership of the health systems that deliver them. They are award-winning researchers and dedicated teachers, and they take genuine pride in mentoring the next generation of scientists and leaders. The department chairs, program directors, and graduate education committees whose letters fill this handbook are not distant administrators; they are people you will come to know, and who want to know you.

This handbook is our effort to put everything you need in one place: degree requirements, milestones, policies, and the people to call when questions arise. Read it early, and keep it close. When something is unclear, and at some point something will be, come to us. Helping you navigate your program is precisely what our office is for.

Graduate school is a long and demanding road, but you will not walk it alone. You are surrounded by faculty, staff, and fellow students who want you to succeed. I look forward to meeting each of you this year and to watching your work take shape.

Welcome to the College of Pharmacy family.

Sincerely,

Jason Eriksen, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs
University of Houston College of Pharmacy

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is organized in parts. It opens with an Introduction and Graduate Programs Overview describing the College, its degree programs, and how it is organized. Next come the program-specific parts—one each for the PPS and PHOP doctoral programs and the MS-PLA program—covering the requirements, milestones, curriculum, and course descriptions for that program. The remaining parts set out the college-wide policies that apply across all programs, including general curriculum and enrollment rules, advising and progress monitoring, and related topics.

Within a single policy topic that applies to more than one program, the college-wide rule is stated first and any program-specific variations follow each section:

- **College-wide rules** appear first and apply unless a program-specific variation is stated.
- **Program-specific variations** appear in labeled subsections immediately below the college-wide rule.

Resolved conflicts between prior program handbooks have been adjudicated and are stated here as single authoritative rules. This handbook covers policies in effect for the current Academic Year (2026–2027) for both the PhD and MS-PLA programs. Supplementary University and College of Pharmacy policies are referenced but not reprinted here; consult the UH Graduate Catalog and the UHCOP website for those documents.

INTRODUCTION AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) Graduate Programs Handbook is the authoritative reference for all graduate students enrolled in doctoral and master's programs at the college. This handbook covers policies, requirements, and procedures that apply across all programs. Program-specific rules appear in labeled subsections where programs differ. Broader University of Houston (UH) policies govern where this handbook is silent; consult the UH Graduate Catalog for those provisions.

This handbook applies to two degree programs:

- The **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pharmaceutical Sciences**, offered in five concentrations.
- The **Master of Science (MS) in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (MS-PLA)**, offered by the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR).

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

PHD IN PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

Within the College, our graduate programs are organized as concentrations — areas of specialized study — housed under three home departments. The PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences offers concentrations in Pharmacology (PCOL), Pharmaceutics (PCEU), and Medicinal Chemistry (MedChem), all based in the Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS). The College also offers a PhD concentration in Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP), based in the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes & Policy. Students pursuing a master's degree enroll in the MS in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA), based in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR), which will also be the home of a Clinical & Translational Research (CTR) concentration now in development. The table below summarizes each concentration and its departmental home:

The PCOL, PCEU, and MedChem concentrations are governed by the PPS Graduate Education Committee (GEC). The PHOP concentration is governed by the PHOP department GEC. CTR is in development; governance arrangements for that concentration will be announced separately.

The College's graduate programs — PhD and master's alike — draw on UH's standing as Houston's only Carnegie Institute-designated Tier One public research university. Students also benefit from access to the Texas Medical Center (TMC), one of the world's largest medical complexes, and to affiliated institutions including UTHealth and Rice University.

DEPARTMENTAL HOMES AND FACILITIES

The College of Pharmacy's graduate programs are based on the UH main campus in the Health & Biomedical Sciences Building 2, the college's home since January 2018. The building offers more than 157,000 square feet of modern research and education space, and its location gives students ready access to the Texas Medical Center and affiliated institutions — an unusually rich setting for pharmaceutical and health-sciences research.

The PPS concentrations (PCOL, PCEU, and MEDCHEM) are housed in the Department of Pharmacological & Pharmaceutical Sciences. These bench-science concentrations span pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, and medicinal chemistry, giving students a laboratory-based research environment supported by the department's faculty and shared core facilities.

The PHOP concentration is based in the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes & Policy, whose nine faculty bring backgrounds in pharmacoepidemiology, practice-based research, public health, biostatistics, and socio-behavioral and administrative pharmacy. The doctoral program welcomed its first students in 2009 and stays connected with a network of more than 100 master's and PhD alumni now working across the pharmaceutical industry, healthcare consulting, healthcare organizations, and academia.

The Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR) is home to the MS-PLA program. Its curriculum centers on pharmacy leadership and administration in health systems, preparing graduates for management and leadership roles in hospital and health-system pharmacy practice.

HOW THE COLLEGE IS ORGANIZED

You'll rarely need to think about the College's full org chart — for most day-to-day matters, your first stop is your program's Graduate Program Staff and Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) in the Office of Graduate Studies. But it helps to understand how the College is organized, so you know where a given decision gets made and who to turn to when something falls outside the routine. This section gives you that map, from the department level up to the Dean's office.

YOUR HOME DEPARTMENT

Your academic home is one of the College's three departments — Pharmacological & Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS), Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes & Policy (PHOP), or Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR). Each is led by a Department Chair (supported by one or more Assistant Department Chairs, who act for the Chair when needed). Your Chair oversees the department's faculty, space, and budget — which is why the Chair is the one who coordinates authorization of your financial support (for example, when your assistantship funding shifts or you change advisors).

GRADUATE EDUCATION COMMITTEES (GECs)

Each department that runs a doctoral concentration operates a Graduate Education Committee (GEC) — the faculty body closest to your academic progress. GECs are responsible for: designing and maintaining the curriculum; admitting students to the program; and ensuring students' progress through their milestones, complete their degrees, and move into strong careers.

There is one GEC for PPS, and a separate GEC for the PHOP concentration. The MS-PLA program is overseen by its own program leadership and advisory committee within PPTR. Your GEC is also where academic grievances are first evaluated at the department level.

OFFICE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

This is the office that runs graduate education day to day, and the one you'll interact with most beyond your own department. The Office for Graduate Programs provides administrative support across all graduate activities, including: supporting graduate admissions across the College; running program assessment and quality control; allocating college and university resources among the concentrations; and receiving and maintaining student progress reports.

COLLEGE GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC)

Above the individual departments sits the college-wide Graduate Studies Committee, which sets policy that applies across all graduate programs at UHCOP. It is made up of five college faculty members and two graduate students, all with voting rights. The GSC also hears appeals in the graduate grievance process and forwards its recommendations to the Dean.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE

The College's financial and administrative machinery runs through College Business Operations (CBO), led by its director, Miranda McMorris. CBO handles budgeting, accounting, human resources, payroll, and employee services — in practical terms, this is where your stipend payments, hiring paperwork, and benefits are processed. You'll usually reach it through the Graduate Office rather than directly, but it's helpful to know that funding and appointment questions ultimately touch this office.

CORE RESEARCH FACILITIES

Much of your research will rely on the College's shared core facilities — specialized instrumentation and equipment used across labs. These are managed by Moody Jandyhala, who maintains the equipment and runs the training required to use it. The College's two key cores are the Mass Spectrometry Core and the Microscopy Core, alongside other shared instrumentation housed in the College. Before you can use a core, you'll generally complete Moody's training for that facility; your advisor's lab is your starting point for getting set up and scheduled.

THE DEAN'S OFFICE

At the top, the Dean leads the College, supported by a team of Associate and Assistant Deans. Two are especially relevant to you: the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs, who oversees the College's research environment and its graduate programs broadly (and to whom the graduate committees ultimately connect), and the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs described above, who handles graduate operations. The Dean's office is where final decisions and grievance appeals are resolved.

QUICK GUIDE: WHO HANDLES WHAT

If your question is about...	Start with...
Course planning, forms, records, milestones	Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) / Graduate Office
Your research and dissertation	Your faculty advisor/mentor and committee
Curriculum, admissions, academic progression	Your department's GEC
Assistantship support, advisor-change funding	Your Department Chair (with the Graduate Office)
Stipend payments, HR, benefits	College Business Operations (CBO) — Miranda McMorris, via the Graduate Office
Access to / training on shared instrumentation	Your advisor's lab → Moody Jandyhala (Mass Spec or Microscopy Core)
College-wide policy or a grievance appeal	College Graduate Studies Committee → Dean
Booking travel; department-level financial or meeting arrangements	Your department's business office (COP staff-by-department directory)
Computer, email, software, network, or hardware problems	College of Pharmacy IT — submit a service ticket

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

University-wide policies governing graduate education are published in the UH Graduate Catalogue. The 2026–2027 edition is available online; use the drop-down menu on the catalogue website to select the correct academic year. The UH Graduate School website provides additional guidance and resources on university requirements.

Keep two important points in mind when consulting these sources:

College policies may be more rigorous than university minimums. UHCOP has the authority to set standards that exceed university-wide requirements. When a college policy and a university policy appear to differ, the more rigorous standard applies to students in UHCOP graduate programs.

Policies change frequently. Requirements described in any written source — including this handbook — are subject to revision. Before relying on a specific policy or deadline, confirm current requirements directly with the graduate staff or the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

ADMINISTRATION DIRECTORY AND KEY CONTACTS

This directory lists the administrative contacts for all graduate programs at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP). Students should contact the person listed for the area that most closely matches their question or concern.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS OFFICE

Graduate Academic Advisor — Cyrena Bell. Room 6007, Health 2. cedwards4@uh.edu | (713) 743-4188. The Graduate Academic Advisor is the primary point of contact for graduate students, assisting with course enrollment and milestone reporting, collecting required information, and working with students to keep them on track. Most academic forms, including milestone and progress forms, should be routed to the Graduate Academic Advisor first. She coordinates with the Graduate Programs Director when an issue requires escalation.

Graduate Programs Director — Neha Valji. Room 6010, Health 2. navalji@uh.edu | (713) 743-3517. The Graduate Programs Director handles petitions, international-student matters, appeals, and disciplinary issues, and evaluates petitions and similar requests. Matters that cannot be resolved at the advising level are escalated to the Director, who escalates policy-level issues to the Assistant Dean as needed.

Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs — Jason Eriksen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacology. Room 6007D, Health 2. jeriksen@uh.edu | (713) 743-1226. The Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs oversees policy issues, grievances, exemptions from program rules, and overall management of the graduate programs. Issues are escalated from the Graduate Programs Director to the Assistant Dean as needed.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACOLOGICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES (PPS)

Department Chair (Joseph and Shirley Shipman Buckley Endowed Professor) — Gregory Cuny, Ph.D. Room 7036, Health 2. gdcuny@uh.edu | (713) 743-1274

Assistant Chair / Professor of Pharmacology — Bradley McConnell, Ph.D. Room 5024, Health 2. bkmccConnell@uh.edu | (713) 743-1218

The Department Chair and Assistant Chair provide overall departmental oversight but have limited day-to-day involvement in the PhD program; most graduate matters are handled through the Graduate Education Committee.

Graduate Education Committee (GEC) Chair — Bin Guo, Ph.D. — Room 7046, Health 2; bguo@uh.edu · (832) 842-8301. The Graduate Education Committee (GEC) oversees admissions, academic progression, and curriculum.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND POLICY (PHOP)

Graduate Program Director (primary point of contact) — Lupita Rangel Curiel. grcuriel@uh.edu | (832) 842-8331. Lupita Rangel Curiel serves as Program Director and is the primary departmental contact for PHOP graduate students, assisting with course planning, enrollment, milestone tracking, and keeping students on track. PHOP students should direct day-to-day program questions to her first.

Department Chair (Mustafa & Sanobar Lokhandwala Endowed Professor; Director, P-HOPER Center) — Rajender R. Aparasu, Ph.D., FAPhA. Room 4052, Health 2. rraparasu@uh.edu | (832) 842-8374. The Department Chair provides overall departmental oversight but has limited day-to-day involvement in the PhD program; most graduate matters are handled through the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Education Committee.

Assistant Chair and GEC Chair (Assistant Director, P-HOPER Center) — Hua Chen, M.D., Ph.D. Room 4049, Health 2. hchen20@uh.edu | (832) 842-8355. As GEC Chair, Dr. Chen leads the Graduate Education Committee (GEC), which oversees admissions, academic progression, and curriculum.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY PRACTICE AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH (PPTR)

The Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR) administers the MS in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (MS-PLA).

Graduate Program Director, MS-PLA (primary point of contact) — Divya A. Varkey, Pharm.D., M.S. Room 4027, Health 2. davarkey@uh.edu | (832) 842-8360. Dr. Varkey is the primary point of contact for MS-PLA students, handling advising, enrollment, milestone tracking, and day-to-day program questions. MS-PLA students should direct program matters to her first.

Department Chair — Kevin W. Garey, Pharm.D., M.S., FASHP, FIDSA, FCCP. Room 4039, Health 2. kgarey@uh.edu | (832) 842-838

Assistant Department Chair — Julianna Fernandez, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCGP. Room 4024, Health 2. jmfernandez3@uh.edu | (832) 842-8352

COLLEGE-WIDE OFFICES AND FACILITIES

Core Research Laboratories and Facilities (instrument training and scheduling) — Dakshina (Moody) Jandhyala, Ph.D. Room 6009, Health 2. dmjandhyala@uh.edu | (713) 743-0475. Contact Dr. Jandhyala for instrument training and scheduling in the College's core research laboratories.

Central Business Office (CBO) — Executive Director, Business Operations: Miranda McMorris. Room 3034, Health 2. mmcmorris@uh.edu | (713) 743-1297. Because most graduate students hold stipended appointments and receive financial aid, the College of Pharmacy Central Business Office (CBO) is involved in many student financial affairs. Contact the CBO for questions about stipends, payroll, and business operations.

Department Business Offices — travel and department-level arrangements. Each department has a business office whose staff assist with department-level financial arrangements and with booking travel and other arrangements for meetings and conferences. These staff support department- and faculty-level logistics and are generally your first stop for travel-related paperwork; they do not handle matters tied to you personally as a student, such as stipend payments (for stipends and payroll, see the Central Business Office above). Find your department's business-office staff in the College directory at <https://www.uh.edu/pharmacy/about-us/directory-home/staff-by-department/>.

Information Technology (IT) Support — submitting a service ticket. For computer, email, software, network, printing, or hardware problems, submit a service ticket to the College of Pharmacy IT department rather than emailing staff directly, so your request is logged and routed to the right person. Submit a ticket and find IT contacts through the IT directory at <https://www.uh.edu/pharmacy/about-us/directory-home/information-technology-directory/index.php>.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE STUDENT RESOURCES

Beyond the College, several University of Houston offices handle services that new students need in their first weeks. These are university-wide offices (not College of Pharmacy), and are especially useful when getting set up.

Getting set up: AccessUH and your CougarNet account. AccessUH (accessuh.uh.edu) is the University's single sign-on portal. Log in with your CougarNet ID and password to reach your UH email, Canvas, class registration (myUH), the myParking portal, and Cougar Card Connect. Activating your CougarNet account is the first step for new students; for login problems, contact UH IT support.

Cougar Card (student ID). Your Cougar Card is the University's official photo ID, used for building access, library and computer-lab access, printing, campus dining, and events. Submit your photo through Cougar Card Connect in AccessUH, then pick up your card at the Cougar Card Office (Welcome Center, 4434 University Drive, Suite 151; 832-842-2273). More information: <https://www.uh.edu/af-university-services/cougarcard/>.

Parking and Transportation. Parking on campus requires a permit, purchased virtually through the myParking icon in AccessUH. Parking & Transportation Services also operates the Cougar

Line campus shuttle and the after-hours Cougar Ride service, both trackable in the UH Go app. Contact: (832) 842-1097 | parking@uh.edu. More information: <https://www.uh.edu/parking/>.

University Libraries. The MD Anderson Library is the University's main library, offering research databases, subject librarians, study and collaboration spaces, and printing (accessed with your Cougar Card). More information: <https://www.uh.edu/libraries/>.

Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) / Title IX. The Office of Equal Opportunity Services administers the University's non-discrimination and Sexual Misconduct/Title IX policies and receives reports of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. All new students are required to complete the Crossroads online training. Contact: (713) 743-8835 | eos@uh.edu. More information: <https://www.uh.edu/equal-opportunity/>.

Campus safety (UHPD). The University of Houston Police Department provides 24/7 campus law enforcement and emergency response. In an emergency, call 911 or UHPD at (713) 743-3333. More information: <https://www.uh.edu/police/>.

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■ PART TWO

PHARMACOLOGICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY • PPS

IN THIS PART

- Messages from department leadership
- Degree requirements and the year-by-year student journey
- Qualifying examination and doctoral candidacy
- Curriculum, course sequences, and travel funding

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR



Gregory Cuny, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair
Department of Pharmacological and
Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dear PPS Graduate Students,

As you enter the laboratory each day, pause and reflect on the nature of your studies. You are not merely generating data or fulfilling degree requirements; you are creating new knowledge for the benefit of human health. Your experiments bring us closer to solving complex biological questions and advancing new therapeutic paradigms. The pursuit of pharmaceutical sciences is a noble and demanding calling, and I am inspired by the deep curiosity and passion you bring to our department.

The doctoral journey requires rigor but can also involve frustrating moments. You will encounter failed experiments, perplexing data, and times when the path forward is unclear. I urge you to view these obstacles not as setbacks, but as the true essence of scientific discovery. Major advances seldom follow a direct or predictable path; they result from resilience, keen observation, critical

thinking, and adapting to scientific surprises. Be persistent, lean on your advisors, mentors and peers, and remember that every hurdle you overcome is shaping you into a more formidable researcher.

Know that our faculty believes in your potential. You are future scientists, educators, and leaders who will redefine pharmaceutical discovery and development. Recognize the significant progress you have achieved, care for yourselves and others, hold fast to the vision that brought you here and accept my continuous encouragement and support as you work towards your doctorate in pharmaceutical sciences.

Sincerely,

Gregory Cuny, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair
Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences
(PPS)

WELCOME FROM THE ASSISTANT CHAIR



**Bradley McConnell, Ph.D.,
FAHA**

Professor of Pharmacology and
Assistant Chair
Department of Pharmacological and
Pharmaceutical Sciences

Welcome to the Department of Pharmacological & Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy.

Thank you for your interest in our department. PPS is a vibrant, collaborative community of faculty, students, postdoctoral fellows, and staff who work together to advance discovery in pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, and medicinal chemistry. Our research spans basic, translational, and preclinical sciences, and we are committed to developing new knowledge and innovative approaches that improve human health.

Our faculty are recognized for excellence in research, teaching, and mentorship, supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a collaborative environment that encourages interdisciplinary partnerships. From uncovering fundamental disease mechanisms to

advancing therapeutic discovery and drug development, our researchers are making meaningful contributions and providing exceptional training opportunities for the next generation of biomedical scientists.

As Assistant Chair, I am proud to be part of a department that values curiosity, collaboration, innovation, and academic excellence. Whether you are exploring our graduate programs, seeking research opportunities, or considering collaboration with our faculty, I encourage you to learn more about the people and programs that make PPS an outstanding place to grow as a scientist and contribute to improving human health.

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ABOUT THE PHARMACOLOGICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES PROGRAM (PHD)

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pharmaceutical Sciences is offered through the Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) in three concentrations: Pharmacology, Pharmaceutics, and Medicinal Chemistry. This section is your primary reference for the PPS concentrations — governance, degree requirements, the year-by-year curriculum, the qualifying examination, and PPS-specific dissertation and graduation requirements. College-wide policies that apply to every graduate program appear in the **Administration** part of this handbook; where PPS differs, the difference is stated here.

DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Department Chair. Gregory Cuny, Ph.D. — Room 7036, Health 2; gdcuny@uh.edu · (713) 743-1274.

Assistant Chair / Professor of Pharmacology. Bradley McConnell, Ph.D. — Room 5024, Health 2; bkmcconnell@uh.edu · (713) 743-1218.

Graduate Education Committee (GEC) Chair. Bin Guo, Ph.D. — Room 7046, Health 2; bguo@uh.edu · (832) 842-8301.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND GOVERNANCE

The Pharmacology, Pharmaceutics, and Medicinal Chemistry concentrations are housed within the Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP). The three PPS concentrations are governed by the PPS Graduate Education Committee (GEC), which oversees admissions, academic progression, and curriculum.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

All three PPS concentrations require a minimum of 75 credit hours for the PhD degree. A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale must be maintained in all graduate-level courses required for the degree (see Administration → Academic Standards and Professional Conduct). The required-credit breakdown differs by concentration; each concentration's Required Credits Summary appears in the curriculum below.

THE PPS STUDENT JOURNEY — YEAR BY YEAR

This section walks through the PPS PhD chronologically, from entry to graduation. Each year lists the coursework you will typically take and summarizes what to accomplish — the milestones to reach, the forms to submit, and what to plan for next. Dates reflect the Fall 2026 entering cohort; Pharmacology and Medicinal Chemistry follow a single five-year sequence, and Pharmaceutics follows the Even-Year (Fall 2026) sequence. Full course tables for each concentration appear in the Curriculum and Course Sequence section below, and all program-wide deadlines are consolidated in the Milestone Schedule and Enforcement section.

Summer enrollment. Course enrollment is not required during the summer terms. Students may, however, enroll in Special Problems research (6X98) or Doctoral Research hours (8X98) over the summer, and first-year students typically continue laboratory rotations during their first summer.

YEAR 1 (2026–2027) — COURSEWORK AND FINDING YOUR LAB

Year 1 pairs your concentration's foundational coursework with the laboratory rotations that lead to selecting a dissertation advisor.

Shared first-year courses. All PPS students take *Biostatistics & Experimental Design* (PHCA 7308), *Responsible Conduct of Biological Research* (BIOL 6120), first-year *Seminar* (PCOL/PCEU 7180/7181), and initial *Special Problems* research credit (6X98).

Pharmacology core. Pharmacology students add *Advanced Pharmacology* (PCOL 6370) in the fall, then *Molecular Pharmacology* (PCOL 7433) and *Cellular Pharmacology* (PCOL 7350) in the spring.

Medicinal Chemistry core. Medicinal Chemistry students add *Introduction to Medicinal Chemistry* (PCOL 7460) in the fall, then *Drug Design and Discovery* (PCOL 6345) and an approved elective in the spring.

Pharmaceutics core. Pharmaceutics students add *Advanced Pharmacokinetics* (PCEU 6441) in the fall, then *Advanced Pharmaceutics I and II* (PCEU 6242 and PCEU 6245) in the spring.

What to accomplish. Year 1 has two priorities: perform well in your coursework and secure a dissertation advisor (research mentor). Many students enter with an advisor already identified and join that faculty member's laboratory directly; others find their mentor through rotations. We encourage you to reach out to potential mentors early — ideally before or at the start of your first rotation. Securing a dissertation advisor by the end of Year 1 is mandatory: students who do not secure an advisor may lose financial support and cannot continue in the program. Once you have an advisor, begin assembling your dissertation committee.

Rotation reports and GEC review. Submit a brief written report on each rotation to the supervising faculty member and the GEC Chair within one week of finishing it. The GEC Chair

meets with you during both your first and second rotations and consults separately with the supervising faculty member to assess your progress in the laboratory. If you wish to continue in the same laboratory for your second rotation, you must first obtain the GEC Chair's permission — submitted as a petition to the GEC with written confirmation from the laboratory's Principal Investigator (PI). The GEC makes this decision as part of its review of student progress each semester, and continuing in the same laboratory also requires successful completion of your first semester.

Key deadlines. The dissertation advisor agreement form is due by the end of your first summer (about August 2027); securing an advisor by this point is required to continue in the program. Your dissertation committee must be formed by the end of your third long semester (about December 2027). Rotation and advising forms are available from the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), your first point of contact.

Academic standing. Throughout your first two years of coursework, maintain a strong GPA and perform well in your classes. Falling below the College's academic standards can lead to withdrawal of financial support, making it difficult to continue in the program.

Summer enrollment. Course enrollment is not required during the summer terms. Students may enroll in research or Special Problems credit.

YEAR 1 - LABORATORY ROTATIONS AND DISSERTATION ADVISOR SELECTION

Purpose of rotations. Laboratory rotations introduce you to potential dissertation advisors, build research skills, and allow faculty to evaluate your performance and potential. Whether you enter the program as a Teaching Assistant (TA) or a Research Assistant (RA), participation in rotations is required.

Number and duration. You are required to complete two mandatory laboratory rotations in Year 1. An optional third rotation is available if needed. Each rotation lasts a minimum of 8 weeks.

Timing. The first rotation should commence within the first two weeks of the fall semester. The second rotation may begin immediately after the first rotation ends or at the start of the spring semester. You are encouraged to contact your first potential advisor within the first week of the program.

Rotating in the same laboratory. You may complete your second rotation in the same laboratory as your first. However, doing so requires a petition to the Graduate Education Committee (GEC), along with written confirmation from the Principal Investigator (PI) of that laboratory.

Reporting and evaluations. Within one week of completing each rotation, you must submit a brief written report on your research activities to the faculty member overseeing the laboratory and to the GEC Chair. The faculty member will also assess your performance, motivation, and potential, and submit a report to the GEC Chair within the same timeframe. The GEC will review both reports and may provide feedback. Required forms are available from the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA).

Selecting a dissertation advisor. By the end of your first summer, you must have mutually agreed upon a dissertation advisor, subject to approval by the departmental Chair. An agreement form verifying this relationship must be signed by both you and your advisor. Failure to secure an advisor by the end of the first summer may result in loss of financial support and possible dismissal from the program.

YEAR 2 (2027–2028) — ADVANCED COURSEWORK AND DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

Year 2 shifts toward advanced coursework and the milestones that establish doctoral candidacy.

Typical coursework. All concentrations take Scientific Writing (PCOL 7370) and continue Seminar and Drug Literature Review (PCOL/PCEU 7141/7142), while research credit (Special Problems, 6X98) increases as required coursework winds down. Concentration-specific courses continue per your course sequence — for example, Pharmaceutics students take Advanced Drug Delivery (PCEU 7340).

What to accomplish. Appoint your dissertation committee, hold your first committee meeting, and complete both parts of the qualifying process — the Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense and the Written Qualifying Examination — to advance to doctoral candidacy.

Forming the dissertation committee. Within six months of selecting your research advisor — and no later than the end of your third long semester, or an enrollment hold is placed on your account — form your doctoral dissertation committee of at least five members. Committee seat requirements, the co-advisor rule (if your advisor does not hold a research doctorate), the form and signature process, and how to postpone naming external members are described in Dissertation and Thesis Committee Composition and Meetings.

Key deadlines. Appoint your dissertation committee by the end of your third long semester (about December 2027); hold your first committee meeting by the fourth long semester (about May 2028); and complete the Proposal Defense and Written Qualifier by the end of Year 2 (about August 2028). Passing both establishes doctoral candidacy.

Why candidacy matters. Advancing to doctoral candidacy is a pivotal step: it formally establishes your qualification to pursue the PhD and marks the point at which you accumulate the doctoral research credit hours required for graduation. Although we expect students to reach candidacy during Year 2, delaying it risks leaving you with too few doctoral research credit hours to complete your dissertation on schedule.

Qualifier deadline and holds. Passing the qualifying process by the end of Year 2 is an expected milestone. Some students may not be ready by then, and a delay can be justified in certain cases; however, failing to complete the qualifier more than one semester after the official deadline will place a registration hold on your account. If you will not finish on time, you must have an approved plan to complete the milestone and must demonstrate progress toward it.

Stay in good academic standing. As in Year 1, maintain a strong GPA and solid course performance; dropping below academic standards will result in loss of financial support and jeopardize your continuation in the program.

YEAR 2 - QUALIFYING EXAMINATION AND DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

PREREQUISITES FOR DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

Before the University formally admits you as a doctoral candidate in PPS, you must satisfy all three of the following requirements:

1. Complete all didactic courses required by the PPS program.
2. Maintain good standing in all other graduate credit hours.
3. Pass the two-step Qualifying Examination (QE) described below.

Both steps of the QE must be completed no later than the end of your second year in the program. Failure to meet this deadline is treated as an academic-progression issue and may result in termination of enrollment per University policy, unless the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) grants a documented exemption.

Course registration before QE completion. You are not eligible to register for Doctoral Research credit hours (PCOL/PCEU 8X98) until you have passed both the oral defense and the written qualifying exam. While completing these milestones, register for research activities under Special Problems: PCOL 6X98 or PCEU 6X98.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND ORAL DEFENSE

Format and submission. The dissertation proposal must follow the format of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) individual predoctoral fellowship (F31) grant application. Although the published F31 Research Plan guidelines govern content and organization, the full proposal must be double-spaced throughout to facilitate reading and correction. You will typically draft the proposal during the Scientific Writing course in the spring of your second year, in close collaboration with your faculty advisor. A polished, complete version of the proposal must be submitted to your advisor and your full Doctoral Dissertation Committee at least 14 days before the scheduled defense date.

Defense procedure. The proposal defense is a private meeting between you and your Doctoral Dissertation Committee. You begin with an approximately 30-minute presentation summarizing your preliminary data and proposed research. The committee's examination follows, covering your proposed project, the relevant literature, and your prior coursework. The committee's goal is to evaluate both your specific research plans and your broader understanding of the field.

Committee recommendation outcomes. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee must select one of the following three recommendations:

- **Acceptance Without Modification.** You proceed with the study as proposed. Your advisor submits the proposal and a signed Proposal Approval Form to the GEC within 3 days of the defense for inclusion in your student file.
- **Acceptance With Modification.** The committee specifies required changes. A revised proposal and a signed Approval Form must be submitted to the GEC within 2 weeks of the defense.
- **Rejection.** The committee may reject the proposal if it is underdeveloped or if the defense is inadequate. You will receive written guidance on areas requiring improvement and will have up to 6 months to schedule a second defense.

Documentation. Your faculty advisor prepares a memo summarizing the defense and the committee's recommendations. Copies are provided to you, to each committee member, and to your student file.

Attempt limit and contingency outcomes. You have two attempts to pass the proposal defense. If you are unsuccessful on the second attempt, you will be transitioned into a contingency Master of Science (M.S.) program. If you already hold an M.S. degree from the Department, you will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

STEP 2 — WRITTEN QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Purpose and design. The written qualifying examination tests your mastery of core concepts in your discipline and your ability to integrate knowledge from multiple courses and apply it to new challenges relevant to your dissertation research. Each member of your Doctoral Dissertation Committee contributes questions to the examination and may assign specific readings or highlight areas for focused study to help you prepare.

Grading process. Each question is graded independently by at least two faculty members with expertise in the relevant area. These graders may or may not be members of your committee. Graders return completed evaluations to your advisor within 10 days.

Pass thresholds. To pass the written qualifying examination, you must meet both of the following criteria simultaneously:

- A minimum overall grade of **75%** across all questions; and
- A mean score of at least **70%** from the two graders on each individual question.

Failure and contingency. If you do not meet both thresholds, you may be eligible for a contingency M.S. degree. Your advisor will advise you on next steps and program eligibility.

Completion documentation. Upon passing the written qualifying examination, you must submit the Completion of Written Qualifier form, signed by your advisor and all members of your Doctoral Dissertation Committee, to the GEC.

ACHIEVING DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

Once you have passed both Step 1 (proposal oral defense) and Step 2 (written qualifying examination), and have satisfied the prerequisite course and standing requirements, you are admitted to doctoral candidacy. At that point you may register for Doctoral Research credit hours (PCOL/PCEU 8X98) and begin the dissertation phase of your program.

YEAR 3 (2028–2029) — DOCTORAL RESEARCH

With candidacy established, Year 3 is devoted primarily to dissertation research.

Typical coursework. Enroll primarily in Doctoral Research Hours (8X98), continuing Seminar and Drug Literature Review each long semester.

Annual committee meetings. Beginning in Year 3, an annual dissertation committee meeting is a mandatory requirement for continuing in the program. Each meeting is both an opportunity to present your work and a formal evaluation in which the committee assesses your fitness to continue in the doctoral program. Establish productivity in the laboratory and demonstrate steady progress toward your degree. During the annual committee meeting, students must provide evidence of reasonable advancement in their doctoral work. The Committee's is charged with providing an independent annual assessment of the student's progress that is submitted the Graduate Office. A lack of demonstrated progress may result in a department decision not to allow continuation in the doctoral program.

Reporting and registration holds. You must hold a dissertation committee meeting at least once each year. If you do not submit the required committee-meeting reports, your class registration will be blocked; to lift the hold, your advisor must certify that a committee meeting will take place.

YEAR 4 (2029–2030) — DOCTORAL RESEARCH CONTINUES

Year 4 continues full-time dissertation research under your committee's guidance.

Typical coursework. Continue Doctoral Research Hours (8X98), Seminar, and Drug Literature Review.

What to accomplish. Hold your annual dissertation committee meeting (about May 2030) and confirm you remain on track for your planned defense.

Reporting and registration holds. You must hold a dissertation committee meeting at least once each year. If you do not submit the required committee-meeting reports, your class registration will be blocked; to lift the hold, your advisor must certify that a committee meeting will take place.

YEAR 5 (2030–2031) — DISSERTATION, DEFENSE, AND GRADUATION

Year 5 completes the dissertation and the steps required to graduate.

Typical coursework. Enroll in Doctoral Research Hours (8X98) and Doctoral Dissertation credit (8X99).

What to accomplish. Obtain your committee's approval to write, present your student seminar, apply to graduate, and submit, defend, and upload your dissertation.

Key deadlines. Secure approval to write the dissertation (final committee meeting) by about December 2030; present the student seminar in the semester before graduation; apply to graduate in about January–March 2031; submit the dissertation to your committee at least 14 days before the defense and post the defense announcement at least 7 days before; defend (about March–April 2031); and upload the approved dissertation to Vireo, graduating in about May 2031.

Applying to graduate. Students intending to graduate must register to graduate one semester in advance and obtain their committee's approval to graduate, typically a few months before the May commencement. Adherence to these deadlines is essential.

Enrollment requirements. You must be enrolled full time — a minimum of 9 semester credit hours (SCH) each semester — and must enroll in Doctoral Dissertation (8X99) for 3 SCH during your final semester.

YEAR 5: PPS-SPECIFIC DISSERTATION, DEFENSE, AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

This section covers requirements specific to PPS doctoral students. For the dissertation and defense process shared by all graduate programs — committee composition, meeting requirements, the public defense format, and the six-step degree-completion checklist — see “Dissertation and Thesis Committee Composition and Meetings” and “Defense, Degree Completion, and Graduation Process.” Formatting requirements are covered in Dissertation and Thesis Format Guidelines under Forms and Templates Reference.

Graduation timing. Most PhD students graduate in the spring of their tenth long semester or the summer following it. For the Fall 2026 cohort, the tenth long semester is **Spring 2031**.

Student seminar. You must present a departmental student seminar — a 50-minute research presentation based on your dissertation work — during your penultimate semester. Available dates are limited; schedule early. See Student Seminar Requirement below.

No manuscript prerequisite. Unlike PHOP, the PPS concentrations have no manuscript-submission requirement before scheduling the defense.

Public session. The public session is a seminar of 45–60 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for questions.

Signature forms. After the defense, the committee completes the University of Houston (UH) signature forms as outlined in Section 16 of the Ph.D. Handbook.

STUDENT SEMINAR REQUIREMENT

During the final year of your doctoral program, you must complete a departmental student seminar: a 50-minute research presentation based on your dissertation findings. The seminar is open to all departmental faculty and students, and your committee members are encouraged to attend.

Purpose. The seminar gives you structured practice in oral presentation of your research before your dissertation defense, and it provides an opportunity to receive constructive feedback from faculty and peers on your research and its framing.

Scheduling. Schedule the seminar during the semester immediately preceding your planned graduation semester (the penultimate semester). Available presentation dates are limited each semester. Schedule early to secure your preferred date and to avoid delaying graduation.

Grading. The seminar is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis. The grading focus is on your skill development and readiness for the dissertation defense, not on the completeness of your research findings.

Evaluation. Your seminar is evaluated using the seminar feedback rubric, which both students and faculty complete. The rubric is described in the Forms and Templates Reference; obtain the current version from the Graduate Programs Office. Review it before preparing your presentation so you understand the criteria your committee and audience will apply.

Beyond Year 5. Continuing past the fifth year requires a petition each semester. Not every student finishes within five years, and some may need an additional semester or two. The Graduate Office works with students where possible to provide graduate tuition fellowships that cover tuition, but funding is not guaranteed after Year 5. We strongly encourage students to plan to graduate by the end of Year 5. Student support is generally not provided beyond the fifth year and, where it is, comes with no guarantee. Close coordination with the Graduate Office is essential.

DOCUMENTING YOUR MILESTONES IN CANVAS

Every milestone in the journey above must be documented as you complete it. Milestone verification forms live in the *COP Graduate Students Canvas* course: download the form from **Canvas > Assignments**, complete it and collect the required signatures, then upload the signed form to the same assignment. Enrollment holds are not released until your milestone record is current, so upload each form promptly rather than waiting for registration. The Canvas hub is described in full in Submitting Forms and Tracking Progress in Canvas, under Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring.

MILESTONE SCHEDULE AND ENFORCEMENT

These deadlines apply the college-wide milestone framework to this program; for the general policy and the enrollment-hold system, see Program Milestones and Satisfactory Academic Progress under Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring.

Strict and flexible deadlines. PPS milestones fall into two categories:

- **Strict (bolded) milestones** are inflexible deadlines. Missing one places your enrollment on hold. If you miss a strict milestone, consult the Graduate Office immediately to resolve the issue.
- **Flexible (unbolded) milestones** allow no more than one semester of delay. Missing these without a valid reason may result in warnings from the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. Continued failure may result in your enrollment being placed on hold and, ultimately, dismissal from the program.

PPS Milestone Table. The table below lists all required milestones with their deadlines and estimated dates for a student entering Fall 2026. Bold entries are strict deadlines. All others are flexible milestones subject to the one-semester delay limit described above.

Milestone	Deadline	Estimated Date
Choose a faculty advisor	End of Year 1	August 2027
Appoint dissertation committee	3rd long semester	December 2027
Committee meeting (Year 2)	4th long semester	May 2028
Proposal Defense	End of Year 2	August 2028
Written Qualifier	End of Year 2	August 2028
Committee meeting (Year 3)	6th long semester	May 2029
Committee meeting (Year 4)	8th long semester	May 2030
Committee meeting (Year 5) / Approval to Write Dissertation	9th long semester	December 2030
Student Seminar	9th long semester (semester before graduation)	August–December 2030
Applying to graduate	10th long semester	January–March 2031

Milestone	Deadline	Estimated Date
Submit dissertation to advisor and committee	10th long semester — 14 days before defense	March–April 2031
Dissertation Defense announcement	10th long semester — 7 days before defense	March–April 2031
Dissertation Defense	10th long semester	March–April 2031
Dissertation Approval and Upload to Vireo	10th long semester	March–May 2031
Graduation ceremony	10th long semester	May 2031

CURRICULUM AND COURSE SEQUENCE — FALL 2026 COHORT

All three doctoral concentrations in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) program require 75 credit hours. The following course calendars and credit summaries apply to each concentration. Students should consult the Graduate Advisor before registering each semester.

PHARMACOLOGY CONCENTRATION - REQUIRED CREDITS SUMMARY

Course	Required Credits
PCOL 6370 Advanced Pharmacology	3
PCOL 7370 Scientific Writing	3
PHCA 7308 Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3
Elective	3
BIOL 6120 Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
PCOL 7433 Molecular Pharmacology	4
PCOL 7350 Cellular Pharmacology I	3
PCOL 7180/7181 Seminar	8

Course	Required Credits
PCOL 7141/7142 Pharmacological Literature Review	8
PCOL (6x98, 8x98, and 8x99) Research Hours	39 †
Grand Total	75

PHARMACOLOGY CONCENTRATION — CONSOLIDATED COURSE SEQUENCE

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2026	1	PCOL 6370	Advanced Pharmacology	3
Fall 2026	1	PHCA 7308	Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3
Fall 2026	1	BIOL 6120	Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
Fall 2026	1	PCOL 7180	Seminar	1
Fall 2026	1	PCOL 6198	Special Problems	1
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 7433	Molecular Pharmacology	4
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 7350	Cellular Pharmacology I	3
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 6198	Special Problems	1
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Summer 2027	1			
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7370	Scientific Writing	3
Fall 2027	2	Elective	Elective Course	3
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 6198	Special Problems	1
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2028	2	PCOL 6X98	Special Problems	7
Spring 2028	2	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Spring 2028	2	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Summer 2028	2			
Fall 2028	3	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Fall 2028	3	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Fall 2028	3	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Spring 2029	3	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Spring 2029	3	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2029	3	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Summer 2029	3			
Fall 2029	4	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Fall 2029	4	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Fall 2029	4	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Spring 2030	4	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Spring 2030	4	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2030	4	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Summer 2030	4			
Fall 2030	5	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9 †
Spring 2031	5	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	8
Spring 2031	5	PCOL 8X99	Doctoral Dissertation	1
Summer 2031	5			

MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY CONCENTRATION

REQUIRED CREDITS SUMMARY

Course	Credits
PCOL 7460 Introduction to Medicinal Chemistry	4

Course	Credits
PCOL 7370 Scientific Writing	3
BIOL 6120 Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
PHCA 7308 Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3
PCOL 6345 Drug Design and Discovery	3
Elective	3
PCOL 7180/7181 Seminar	4
PCOL 7141/7142 Pharmacological Literature Review	2
PCOL (6x98, 8x98, and 8x99) Research Hours	52 †
Grand Total	75

MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY - CONSOLIDATED COURSE SEQUENCE

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2026	1	PCOL 7460	Introduction to Medicinal Chemistry	4
Fall 2026	1	PHCA 7308	Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3
Fall 2026	1	BIOL 6120	Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
Fall 2026	1	PCOL 7180	Seminar	1
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 6345	Drug Design and Discovery	3
Spring 2027	1	Elective	Elective Course	3
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 6198	Special Problems	2
Spring 2027	1	PCOL 7181	Seminar	1
Summer 2027	1			
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7370	Scientific Writing	3
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7180	Pharmacology Seminar	1
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7141	Drug Literature Review	1

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 6198	Special Problems	4
Spring 2028	2	PCOL 6798	Special Problems	7
Spring 2028	2	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2028	2	PCOL 7181	Pharmacology Seminar	1
Summer 2028	2			
Fall 2028	3	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9
Spring 2029	3	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9
Summer 2029	3			
Fall 2029	4	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9
Spring 2030	4	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9
Summer 2030	4			
Fall 2030	5	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9
Spring 2031	5	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	6 †
Spring 2031	5	PCOL 8399	Doctoral Dissertation	3
Summer 2031	5			

PHARMACEUTICS CONCENTRATION

The Pharmaceutics concentration offers two parallel course sequences depending on the student's year of entry. The required courses and total credits (75) are identical; the sequencing of certain courses differs.

REQUIRED CREDITS SUMMARY

Course	Required Credits
PCEU 6441 Advanced Pharmacokinetics	4
PHCA 7308 Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3

Course	Required Credits
BIOL 6120 Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
PCOL 7370 Scientific Writing	3
PCEU 7355 Regulatory Affairs (or another course with approval)	3
PCEU 6242 Advanced Pharmaceutics I	2
PCEU 6245 Advanced Pharmaceutics II	2
PCEU 7340 Advanced Drug Delivery	3
PCOL 7180/7181 Seminar	6
PCOL 7141/7142 Pharmacological Literature Review	6
PCOL (6x98, 8x98, and 8x99) Research Hours	42 †
Grand Total	75

CONSOLIDATED COURSE SEQUENCE (2026, EVEN-YEAR ENTRY)

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2026	1	PCEU 6441	Advanced Pharmacokinetics	4
Fall 2026	1	PHCA 7308	Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3
Fall 2026	1	BIOL 6120	Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
Fall 2026	1	PCEU 6198	Special Problems	1
Spring 2027	1	PCEU 6242	Advanced Pharmaceutics I	2
Spring 2027	1	PCEU 6245	Advanced Pharmaceutics II	2
Spring 2027	1	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2027	1	PCEU 6142	Literature Review	1

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Spring 2027	1	PCEU 6x98	Special Problems	3
Summer 2027	1			
Fall 2027	2	PCOL 7370	Scientific Writing	3
Fall 2027	2	PCEU 6141	Drug Literature Review	1
Fall 2027	2	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Fall 2027	2	PCEU 6498	Special Problems	4
Spring 2028	2	PCEU 7340	Advanced Drug Delivery	3
Spring 2028	2	PCEU 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2028	2	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2028	2	PCEU 6498	Special Problems	4
Summer 2028	2			
Fall 2028	3	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Fall 2028	3	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Fall 2028	3	PCEU 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2029	3	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	4
Spring 2029	3	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2029	3	PCEU 7355	Regulatory Affairs (or another course with approval)	3
Spring 2029	3	PCEU 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Summer 2029	3			
Fall 2029	4	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Fall 2029	4	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Fall 2029	4	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2030	4	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Summer 2030	4			
Fall 2030	5	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9 †
Spring 2031	5	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	6
Spring 2031	5	PCEU 8399	Doctoral Dissertation	3
Summer 2031	5			

CONSOLIDATED COURSE SEQUENCE (2027, 2029 - ODD-YEAR ENTRY)

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2027	1	PCEU 6441	Advanced Pharmacokinetics	4
Fall 2027	1	PHCA 7308	Biostatistics & Experimental Design	3
Fall 2027	1	BIOL 6120	Responsible Conduct of Biological Research	1
Fall 2027	1	PCEU 6198	Special Problems	1
Spring 2028	1	PCEU 7340	Advanced Drug Delivery	3
Spring 2028	1	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2028	1	PCEU 6142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2028	1	PCEU 6198	Special Problems	4
Summer 2028	1			
Fall 2028	2	PCOL 7370	Scientific Writing	3
Fall 2028	2	PCEU 7141	Drug Literature Review	1
Fall 2028	2	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Fall 2028	2	PCEU 6498	Special Problems	4
Spring 2029	2	PCEU 6242	Advanced Pharmaceutics I	2
Spring 2029	2	PCEU 6245	Advanced Pharmaceutics II	2
Spring 2029	2	PCEU 7355	Regulatory Affairs (or another course with approval)	3

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits
Spring 2029	2	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2029	2	PCEU 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Summer 2029	2			
Fall 2029	3	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Fall 2029	3	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Fall 2029	3	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Spring 2030	3	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Spring 2030	3	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2030	3	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Summer 2030	3			
Fall 2030	4	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	7
Fall 2030	4	PCOL 7142	Drug Literature Review	1
Fall 2030	4	PCEU 6180	Seminar	1
Spring 2031	4	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9
Summer 2031	4			
Fall 2031	5	PCOL 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	9 †
Spring 2032	5	PCEU 8X98	Doctoral Research Hours	6
Spring 2032	5	PCEU 8399	Doctoral Dissertation	3
Summer 2032	5			

PPS COURSE TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

PPS course types — didactic, elective, seminar (PCOL/PCEU 7180/7181), and drug literature review (PCOL/PCEU 7141/7142) — are described in the General Course Types section under General Curriculum and Enrollment Policies. Required Seminar and Drug Literature Review credit hours differ by concentration; see the Required Credits Summary for your concentration.

Course type descriptions (didactic, elective, seminar, and Drug Literature Review) appear in the curriculum above. Individual course descriptions for PPS courses (PCOL and PCEU) are maintained in the University of Houston Graduate Catalog. Elective options outside the College of Pharmacy — including other UH colleges and Gulf Coast Consortia / Texas Medical Center (TMC) institutions — follow the inter-institutional enrollment process in **Administration → General Curriculum Policies**; consult that section and your Faculty Advisor before enrolling.

DIDACTIC COURSES

Didactic courses are traditional classroom-based courses. They feature lectures, presentations, exercises, and exams. Grades are assigned on a letter scale of A to F. These courses form the core of the academic curriculum and build the foundation required in your chosen concentration.

PCEU 6441: Advanced Pharmacokinetics Credit Hours: 4. (3-4). Prerequisites: Graduate standing. A study of the kinetic processes of drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion and the application of these concepts to the interpretation of data. Mathematical derivations of the mass balanced relationships involving rate processes and their physiological importance in a biological system are correlated.

PCEU 6242: Advanced Pharmaceutics I Credit Hours: 2. (2-0). Prerequisites: PCEU 3340 and PCEU 3341 or equivalent, or consent of instructor. A systematic study of the application of physical chemical principles to the pharmaceutical sciences. Topics include physical pharmacy and conventional dosage forms: protolytic equilibria, buffers, stability kinetics, enzyme kinetics, drug transport kinetics and theory.

PCEU 6245: Advanced Pharmaceutics II Credit Hours: 2. (2-0). Prerequisites: PCEU 3340 and PCEU 3341 or equivalent, or consent of instructor. A systematic study of the current development of innovative delivery systems. Topics include solid dosage forms, dispersed systems, dermatopharmaceutics, controlled release dosage forms, liposomes, drug targeting delivery and biotechnology-derived products.

PCEU 7355: Regulatory Affairs Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Regulatory affairs in clinical pharmacokinetic evaluation and FDA drug approval; clinical trial regulation, good laboratory/manufacturing practice, quality control/assurance, new drug applications and evaluating contract analytical labs.

PCEU 7340: Advanced Drug Delivery Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Course examines current practices, novel drug delivery systems under investigation and future directions of drug delivery systems and technology.

PCOL 7370: Scientific Writing Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: Consent of instructor. Planning, preparation and evaluation of effective research manuscripts (articles) and grant proposals in the pharmaceutical sciences.

BIOL 6120: Responsible Conduct of Biological Research Credit Hours: 1. (1-0). Topics include data management, collaboration, conflicts of interest, key federal policies, mentor-trainee relationships, authorship and publication, research misconduct, and social impacts of scientific research, as mandated by NIH guidelines.

PCOL 6370: Advanced Pharmacology Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Coverage of basic principles of drug action including in-depth assessments of drugs that influence the central and peripheral nervous systems and effector tissues. Specific emphases are the sites and mechanisms of drug action and current research procedures used to study those actions.

PCOL 7350: Cellular Pharmacology I Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Drug-receptor theory and analysis, membrane receptors and transporters; their structure, function and regulation as it relates to drug action. Physiology and pharmacology of synaptic mechanisms in the central and peripheral nervous system with emphasis on mechanisms of drug and neurotransmitter action.

PCOL 7433: Molecular Pharmacology (Credit Hours: 4. (4-0). Prerequisites: Graduate standing. This course is intended to provide students with a working knowledge of the fundamentals of molecular biology, especially as it relates to the conduct of research in pharmacological and pharmaceutical sciences. This will be achieved through a combination of lectures, textbook readings, determining solutions of study problems based upon experimental data of actual research data, reading primary research papers in pharmacological and pharmaceutical sciences and determining the solutions to study problems based upon these papers.

PCOL 7460: Introduction to Medicinal Chemistry Credit Hours: 4. (4-0). Prerequisites: Graduate standing. This course is designed to provide basic foundation of medicinal chemistry to the first year graduate students in the medicinal chemistry discipline. A variety of topics including organic chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology and therapeutics will be covered. Emphasis will be placed on current research strategies being pursued in these areas, including a survey of the current research literature.

PCOL 6345: Drug Design and Discovery Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Principles of medicinal chemistry and their application to drug discovery will be covered. Foundational topics will initially be presented, followed by a survey of lead compound discovery and optimization strategies.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Electives let you explore topics that align with your research interests. You may choose elective courses from the University of Houston (UH) College of Pharmacy (COP), other colleges at UH, or Gulf Coast Consortia institutions in the Houston area.

Your elective selections must be made in consultation with your Faculty Advisor and dissertation committee to ensure each course adds meaningful insight to your dissertation topic.

Enrolling in a course outside the COP. If you want to take a course outside the COP, identify the course 4–6 weeks before the start of the semester. You must then obtain advanced approval from the Course Coordinator, obtain approval from your Faculty Advisor, and complete an inter-institutional course form approved by the GEC.

SEMINAR COURSES (PCOL/PCEU 7180/7181)

The Seminar course is a professional development requirement, not a traditional lecture course. It requires mandatory attendance at weekly departmental seminars. Seminars feature professionals from the field who present their research and interact with students.

Enrollment. You are strongly encouraged to register for 1 credit hour of Seminar each long semester throughout your program. These courses are graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis.

Nine-hour threshold. Enrolling in Seminar may push your total credit hours above 9 for a semester, which triggers additional tuition charges. If that happens, you may opt out of registering for that semester. However, attendance at the weekly seminars remains mandatory regardless of registration status.

Minimum requirement. A minimum of 4 credit hours in Seminar courses is required across your entire program.

DRUG LITERATURE REVIEW (PCOL/PCEU 7141/7142)

Drug Literature Review (DLR) is designed to sharpen your skills in critically evaluating published research in Pharmacology, Pharmaceuticals, or Medicinal Chemistry. The course consists of group discussions in which you present your analysis of selected publications. Both peers and the course instructor evaluate your presentations. DLR courses are graded on an S/U basis.

Nine-hour threshold. As with Seminar, registering for DLR may push your total credit hours above 9 for a semester. If that happens, you may opt out of registering for that semester. However, attendance remains mandatory.

Minimum requirement. A minimum of 4 credit hours in DLR is required across your entire program.

RESEARCH CREDIT HOURS (SPECIAL PROBLEMS, DOCTORAL RESEARCH, DISSERTATION)

This section applies to students in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) doctoral program. Research credit hours fall into three course categories that correspond to distinct stages of doctoral study: Special Problems, Doctoral Research, and Doctoral Dissertation.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS (PCOL/PCEU 6X98)

Before you pass your qualifying exams and achieve doctoral candidacy, you enroll in Special Problems research credits (PCOL/PCEU 6X98). These credits provide academic recognition for laboratory research conducted in the pre-candidacy stage.

20-credit-hour cap. A maximum of 20 credit hours of Special Problems may count toward the minimum research hours required for your degree. Research hours beyond 20 must be taken as Doctoral Research (PCOL/PCEU 8X98) or Doctoral Dissertation (PCOL/PCEU 8X99).

Grading. Special Problems credits are graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis.

Full-time enrollment. You may enroll in additional 6X98 credits beyond the 20-credit cap to meet full-time enrollment requirements. Full-time enrollment is defined as 9 credit hours during the spring and fall semesters. This is relevant for employment authorization, immigration status,

and continuous enrollment obligations. Summer enrollment is generally not required except under specific circumstances; consult your concentration requirements for details.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH (PCOL/PCEU 8X98)

Doctoral Research credits are available only after you have achieved doctoral candidacy — that is, after you have completed both the oral defense and the written qualifying exam. You enroll in 8X98 from the semester following your proposal defense through the semester before your planned graduation.

Grading. Doctoral Research credits are graded on an S/U basis.

Prerequisite. You may not register for 8X98 until your qualifying exams are completed.

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION (PCOL/PCEU 8X99)

Doctoral Dissertation credits are reserved for your final semester in the program. Enrollment in 8X99 culminates in your dissertation defense and graduation.

Grading. Doctoral Dissertation credits are letter-graded (A, B, C, D, F), reflecting the quality and rigor of the completed dissertation.

Prerequisite. You may not register for 8X99 until your qualifying exams are completed.

COMBINED CREDIT-HOUR MINIMUM

To fulfill degree requirements, you must complete a minimum of 18 combined credit hours from Doctoral Research (8X98) and/or Doctoral Dissertation (8X99) courses. The actual number of required research hours varies by concentration. Review your concentration requirements for the specific total that applies to you.

DEPARTMENTAL TRAVEL FUNDING

The Department of PPS administers a separate departmental travel fund with the following terms. Students must complete the Graduate Student Travel Request form and obtain signatures from both their Faculty Advisor and the Department Chair before any travel is initiated. Reimbursement will be denied if these procedures are not followed.

Eligibility for departmental funds. The student must be a full-time doctoral graduate student in good academic standing. The student must be a first-author presenter at the meeting. The amount of funds available is subject to change and should be confirmed with departmental staff. Students are also encouraged to apply for Cullen Travel grants (<https://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/cost-and-aid/awards-scholarships-and-fellowships/cullen-fellowship-travel-grant/>).

Allowable expenses. The request form covers the following expense categories: conference registration, transportation, lodging, meals, and other approved expenses. Submit a copy of the meeting information and the accepted abstract with your travel request.

Transportation rules. Only the least expensive means of transportation is reimbursable. Car rental and gasoline expenses are not allowed in addition to air travel costs. If personal vehicle use is proven more cost-effective than air travel, mileage will be reimbursed at the authorized standard rate set by the State of Texas.

Receipt submission All receipts must be submitted within 30 days of return. Reimbursements will not be issued for receipts submitted after this deadline. Consult departmental office staff before initiating any travel request. Failure to follow departmental guidelines will result in denial of reimbursement.

PPS departmental travel requests are subject to the following submission deadlines:

Travel within the Continental United States (CONUS): submit your departmental travel request at least 30 days before departure. Travel outside the Continental United States: submit at least 60 days before departure. Note that departmental funds are not available for travel outside the continental United States.

3



■ PART THREE

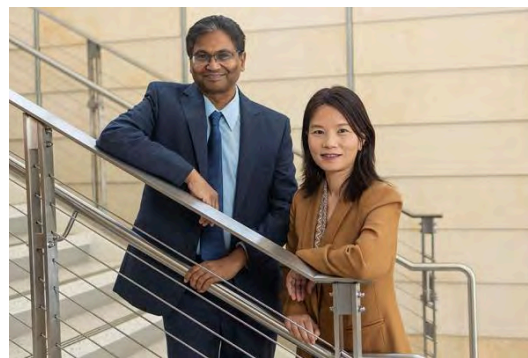
PHARMACEUTICAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND POLICY

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY • PHOP

IN THIS PART

- A message from the chair and vice chair
- Degree requirements and the year-by-year student journey
- Comprehensive examinations
- Dissertation, publication expectations, and curriculum

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR



Rajender R. Aparasu, Ph.D., FAPhA

Department Chair

Hua Chen, M.D., Ph.D.

Department Vice Chair, Graduate Program
Director

The Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) concentration in the Pharmaceutical Sciences doctoral degree program at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy offers a learning and research environment that combines the collaborative opportunities of the Texas Medical Center's world-class healthcare and scientific community with the academic resources and award-winning faculty at Houston's only Carnegie Institute-designated Tier One public research university.

The Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy program consists of pharmaceutical practice and policy research, a multidisciplinary field that examines cost, access, and quality of pharmaceutical care from clinical, socio-behavioral, economic, organizational and technological perspectives. Traditional and innovative areas of pharmaceutical health outcomes research include pharmacoepidemiology, pharmacoecomics, comparative effectiveness research, patient-centered outcomes research, and translational research.

The PHOP concentration offers structured learning and experiences in health care systems, health care quality, health behavior, biostatistics, multivariate analyses, research methods and design, pharmacoepidemiology, and pharmacoecomics. Elective courses such as secondary data analyses, multilevel modeling, patient-reported outcomes, and risk adjustment provide advanced learning experiences, along with the opportunities to participate in grant proposal writing and teaching and research practicums.

Graduate courses in business administration, psychology, and economics are available from the other departments at the University of Houston. Texas Medical Center academic institutions, such as the University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHealth)

and Rice University, also provide additional coursework to provide well-rounded graduate training in pharmaceutical health outcomes and policy.

Within the college's Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy, our nine faculty members come from a range of backgrounds, including pharmacoepidemiology, practice-based research, public health, biostatistics, and socio-behavioral and administrative pharmacy. Among our faculty are recipients of awards and/or research grants from such organizations as the National Institutes of Health, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the PhRMA Foundation. The college and individual faculty members have collaborative relationships with numerous colleagues and institutions throughout the Texas Medical Center (TMC), offering abundant opportunities for multidisciplinary research. Currently housed in the College of Pharmacy's beautiful new home on the UH main campus, Health & Biomedical Sciences Building 2 since January 2018, PHOP faculty and students enjoy access to over 157,000 square feet of state-of-the-art research and education facilities.

Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy graduates are in high demand. Welcoming its first students in 2009, the UH College of Pharmacy's PHOP doctoral program maintains contact with over 100 master's and PhD alumni in the pharmaceutical industry, healthcare consulting groups, healthcare organizations, and academia.

Rajender R. Aparasu, Ph.D., FAPhA

Department Chair

Hua Chen, M.D., Ph.D.

Department Vice Chair, Graduate Program Director,
Graduate Education Committee Chair

ABOUT THE PHARMACEUTICAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND POLICY (PHOP) PROGRAM

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) is offered by the Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP). This section is your primary reference for the PHOP program: its governance, degree requirements, curriculum, examinations, and the dissertation and graduation requirements that are specific to PHOP. College-wide policies that apply to every graduate program — academic standards, funding, the general dissertation and defense process, and forms — appear in the Administration part of this handbook. Where PHOP differs from the college-wide rule, the difference is stated here.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND GOVERNANCE

The Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) is located in the UH Health and Biomedical Sciences Building 2 (Health 2). The building provides over 157,000 square feet of research and education facilities. The department has nine faculty members with backgrounds in pharmacoepidemiology, practice-based research, public health, biostatistics, and socio-behavioral and administrative pharmacy. The PHOP doctoral program welcomed its first students in 2009 and maintains contact with over 100 master's and PhD alumni working in the pharmaceutical industry, healthcare consulting, healthcare organizations, and academia. The PHOP PhD program is governed by the PHOP department Graduate Education Committee (GEC), which is separate from the PPS GEC. The GEC oversees admissions, academic progression, and curriculum.

PHOP DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP

- o **Department Chair.** Rajender R. Aparasu, Ph.D., FAPhA — Room 4052, Health 2; rraparasu@uh.edu · (832) 842-8374.
- o **Vice Chair and Chair of the Graduate Education Committee.** Hua Chen, M.D., Ph.D. — Room 4049, Health 2; hchen20@uh.edu · (832) 842-8355.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete a minimum of 75 credit hours to earn the PhD degree. Students cannot exceed 99 credit hours of PhD coursework. All core and elective requirements must be met with hours completed in residence or with approved transfer credit. A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) must be maintained in all graduate-level courses required for the degree.

REQUIRED CREDIT HOURS BY CATEGORY

Requirement	Credit Hours
Health Outcomes Core	9
Research Methods Core	9
Statistical Analysis Core	9
Electives	18 (minimum)
Seminar	6
Dissertation Research	23
Dissertation Defense	1
Minimum total	75

Elective requirements: A minimum of 18 credit hours of elective coursework is required. Of these, 9 credit hours must be at the 7000 level or higher. No more than 9 credit hours may be Special Problems.

Seminar requirement: Students must enroll in the seminar course each long semester. Exceptions are generally not granted for full-time students. However, the seminar requirement may be waived during the final semester when the student carries a reduced course load.

Transfer credit: Students may transfer up to 9 credit hours of graduate coursework completed at another institution. Students who completed the Master of Science (MS) in Pharmacy Administration at the University of Houston (UH) may transfer up to 18 credit hours. Only courses with a grade of "B" or above are accepted for transfer. Courses with Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grades cannot be transferred. All transfer credits must be approved by the Department Chair. Use the Transfer Credit Request Form (see Administration → Forms & Templates).

Final degree plan: A completed final degree plan, approved by the faculty mentor and all dissertation committee members, must be submitted no less than 60 days prior to applying for graduation.

THE PHOP STUDENT JOURNEY — YEAR BY YEAR

This section walks you through the PHOP PhD chronologically, from entry to graduation. Each year lists the coursework you will typically take and summarizes what to accomplish — the milestones to reach, the forms to submit, and what to plan for next. Dates reflect the Fall 2026 entering cohort. The full course sequence appears in the Curriculum and Course Sequence section below, the complete milestone list is in the Five-Year Program Timeline and the Milestone Schedule and Enforcement section, and your progress is monitored by your faculty mentor, the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Graduate Education Committee (GEC).

YEAR 1 (2026–2027) — CORE COURSEWORK AND SELECTING A FACULTY MENTOR

Year 1 combines the core curriculum with the faculty interviews and research rotations that lead to selecting your dissertation mentor.

Typical coursework. Begin the core curriculum — courses in health outcomes, research methods, and statistical analysis — together with the departmental Seminar. See the Curriculum and Course Sequence and Core Course Descriptions for the specific courses. Maintain a strong GPA and perform well in your coursework. Falling below the College's academic standards can lead to withdrawal of financial support, making it difficult to continue in the program.

Summer enrollment. Course enrollment is not required during the summer terms. Students may enroll in research or Special Problems credit, complete intensive rotations (first summer), or pursue an optional internship in later summers.

What to accomplish. Meet with all PHOP faculty to learn about their research (fall through early spring), complete your intensive research rotations, select a primary faculty mentor, and submit your Degree Plan by the end of the first summer.

Rotations and mentor selection. Submit the Initial Research Rotation Form (documenting your faculty meetings) to the GEC by the last day before Spring Break (about March 15). For the Intensive Research Rotations, the Graduate Advisor posts available faculty by April 1, you submit the sign-up sheet by April 15, assignments are issued by May 1, and all rotations must be completed by July 15. You must rotate with at least two faculty members (about one month each, which may run concurrently). Submit the signed Faculty Mentor Selection Form — with both your and your mentor's signatures — to the GEC by August 1, before Year 2 begins.

YEAR 2 (2027–2028) — COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH

Year 2 completes the core coursework and launches dissertation research under your faculty mentor.

Typical coursework. Finish any remaining core courses and continue the Seminar while beginning research with your mentor.

What to accomplish. Establish your research direction with your mentor and make early progress. An optional internship is available in the summer.

Stay in good academic standing. As in Year 1, maintain a strong GPA and course performance; dropping below academic standards can result in loss of financial support and jeopardize your continuation in the program.

YEAR 3 (2028–2029) — WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAM AND ELECTIVES

Year 3 centers on passing the written comprehensive examination and completing elective coursework.

Typical coursework. Complete elective coursework — at least 18 elective credit hours overall, of which at least 9 must be at the 7000 level — and continue your dissertation research.

What to accomplish. Take and pass the Written Comprehensive Examination once you have completed the required core courses. The Core Examination consists of three separate tests: a five-hour PHOP examination, a four-hour Statistics examination, and a four-hour Research Methods examination, each requiring a minimum of 80% to pass, and is offered early in the fall and spring semesters. It is typically taken in Fall 2028 but may be taken in Spring 2029 depending on core completion.

Retake rules. Attempt limits apply to each test independently: a first failure requires remediation and a retake; a second failure brings a recommendation to withdraw (with a possible GEC petition for a third attempt); a third failure results in dismissal from the program.

YEAR 4 (2029–2030) — COMMITTEE, AREA EXAM, AND PROPOSAL DEFENSE

Year 4 forms your dissertation committee and completes the remaining examinations that establish candidacy.

Typical coursework. Finish any remaining electives and continue dissertation research.

What to accomplish. Form your dissertation committee of at least five members in the fall (Dissertation Committee Form due), then, in the spring, take the Area of Emphasis Exam and complete the Oral Comprehensive Examination as part of your Dissertation Proposal Defense. The written proposal follows the NIH R01 12-page format; the Proposal Development course (PHCA 8311) is encouraged.

Eligibility and deadlines. You are eligible for the Area of Emphasis Exam once you have completed at least 18 elective credit hours (9 at the 7000 level) and your full committee was formed in the prior semester. Circulate the written proposal to all committee members at least one week before the defense. Passing both the written and oral comprehensive exams, with an accepted proposal, clears you to focus on dissertation research.

YEAR 5 (2030–2031) — DISSERTATION, DEFENSE, AND GRADUATION

Year 5 completes the dissertation and the steps required to graduate.

Typical coursework. Enroll in dissertation research credit.

What to accomplish. Complete your dissertation research, defend your dissertation (about Spring 2031), then upload the approved dissertation, submit your final degree plan, and graduate (about Summer 2031).

Planning to graduate. Register to graduate one semester in advance and confirm your committee's approval; adherence to Graduate School deadlines is essential. See the Milestone Schedule and Enforcement section for the full deadline list.

FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM TIMELINE AND MILESTONES — FALL 2026 COHORT

The table below shows suggested milestones for a full-time student on a five-year plan entering Fall 2026. Individual progress varies. Faculty mentors, the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) monitor all student progress.

Year	Term	Milestone
1 (2026–27)	Fall 2026	Begin core coursework; start initial faculty interviews/rotations
1 (2026–27)	Spring 2027	Complete core coursework; complete initial rotations; submit Intensive Rotation sign-up (May 1, 2027)
1 (2026–27)	Summer 2027	Complete intensive rotation; Faculty Mentor Selection Form due August 1, 2027 ; Degree Plan submitted
2 (2027–28)	Fall 2027 – Spring 2028	Core coursework; research with faculty mentor
2 (2027–28)	Summer 2028	Optional internship
3 (2028–29)	Fall 2028	Written Comprehensive Exam (may be taken in Spring 2029 depending on core completion)
3 (2028–29)	Spring 2029	Elective coursework
3 (2028–29)	Summer 2029	Optional internship; continue dissertation research

Year	Term	Milestone
4 (2029–30)	Fall 2029	Dissertation Committee formed; Dissertation Committee Form due
4 (2029–30)	Spring 2030	Area of Emphasis Exam; Dissertation Proposal Defense
4 (2029–30)	Summer 2030	Dissertation research; optional internship
5 (2030–31)	Fall 2030	Dissertation research
5 (2030–31)	Spring 2031	Dissertation Defense
5 (2030–31)	Summer 2031	Dissertation upload; final degree plan submitted; graduation

DOCUMENTING YOUR MILESTONES IN CANVAS

Every milestone in the journey and timeline above must be documented as you complete it. Milestone verification forms live in the COP Graduate Students Canvas course: download the form from Canvas > Assignments, complete it and collect the required signatures, then upload the signed form to the same assignment. Enrollment holds are not released until your milestone record is current, so upload each form promptly rather than waiting for registration. The Canvas hub is described in full in Submitting Forms and Tracking Progress in Canvas, under Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring.

MILESTONE SCHEDULE AND ENFORCEMENT

These deadlines apply the college-wide milestone framework to this program; for the general policy and the enrollment-hold system, see Program Milestones and Satisfactory Academic Progress under Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring.

PHOP: Grades, probation, and dismissal. PHOP students are subject to the college-wide grading, GPA, probation, and dismissal rules — including the C-grade limit, U-grade rules, Incomplete-grade rules, and graduation-eligibility requirements — stated in the Grading, GPA, Probation, and Dismissal section of this handbook.

PHOP: Comprehensive Examinations. PHOP doctoral students must pass a written and an oral comprehensive examination before advancing to candidacy. See the Comprehensive Examinations (Written and Oral) section for the full written and oral exam requirements.

PHOP: Milestone timeline summary. A full-time PHOP student is expected to:

- o Identify a PhD major advisor before the fall semester of the second year.
- o Develop the PhD study plan during the first year summer.

- o Complete written comprehensive exams at the beginning of the third year (Fall or Spring semester).
- o Prepare for the Area of Emphasis exam and dissertation proposal defense in the third year fall semester.
- o Complete a minimum of 75 credit hours for the PhD degree.
- o Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (A = 4.00) in all graduate-level courses required for the degree.
- o Students cannot exceed 99 credit hours of PhD coursework.

INITIAL RESEARCH ROTATIONS AND FACULTY MENTOR SELECTION

Purpose of rotations. PhD students in PHOP must identify a primary faculty mentor who will oversee their dissertation research. The selection process begins with individual faculty interviews and moves into intensive research rotations during the spring and summer of Year 1.

Initial faculty interviews. You are expected to meet with all PHOP faculty members to learn about their research interests. These meetings should begin in the fall semester and be completed early in the spring semester of Year 1. The Initial Research Rotation Form, documenting that you have met with faculty, must be submitted to the GEC by the last day before Spring Break (approximately March 15).

INTENSIVE RESEARCH ROTATION SIGN-UP AND ASSIGNMENTS

- **April 1** — Graduate Advisor provides list of faculty available to accept new students
- **April 15** — Students submit the Intensive Research Rotation sign-up sheet to the Graduate Advisor
- **May 1** — Students are notified of rotation assignments
- **July 15** — All rotations must be completed
- **August 1** — Signed Faculty Mentor Selection Form must be submitted to the GEC. You must rotate with at least 2 faculty members. Intensive Research Rotations last approximately one month each and may be conducted concurrently with more than one faculty member.

Faculty Mentor Selection. Final decisions, with the signed Faculty Mentor Selection Form, must be provided to the GEC by August 1 before the start of Year 2. Both the student's signature and the faculty mentor's signature are required on the form.

Changing your faculty mentor. If you are unable to work satisfactorily with your chosen faculty mentor, you may seek a new mentor, provided you are not on academic probation at the time.

Forming the dissertation committee. After selecting your permanent mentor, form a doctoral dissertation committee of at least five members that meets at least once per long semester (the GAA and committee chair monitor compliance). Complete the Dissertation Committee Selection Form (see Appendix) and submit it to the GEC Chair for approval; the required committee composition is described in Dissertation and Thesis Committee Composition and Meetings.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students in the PHOP PhD program must pass both a written comprehensive examination and an oral comprehensive examination before beginning dissertation research. The written exam must be completed first.

WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Purpose and structure. The written comprehensive examination ensures that students are proficient in the core and specific areas of their research. The exam consists of two parts: the Core exam and the Area of Emphasis exam.

Core Exam. The Core exam covers three subject areas: PHOP, Statistics, and Research Methods. Each subject is a separate 4-hour test. Faculty who teach the corresponding courses write the questions. Students must earn a minimum of 80% on each test to pass the Core exam.

The Core exam is offered during the first few weeks of the fall and spring semesters. It is offered when at least two students are qualified and wish to take it. Students are eligible for the Core exam after they have completed all required core curriculum courses.

Area of Emphasis Exam. The Area of Emphasis exam is a 4-hour, open-book test. The student's dissertation committee develops the exam questions. The faculty mentor is responsible for administering it. Students must earn a minimum of 80% to pass the Area of Emphasis exam.

Students are eligible for the Area of Emphasis exam when both of the following conditions are met:

- The student has completed a minimum of 18 elective credit hours, of which at least 9 credit hours must be at the 7000 level.
- The student's complete dissertation committee was formed in the semester prior to taking the exam.

Retake and dismissal rules. The attempt limits below apply to each individual test and are tracked independently.

- **First failed attempt.** The student must retake the failed test after sufficient remediation supervised by the faculty mentor.
- **Second failed attempt.** The student will be recommended to withdraw from the Pharmaceutical Sciences PhD program. The student and faculty mentor may petition the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) for a third attempt. A new coursework plan must be submitted. The student may be required to complete additional coursework before attempting the exam a third time.

- **Third failed attempt.** The third attempt is final. Failure to pass on the third and final attempt results in automatic expulsion from the program.

ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE

Overview. All students must complete an oral comprehensive examination. This exam is conducted during the dissertation proposal defense before the student's dissertation committee. Students must complete the oral comprehensive exam within one year of completing the written comprehensive exams.

Dissertation proposal requirements. All students must write a dissertation proposal following the NIH (National Institutes of Health) R01 12-page format. Students are encouraged to register for the Proposal Development course (PHCA 8311) to develop this proposal.

Defense format. The proposal defense is held as a private meeting between the student and the committee. The following format is suggested, though there are no fixed structural requirements.

- At least one week before the defense, the written proposal must be circulated to all dissertation committee members. It is strongly recommended that the student discuss the proposal contents with committee members before this distribution.
- The defense begins with a student presentation of approximately 30–45 minutes. The presentation summarizes the research study and the proposal.
- Following the presentation, the committee may examine the student on the proposed research, the supporting literature, and related topics in health outcomes, statistics/research methods, and the student's area of emphasis.
 - **Committee outcomes.** After the defense, the committee will take one of three actions:
 - **Acceptance.** The proposal is accepted. The student may proceed with dissertation research.
 - **Acceptance with modification.** The committee specifies required changes. The student must incorporate those changes into a revised draft of the proposal.
 - **Rejection.** The proposal is judged inadequately developed. The student must revise and re-submit. A second defense must be scheduled no later than three months after the initial defense date.
- Following a successful defense, the student's faculty mentor will issue official written communication confirming the outcome. This communication must be forwarded to the Department Chair.

RETAKE AND DISMISSAL RULES

- **First failed attempt.** The student is provided a second opportunity to defend the proposal.
- **Second failed attempt.** The student is provided a third and final opportunity.

- **Third failed attempt.** Failure to adequately defend the proposal on the third attempt results in expulsion from the Pharmaceutical Sciences PhD program. The faculty mentor will communicate all outcomes to the student and the Department Chair throughout this process.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH, AUTHORSHIP, AND PUBLICATION EXPECTATIONS

RESEARCH SCOPE AND QUALITY

Dissertation research in the PHOP program may focus on any major area within Health Outcomes and Policy, including Pharmacoeconomics, Pharmacoepidemiology, Health Services Research, Management and Marketing, Patient Behavior, Pharmaceutical Care, Health Systems Operations, and Information Systems in Health Care.

The dissertation must demonstrate that you can independently conceive, conduct, analyze, interpret, and present the results of original scientific research. The quantity and quality of research must meet two standards:

- **Publication sufficiency.** The work must be sufficient to support at least two peer-reviewed publications.
- **Document acceptability.** The work must be sufficiently complete, as judged by your PhD mentor and dissertation committee, to produce an acceptable dissertation document.

Before you sit for comprehensive exams, you are expected to complete a thorough original literature review. That review provides the foundation for writing a National Institutes of Health (NIH)-style dissertation proposal.

ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE

All research activities must comply with every applicable University of Houston (UH) research ethics and compliance regulation. This includes obtaining approval from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS), which functions as the UH Institutional Review Board (IRB). See <https://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb/> for current requirements and submission procedures.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

You are strongly encouraged to present your research at local, regional, national, and international conferences throughout the program. Active participation in the scholarly community is an expected part of doctoral training in PHOP.

AUTHORSHIP AND PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All dissertation research is expected to be published. Faculty will work with you to encourage and assist you in submitting high-quality research to peer-reviewed journals.

Manuscript submission requirement. The student is required to submit two manuscripts based on their dissertation research to peer-reviewed journals prior to the dissertation defense. The student will not be allowed to defend the dissertation until this requirement is met.

Authorship discussion at the first committee meeting. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee will discuss authorship and publication plans with the student and committee members at the first full meeting of the dissertation committee. This early conversation establishes expectations and responsibilities for all contributors before substantive data collection begins. All research conducted during your time at UH must comply with UH research ethics standards, research compliance policies, and CPHS approval requirements.

DISSERTATION, DEFENSE, AND GRADUATION GUIDELINES

The general dissertation, defense, and graduation process — committee composition, document circulation timelines, the six-step completion checklist, formatting, and Vireo upload — is in Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring; formatting requirements are covered in Dissertation and Thesis Format Guidelines under Forms and Templates Reference. The requirements below are specific to PHOP and apply *in addition* to that process.

- o **Graduation timing.** Most PhD students graduate in the spring of their tenth long semester or in the summer following it. For the Fall 2026 cohort, the tenth long semester is Spring 2031.
- o **Pre-defense manuscript requirement.** Two manuscripts based on your dissertation must have been submitted to peer-reviewed journals before scheduling the dissertation defense. You will not be allowed to schedule the defense until this requirement is met.
- o **Public session.** The public session is a seminar of 45–60 minutes, followed by 15 minutes for questions.
- o **Mandatory attendance.** All graduate students in the PHOP PhD program are required to attend each departmental dissertation defense.
- o **Approval form.** The approval form must bear original signatures of the mentor, all committee members, and the Dean of the College of Pharmacy.

CURRICULUM AND COURSE SEQUENCE — FALL 2026 COHORT

The tables below show the recommended four-year course sequence for a full-time PhD student entering in **Fall 2026**. Individual plans may vary based on the faculty mentor's guidance and dissertation committee decisions.

YEAR 1 (2026–2027) — CORE COURSEWORK AND FACULTY MENTOR SELECTION

Year 1 Total: 20 credit hours. During the Year 1 summer (Summer 2027), students must identify their PhD major advisor before the fall semester of Year 2 (Fall 2027) begins. Students may also apply for an internship or register for additional coursework.

Semester	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2026	PHCA 7305	Social and Behavioral Determinants and Theory in PHOP	3
Fall 2026	PHCA 7308	Biostatistics and Experimental Design	3
Fall 2026	PHCA 7340	Data Analytics for PHOP	3
Fall 2026	PHCA 7180	Seminar	1
Spring 2027	PHCA 7320	Introduction to Health Systems and Policy	3
Spring 2027	PHCA 7307	Epidemiologic Methods and Research Design	3
Spring 2027	PHCA 7301	Regression Analysis and Methods	3
Spring 2027	PHCA 7180	Seminar	1

YEAR 2 (2027–2028) — CORE COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH WITH FACULTY MENTOR

Year 2 Total: 20 credit hours. During the Year 2 summer (Summer 2028), students may apply for an internship or register for courses. Students should begin preparing for the Written Comprehensive Exam, to be taken in the fall or spring of Year 3 after core coursework is complete.

Semester	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2027	PHCA 7316	Pharmacoepidemiology	3
Fall 2027	Elective		3
Fall 2027	PHCA 7180	Seminar	1
Spring 2028	PHCA 7330	Advanced Pharmacoeconomics	3
Spring 2028	Elective		3

Semester	Course	Title	Credits
Spring 2028	Elective		3
Spring 2028	PHCA 7180	Seminar	1

YEAR 3 (2028–2029) — COMPREHENSIVE EXAM, RESEARCH, AND ELECTIVE COURSEWORK

Year 3 Total: 18 credit hours. Students should be progressing on dissertation research during Year 3 and preparing for the Area of Emphasis Exam and Dissertation Proposal Defense.

Semester	Content	Credits
Fall 2028	Elective courses	8
Fall 2028	PHCA 7180 Seminar	1
Spring 2029	Elective courses or Dissertation Research (PHCA 8198/8298/8398/8698)	8
Spring 2029	PHCA 7180 Seminar	1

YEAR 4 (2029–2030) — DISSERTATION COMMITTEE, AREA OF EMPHASIS EXAM, AND DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Year 4 Total: 18 credit hours. By the end of Year 4 (Spring 2030), a full-time student should have completed a minimum of 75 credit hours. A student may graduate early if all minimum program requirements have been completed.

Semester	Course	Title	Credits
Fall 2029	PHCA 8198/8298/8398/8698	Doctoral Dissertation Research (or Electives)	8
Fall 2029	PHCA 7180	Seminar	1
Spring 2030	PHCA 8198/8298/8398/8698	Doctoral Dissertation Research (or Electives)	8
Spring 2030	PHCA 8199	Doctoral Dissertation Defense	1

CORE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

HEALTH OUTCOMES CORE

PHCA 7305: Social and Behavioral Determinants and Theory in PHOP Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Introduces the concept of social and behavioral determinants in pharmaceutical health outcomes with an understanding of research topics and theory. Emphasis is on historical, social, and behavioral issues pharmacists have faced and the role of pharmacy managers in health care systems. The course uses a case-based discussion approach with pre-assigned reading material.

PHCA 7306: Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Quality Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7305, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Focuses on practice, policy, and research issues in pharmaceutical health outcomes and quality of pharmaceutical care.

PHCA 7320: Introduction to Health Systems and Policy Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7305 and PHCA 7306, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Covers topics related to providers, payers, and patients in health care through three modules. Includes a longitudinal Health Policy Analysis project presented and submitted under faculty guidance.

RESEARCH METHODS CORE

PHCA 7307: Epidemiologic Methods and Research Design Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7308, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Covers principles of epidemiologic research methods and their applications to current clinical problems in pharmaceutical health outcomes research. Topics include fundamentals of epidemiologic research design, quantitative and qualitative methods, computer applications, survey questionnaire design, and evaluation of health policy interventions.

PHCA 7316: Pharmacoepidemiology Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Focuses on epidemiological principles applied to pharmacy. Introduces concepts, methods, and nomenclature in pharmacoepidemiology and their applications to current public health problems.

PHCA 7330: Advanced Pharmacoeconomics Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7316 and PHCA 7307, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Prepares upper-doctoral students in the branch of economics that uses cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, cost-minimization, cost-of-illness, and cost-utility analyses to compare pharmaceutical products and treatment strategies. Students learn principles, methods, and applications of economic analysis for drug therapy, pharmacy services, and pharmaceutical health policy evaluations; practice economic model building; and complete an advanced pharmacoeconomic project suitable for publication.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CORE

PHCA 7308: Biostatistics and Experimental Design Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Covers applications of experimental design techniques and statistical methods in health care and pharmacy. Topics include hypothesis testing, contingency tables, correlation, regression, and analysis of variance.

PHCA 7301: Regression Analysis and Methods Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7308, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Covers applications of multiple regression methods, regression diagnostics, variable selection, model building strategies, and assessment of model fit in pharmacy research. Emphasis is on linear, logistic, and proportional hazards regression.

PHCA 7340: Data Analytics for PHOP Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Introduces doctoral students to computer data analytic topics and techniques for analyzing large health care databases using SAS and R. Topics include big data in the U.S. health care system, fundamental and advanced SAS and R programming, and conceptual approaches to data analysis including causal inference and data mining. Prepares students with essential skills for advanced coursework and dissertation research.

SEMINAR

PHCA 7180: Seminar in Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy Credit Hours: 1. (1-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Students review and evaluate recent advances in PHOP literature and the pharmacy profession. Students enroll in this course every long semester throughout the program.

DISSERTATION COURSES

PHCA 8198 / 8298 / 8398 / 8698: Doctoral Dissertation Research Credit Hours: 1, 2, 3, or 6 per semester. Prerequisites: consent of instructor. Doctoral dissertation research. Students select the section (8198, 8298, 8398, or 8698) corresponding to the credit hours needed each semester. A total of 23 dissertation research credit hours is required.

PHCA 8199: Doctoral Dissertation Defense Credit Hours: 1. Prerequisites: consent of instructor. Doctoral dissertation defense. Completed in the semester the student defends.

DEPARTMENTAL ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The following departmental elective courses are available to PHOP PhD students. Elective selection must be consistent with the approved degree plan.

PHCA 6310: SAS Applications in Statistics Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Provides practical experience in conducting statistical analysis using the SAS statistical package to analyze, evaluate, and report data.

PHCA 7312: SAS Programming for Healthcare Data Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: consent of instructor. Covers beginning and intermediate SAS statistical applications and programming techniques, including subsetting and merging datasets, arrays, iterative loops, SQL, and macro programming.

PHCA 7313: Pharmacoeconomics Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Focuses on the economic methods used to evaluate drug therapy decisions. Covers tools needed to assess the costs and outcomes of medications and pharmacy services. Emphasis is on disease-state management with examples from pharmaceutical outcomes research.

PHCA 7310 / 7610: Research Practicum Credit Hours: 3 or 6 per semester. Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. A structured research internship experience in the pharmaceutical or health care industry.

PHCA 7311: Teaching Practicum Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. A structured academic experience in which students prepare and teach lectures in an undergraduate course under faculty guidance.

PHCA 8301: Behavioral Theories in Pharmacy and Health Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7305 and PHCA 7306, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Students discuss and appraise models and theories in pharmaceutical health outcomes research.

PHCA 8303: Multivariate Analysis Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PHCA 7308 and PHCA 7301, graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Covers advanced statistical techniques for handling multiple dependent and independent measures in pharmacy administration research. Topics include factor analysis, multiple discriminant analysis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), cluster analysis, canonical correlation, and structural equation modeling.

PHCA 8305: Risk Adjustment of Health Care Outcomes Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing or consent of instructor. Students interpret and apply patient risk factors, the Donabedian model, administrative and clinical data sources, comparisons across providers, propensity scoring, and estimation of intervention effects in observational studies.

PHCA 8311: Proposal Development Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. Develops grant writing skills through the completion and submission of a proposal using the National Institutes of Health (NIH) format.

PHCA 8311: Advanced Teaching Practicum Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. A structured academic experience in which students develop and teach lectures in a graduate course under faculty guidance.

APPROVED NON-DEPARTMENTAL ELECTIVE COURSES

Students may take approved elective courses from other departments at UH and from the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH). Non-departmental enrollment is not guaranteed. Students should check current course catalogs for availability.

Enrollment approval is required. All non-departmental elective enrollments must be approved by the faculty mentor and the Graduate Academic Advisor. Allow **7 to 10 business days** for enrollment approvals.

WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

ECON 6465: Econometrics Credit Hours: 4. (3-1). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. Covers statistical tools needed to understand and execute empirical economic research. Topics include linear regression, instrumental variables estimation, limited dependent variable models, and panel data methods. Emphasis is on applying econometrics to real-world problems.

ECON 6485: Microeconomic Analysis Credit Hours: 4. (3-1). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. Covers fundamentals of market and individual choice analysis with emphasis on empirical analysis in a business setting. Includes analysis of domestic and

international markets and the theoretical study of relationships within and between individuals, organizations, and the international economy.

ECON 6340: Health Economics Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: ECON 6465 and ECON 6485, or consent of instructor. Covers economic analysis of health care. Topics include the value of health, demand for health care, health insurance markets, managed care, and the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

MARK 7371: Pricing Strategy Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. Covers pricing concepts and analytic tools for maximizing profitability.

MARK 8349: Multivariate Methods in Marketing (*Fall only*) Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: graduate standing and consent of instructor. Covers multivariate data analysis techniques for marketing research.

PHLS 8306: Health Psychology Research, Prevention, and Interventions Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: none. Formerly/same as EPSY 8306. Introduction to health psychology, with emphasis on research, prevention, and interventions focused on biological, environmental, and cultural determinants of health disorders.

PSYC 7305: Structural Equations in Psychological Analysis Credit Hours: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: PSYC 6300 and PSYC 6302, or consent of instructor. Covers estimation, testing, and assessment of fit using LISREL for path analytic, confirmatory factor, and latent variable models.

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH (UTSPH)

PH 1835: Statistical Methodology in Clinical Trials Credit Hours: 3. Covers current statistical methodology in the design, execution, and analysis of clinical trials. Topics include basic study design, randomization, sample size, data analysis, and interim monitoring. Prerequisites: PH 1700 and calculus, or consent of instructor.

PH 2860: Advanced Design and Analysis Methods in Epidemiology Credit Hours: 3. Covers study design and advanced data analysis techniques. Topics include generalized regression models for binary, continuous, and count outcomes; multivariate data reduction; longitudinal models; clustered data analysis; and select data mining methods. Uses SAS, STATA, or other suitable statistical packages.

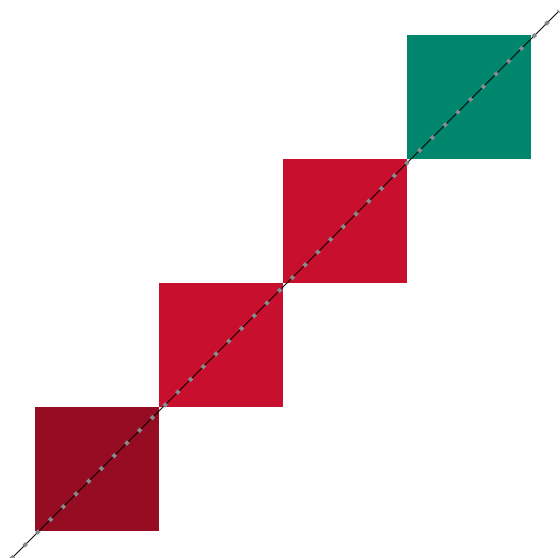
PHD 3810: Health Policy in the United States Credit Hours: 3. Students appraise U.S. health policy and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Covers principal policy-making institutions, processes, and ideas shaping federal health policy.

PH 3915: Methods for the Economic Evaluation of Health Programs Credit Hours: 3. Covers concepts and methods for economic analysis of health care decision alternatives. Topics include cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness, cost-utility analysis, and decision analysis. Emphasis is on evaluating alternative health programs.

PHD 3926: Health Survey Research Design Credit Hours: 3. Prerequisites: PHM 1690 and PHM 2610, or equivalents. Covers methods for designing and conducting health surveys. Emphasis is on problem conceptualization, measurement, and questionnaire design within a total

survey design framework. Includes examples of face-to-face, telephone, mail, and Internet surveys.

4



■ PART FOUR

PHARMACY LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

MASTER OF SCIENCE • MS-PLA

IN THIS PART

- A letter from the director
- Degree requirements and the two-year student journey
- Advising, examinations, and the thesis defense
- Curriculum, degree plan, and concurrent enrollment

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Divya Varkey, Pharm.D.

Program Director
Pharmacy Leadership and
Administration

Welcome to The Houston Program.

Our goal from the start was to be what we are today, and we knew we had all the pieces and people to do so. What we celebrate now is not just the growth of our network but the profound impact this program has had on countless lives. Our alumni have gone on to achieve remarkable successes in not only pharmacy, but various fields within healthcare. Today we are leading a charge of pharmacists branching out to lead in health-system, industry, and managed care pharmacy — and you are the next part of that.

The Houston Program has become more than just a residency and MS. It has evolved into a community of leaders who support, inspire, and uplift each other. Our gatherings, whether virtual or in person, are filled with stories of triumph, innovation, and the unyielding spirit of collaboration. You'll be at those gatherings soon, and before long you'll be the one telling the story.

The crux of our foundation is our diversity. Each cohort brings perspectives we didn't have before, and those varied perspectives continue to shape who we are and who we aim to become. Recent residents took on the work of imagining what the next phase of our community looks like, and we expect the same of you — not eventually, but this year. Tell us what you see. It's how this program keeps improving.

As we look to the future, our commitment remains steadfast: to foster an environment where curiosity thrives, creativity flourishes, and every individual feels empowered to make a meaningful difference. With your energy added to the unwavering support of our alumni and friends, we are confident that the best is yet to come.

Welcome aboard. We're glad you're here.

Divya Varkey, Pharm.D.

Program Director
Pharmacy Leadership and Administration

ABOUT THE PHARMACY LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

The Master of Science (MS) in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (MS-PLA) is offered by the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR). This section is your primary reference for the MS-PLA program — governance, degree requirements, the term-by-term degree plan, and the thesis, defense, and graduation requirements specific to MS-PLA. College-wide policies appear in the **Administration** part of this handbook; where MS-PLA differs, the difference is stated here.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION AND GOVERNANCE

The MS-PLA is administered within the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR). The program focuses on pharmacy leadership and administration in health-system pharmacies and prepares graduates for leadership roles in hospital and health-system pharmacy practice. Unlike the PhD concentrations, the MS-PLA program does not have a dedicated departmental Graduate Education Committee (GEC); it is administered through the College's general graduate administration. The Graduate Programs Office is the first point of contact, and the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs oversees grievances, exemptions from program rules, and scholarship eligibility.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The MS-PLA requires a minimum of 36 credit hours, including a major thesis or project. A maximum of 9 credit hours of transfer credit may be approved from another institution, in accordance with University of Houston guidelines. A minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (A = 4.00) must be maintained in all graduate-level courses required for the MS degree. All courses in the MS degree plan are considered graduate-level courses as defined by the department and/or the thesis or project committee.

THE MS-PLA STUDENT JOURNEY — YEAR BY YEAR

This section walks you through the MS in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration chronologically, across its two-year, thesis-track sequence. Each year summarizes the coursework you will take and what to accomplish — the milestones to reach and the thesis steps to plan for. Dates reflect the Fall 2026 entering cohort. The full term-by-term plan appears in the Curriculum and Degree Plan section below, and Divya A. Varkey, the MS-PLA Graduate Program Director, is your primary point of contact throughout the program.

No comprehensive or qualifying exam. The MS-PLA is a thesis-track degree: your master's thesis project and its defense take the place of program examinations.

Summer term. The plan includes a required summer term after your first year — Healthcare Finance (PHLA 6260), Leadership Concepts II (PHLA 6220), and Thesis: Proposal Development (PHLA 7199).

YEAR 1 (2026–2027) — FOUNDATIONAL COURSEWORK AND STARTING YOUR THESIS

Year 1 builds the leadership, outcomes, and analytics foundation and launches your thesis work.

Fall 2026 coursework. Lean Six Sigma, Yellow Belt (PHLA 6206), Leadership Seminar (PHLA 6100), Advanced Health System Management (PHLA 6221), Research Methodology 1 (PHLA 6250), and a 3-hour open elective — 10 credit hours.

Spring 2027 coursework. Leadership Concepts I (PHLA 6120), Leadership Seminar (PHLA 6100), Regulatory Compliance (PHLA 6240), Research Methodology 2 (PHLA 6250), and a 1.5-hour Bauer elective (MANA) — 7.5 credit hours.

Summer 2027 coursework. Healthcare Finance (PHLA 6260), Leadership Concepts II (PHLA 6220), and Thesis — Proposal Development (PHLA 7199) — 6 credit hours. Defend your thesis proposal no later than the last Friday of August.

What to accomplish. Submit your thesis ideas to the Graduate Program Director by the last Friday of May, confirm your UH primary faculty advisor and graduate committee in June, then register for Thesis: Proposal Development (PHLA 7199) in the summer and defend your proposal by the last Friday of August. See Advising, Mentorship, and Milestones for the advisor-selection and committee-formation timeline.

Academic standing. Maintain a strong GPA and solid course performance; falling below the College's academic standards can jeopardize your standing and any financial support.

YEAR 2 (2027–2028) — COMPLETING COURSEWORK AND DEFENDING THE THESIS

Year 2 completes the curriculum and centers on finishing, defending, and uploading your thesis.

Fall 2027 coursework. Leadership Seminar (PHLA 6100), Capstone (PHLA 7320), and Thesis — Project Completion (PHLA 7299) — 6 credit hours.

Spring 2028 coursework. Leadership Seminar (PHLA 6100), Leadership Transitions (PHLA 7A20), Workforce Competency (PHLA 6213), and Thesis — Scientific Writing (PHLA 7299) — 6.5 credit hours.

What to accomplish. Complete your remaining coursework and the open elective, finish your thesis research, and prepare your written manuscript in a publication-ready format — your committee needs the draft at least 14 days before the defense.

Defense and deadlines. Defend your thesis no later than the last Friday of March. The public session is a 25–30-minute seminar built around a 15–20 minute slide presentation, followed by

15 minutes of questions, and is followed by a closed session with your committee. An unsuccessful defense allows one retake; if the second attempt is unsuccessful, your faculty mentor will review your options with you.

Upload and graduation. After a successful defense, run the manuscript through Turnitin and obtain GAA approval, collect signatures (student, advisor, all committee members, and the Dean via the GAA), and upload the approved thesis to Vireo by the Friday of the third week of April. See the Thesis Upload: Five-Step Procedure for the exact steps.

DOCUMENTING YOUR MILESTONES IN CANVAS

Program forms for the MS-PLA program are posted in the COP Graduate Students Canvas course: download each form from Canvas > Assignments, complete it and collect the required signatures, then upload the finished form to the same assignment. The Graduate Program Director coordinates MS-PLA milestone tracking, so direct questions about which forms apply to you to her first. The Canvas hub is described in full in Submitting Forms and Tracking Progress in Canvas, under Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring.

ADVISING, MENTORSHIP, AND MILESTONES

MS-PLA advising is coordinated by the MS-PLA Graduate Program Director (Dr. Divya Varkey), who is your primary point of contact throughout the program. College-wide advising policy appears in Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring.

MS-PLA advising centers on selecting a major-project or thesis advisor and forming the thesis committee. The MS-PLA timeline runs on a fixed annual cycle: identify areas of interest during the Research Methodology course in Spring of Year 1, submit project ideas to the Graduate Program Director by the last Friday of May, and confirm both your UH primary faculty advisor and your graduate committee in June.

Selecting your advisor. Submit your project ideas to the Graduate Program Director by the last Friday of May in Year 1; those ideas are used to identify potential UH faculty advisors. Confirm your UH primary faculty advisor in June by completing the Faculty Advisor Selection form.

Forming your thesis committee. Work with your advisor to form a thesis committee that will guide your project and evaluate your defense. Confirm committee membership in June of Year 1 by completing the MS Thesis Committee Selection form. The committee has four members: your major advisor, another UH faculty member, your major project advisor from your practice institution, and one additional member from that institution. Consult your major advisor on the selection; see Dissertation and Thesis Committee Composition and Meetings for the required seats.

Progress and milestones. Meet regularly with your advisor and register for the thesis sequence — PHLA 7199 (Proposal Development) in Summer of Year 1, then PHLA 7299 in Fall and Spring of Year 2. Keep the Graduate Program Director informed of your progress; a student who falls behind should agree on a written plan to return to good standing. Complete and defend the thesis by the Year-2 deadlines in Thesis, Defense, and Graduation — MS-PLA-Specific Requirements.

EXAMINATIONS

The MS-PLA is a thesis-track master's degree and does **not** require a comprehensive or qualifying examination. The master's thesis project and its defense take the place of program examinations; see *Thesis, Defense, and Graduation* below and Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring for the general process.

THESIS, DEFENSE, AND GRADUATION — MS-PLA-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

This section covers requirements specific to the MS-PLA program. For the thesis and defense process shared by all graduate programs — committee composition, the public defense format, and the degree-completion steps — see “Dissertation and Thesis Committee Composition and Meetings” and “Defense, Degree Completion, and Graduation Process”.

The general thesis and graduation process — committee composition, formatting, and the completion steps — is in Advising, Mentorship, and Progress Monitoring; formatting requirements are covered in Dissertation and Thesis Format Guidelines under Forms and Templates Reference. The requirements below are specific to the MS-PLA thesis track.

Written manuscript requirement. You must submit the results of your project in a written manuscript in a format suitable for publication in a journal chosen by you and your major advisor. This manuscript is mandatory for approval of the project by the project/thesis committee. A draft must reach your graduate committee at least 14 days before the defense, and the committee must have the manuscript in hand for at least one week before the defense is scheduled.

Thesis proposal defense. Submit a written proposal in Microsoft Word running through the end of the methods section, with a draft to your graduate committee 14 days before the defense, and present a 15–20 minute slide presentation highlighting the proposal. Attendance is limited to your graduate committee. The proposal must be defended no later than the last Friday of August, and the MS Thesis Proposal Approval Form must be completed.

Thesis defense. Submit a complete written document suitable for manuscript submission, with a draft to your graduate committee 14 days before the defense, and present a 15–20 minute slide presentation. The defense is open to your graduate committee, the public, and anyone interested in attending.

Annual defense deadlines. Thesis ideas are due to the Graduate Program Director by the last Friday of May, the proposal defense is due by the last Friday of August, the thesis defense must occur no later than the last Friday of March, and the thesis upload deadline is the Friday of the third week of April.

Public session. The defense has an open public session and a closed session with your committee. The public portion is presented as a seminar with ample time for discussion of the findings — usually 25–30 minutes plus 15 minutes for questions — and includes a 15–20 minute slide presentation.

Unsuccessful defense. A student may be given a second opportunity following an unsuccessful defense. A student who is unsuccessful on the second attempt will be informed of their options by their faculty mentor.

Originality check. Upload the document to Turnitin, send the report to the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), and wait for GAA approval before proceeding.

Signatures. The final approved thesis must be signed by the student, advisor, all committee members, and the Dean. Complete the thesis approval form and submit it to the GAA, who will obtain the Dean's signature.

Defense announcement. Consult the Graduate Academic Advisor for room booking, public advertisement, and other defense logistics. A copy of the defense announcement must also be sent to the Chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research, the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Dean of the College of Pharmacy. The announcement must state your name, thesis title, faculty mentor's name, the location, date, and time, and identify the event as a thesis defense.

Committee meeting frequency. Once your thesis or project committee is established, you must meet with your advisor and the committee at least twice during each academic year.

Applying to graduate. Apply for graduation at the University of Houston Graduation Office in E. Cullen and pay the graduation processing fee. The deadline is typically at the beginning of the semester in which you intend to graduate; confirm the date with your advisor. The department's Graduate Advisor will assist with the electronic submission.

CURRICULUM AND DEGREE PLAN — FALL 2026 COHORT

The Master of Science (MS) in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration requires completion of a minimum of 36 credit hours, including a major thesis or project.

COURSE STATUS CODES

All courses in the degree plan carry one of three status designations:

Code	Meaning
R	Required — the course must be completed.
PE	Prescribed Elective — the course is highly recommended as a component of the degree plan.
OE	Open Elective — the course may be selected from any available options.

TERM-BY-TERM DEGREE PLAN

FALL I (FALL 2026)

Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Status
Lean Six Sigma (Yellow Belt)	2	PHLA 6206	PE
Leadership Seminar	1	PHLA 6100	R
Advanced Health System Management	2	PHLA 6221	R
Research Methodology 1	2	PHLA 6250	PE
Elective	3	—	OE
Term Total	10		

SPRING I (SPRING 2027)

Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Status
Leadership Concepts I	1	PHLA 6120	PE
Leadership Seminar	1	PHLA 6100	R
Regulatory Compliance	2	PHLA 6240	PE
Research Methodology 2	2	PHLA 6250	PE
Bauer Elective	1.5	MANA	PE
Term Total	7.5		

SUMMER I (SUMMER 2027)

Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Status
Healthcare Finance	2	PHLA 6260	PE
Leadership Concepts II	2	PHLA 6220	PE

Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Status
Thesis (Proposal Development)	2	PHLA 7199	R
Term Total	6		

FALL II (FALL 2027)

Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Status
Leadership Seminar	1	PHLA 6100	R
Capstone	3	PHLA 7320	R
Thesis (Project Completion)	2	PHLA 7299	R

SPRING II (SPRING 2028)

Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Number	Status
Leadership Seminar	1	PHLA 6100	R
Leadership Transitions	1.5	PHLA 7A20	PE
Workforce Competency	2	PHLA 6213	PE
Thesis (Scientific Writing)	2	PHLA 7299	R
Term Total	6.5		

Total Credit Hours: 36

PLA DEGREE PLAN — CONSOLIDATED COURSE SEQUENCE (ALL TERMS)

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits	Status
Fall 2026	1	PHLA 6206	Lean Six Sigma (Yellow Belt)	2	PE
Fall 2026	1	PHLA 6100	Leadership Seminar	1	R

Semester	Year	Course	Title	Credits	Status
Fall 2026	1	PHLA 6221	Advanced Health System Management	2	R
Fall 2026	1	PHLA 6250	Research Methodology 1	2	PE
Fall 2026	1	—	Elective	3	OE
Spring 2027	1	PHLA 6120	Leadership Concepts I	1	PE
Spring 2027	1	PHLA 6100	Leadership Seminar	1	R
Spring 2027	1	PHLA 6240	Regulatory Compliance	2	PE
Spring 2027	1	PHLA 6250	Research Methodology 2	2	PE
Spring 2027	1	MANA	Bauer Elective	1.5	PE
Summer 2027	1	PHLA 6260	Healthcare Finance	2	PE
Summer 2027	1	PHLA 6220	Leadership Concepts II	2	PE
Summer 2027	1	PHLA 7199	Thesis (Proposal Development)	2	R
Fall 2027	2	PHLA 6100	Leadership Seminar	1	R
Fall 2027	2	PHLA 7320	Capstone	3	R
Fall 2027	2	PHLA 7299	Thesis (Project Completion)	2	R
Spring 2028	2	PHLA 6100	Leadership Seminar	1	R
Spring 2028	2	PHLA 7A20	Leadership Transitions	1.5	PE
Spring 2028	2	PHLA 6213	Workforce Competency	2	PE
Spring 2028	2	PHLA 7299	Thesis (Scientific Writing)	2	R

CORE AREA SUMMARY

Core Area	Total Credit Hours
Leadership	15

Core Area	Total Credit Hours
Health-Systems	11
Research	10

The three core areas total 36 credit hours, the program minimum. The Leadership core total includes 4.5 credit hours of Bauer/elective coursework (a 3-hour open elective in Fall I and a 1.5-hour Bauer elective in Spring I). Confirm your individual distribution with the Graduate Program Director when your degree plan is filed.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

HEALTH-SYSTEMS COURSES

PHLA 6221 — Advanced Health System Management Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Overview of healthcare law, policy, and contemporary topics in hospital and health system management.

PHLA 6240 — Regulatory Compliance Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Overview of regulatory considerations and compliance, including practical application of quality improvement methodology.

PHLA 6260 — Healthcare Finance Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Examines both micro and macro aspects of financial management of health care systems. Approaches to financial record keeping, financial analysis, and budgeting are reviewed. Financial policies implemented by governmental and private third parties are analyzed.

PHLA 7320 — Capstone Course Credit hours: 3. Prerequisites: PHLA 6221. Overview of drug use in health systems, including regulatory, practice management, operations, formulary management, human resources, and marketing.

PHLA 6213 — Pharmacy Workforce Competency Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: PHLA 6221. Introduces the ideas and processes behind the evaluation, assessment, and development of employees' capabilities in the pharmacy setting. Topics include methods of assessment, validation, training development, and employee engagement.

Research and Methodology Courses

PHCA 6308 — Biostatistics and Experimental Design Credit hours: 3. Approved elective; not required in the standard degree plan. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Applications of experimental design techniques and statistical methods in health care and pharmacy. Topics include hypothesis testing, contingency tables, correlation, regression, and analysis of variance.

PHLA 6250 — Research Methodology 1 and 2 Credit hours: 2 each (4 hours total; taken in Fall I and Spring I). Prerequisites: Research Methodology 1 — graduate standing or consent of

instructor; Research Methodology 2 — PHLA 6250 (Research Methodology 1), graduate standing, or consent of instructor. Research Methodology 1 covers principles of research, biostatistics, and the development of research questions; Research Methodology 2 covers principles of research and their application in practice.

PHLA 7199 — Thesis (Proposal Development) Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and formation of a graduate committee. Taken in Summer of Year 1; the proposal is defended by the last Friday of August.

PHLA 7299 — Thesis (Project Completion and Project Defense) Credit hours: 2 each (4 hours total). Prerequisites: PHLA 7199. Taken in Fall and Spring of Year 2; the thesis is defended by the last Friday of March.

Leadership Courses

PHLA 6100 — Leadership Seminar Credit hours: 1. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Develops the student's understanding of and capacity for leadership within the pharmacy profession. Topics include leadership development, strategic planning, project management, and community engagement.

PHLA 6206 — Lean Six Sigma (Yellow Belt) Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. A short-burst course using pharmacy-specific case studies to teach quality tools that improve organizational effectiveness through Lean/Six Sigma principles.

PHLA 6120 — Leadership Concepts I Credit hours: 1. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. A longitudinal course targeting emerging pharmacy leaders, teaching principles of human behavior and their impact within the workplace.

PHLA 6220 — Leadership Concepts II Credit hours: 2. Prerequisites: PHLA 6120 Leadership Concepts I or consent of instructor. A short-burst course targeting emerging pharmacy leaders, teaching essential principles of leadership.

PHLA 7A20 — Leadership Transitions Credit hours: 1.5. Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. Career guidance targeted on the initial transition from student to practitioner.

PHLA 6397 — Selected Topics in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration Credit Hours: 3. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor. In-depth study of selected current topics in pharmacy leadership and administration; content varies by offering and may be repeated for credit when topics differ.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT AT UT SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Students in the Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA) Master of Science program may take elective courses at the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH), located in the Texas Medical Center, through concurrent enrollment. UTSPH is a GCC member institution; the college-wide 12-hour concurrent-enrollment cap (see Inter-Institutional and Concurrent Enrollment under General Curriculum and Enrollment Policies) applies.

Campus restriction: Select Houston campus courses only.

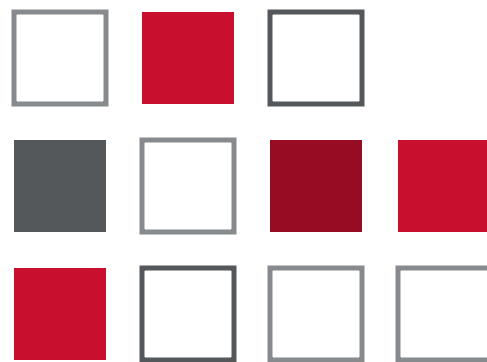
REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Review UTSPH course listings and identify the course you wish to take.
2. Email the instructor to confirm permission to enroll.
3. Complete the Inter-institutional Application for UTSPH (required for first-time registration only).
4. Complete concurrent enrollment forms for both UH and UTSPH. The UH form requires the following signatures: course instructor, faculty advisor, program director, UH Registrar, and — for international students — the International Office.
5. Deliver all signed paperwork to the UTSPH Registrar's office for processing. A non-billable course placeholder will be added to your myuh.edu profile to reflect your accurate enrollment hours. Fees are assessed separately for concurrent courses.
6. Request a scanned copy of the UTSPH-signed paperwork and forward it to the Graduate Advisor's office for your student file.
7. Students are permitted to complete a maximum of 12 credit hours of concurrent enrollment during their entire course of study at UH.

FINANCIAL AID

If your billable UH enrollment falls under 7 credit hours, your financial aid will be adjusted. Contact the Graduate Advisor with any questions about the impact on financial aid or fellowships before registering.

5



■ PART FIVE

COLLEGE-WIDE POLICIES

IN THIS PART

- Curriculum and enrollment policies
- Advising, mentorship, and progress monitoring
- Dissertation, defense, and graduation
- Academic standards, funding, and student life

GENERAL CURRICULUM AND ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Each graduate concentration at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) has its own curriculum requirements. These requirements include didactic courses, elective courses, qualifying examinations, and seminars. The specific requirements for your concentration are published in the program handbook for that concentration. Program handbooks are posted in Canvas under Home > Documents.

Program-specific course sequences and course descriptions appear in each program's section (PPS, PHOP, and MS-PLA).

Course selection for each academic year is determined in consultation with graduate staff. Graduate staff ensure that course sections are available and that each student's course plan fits properly into their program of study. Students should meet with graduate staff before registering for courses each term.

DEGREE PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

PHOP (PhD): Each student must submit an official degree plan for approval. The degree plan formally declares the degree objective and the specific courses required for the degree. Students develop an initial degree plan in consultation with the faculty mentor and the GAA. This initial plan must be approved by the faculty advisor and the GEC within one year of enrolling in the PhD program. A copy of the approved initial plan is provided to both the student and the faculty mentor. All changes to the degree plan must be signed by the student and the faculty mentor. A completed final degree plan, approved by the mentor and all committee members, must be submitted during the semester the student intends to graduate. The PhD Degree Plan form must be used; the area indicating "final plan" must be checked on the final submission. The final degree plan must be submitted no less than 60 days prior to applying for graduation, in accordance with the University of Houston Academic Calendar.

COURSE ENROLLMENT, CREDIT LOAD, AND MILESTONE HOLDS

ENROLLING IN COURSES

Each semester, the University of Houston (UH) opens online enrollment near the end of the current term. Use the MyUH portal to register once enrollment opens. Before selecting your courses, consult your faculty advisor and the graduate program staff to confirm which courses you need.

Each course section has a named instructor. For research courses (6X98 Special Problems or dissertation hours), you must enroll in the specific section that lists your faculty advisor as the

instructor. If that section does not appear in MyUH, it was likely overlooked during setup. Contact the graduate program staff and request that the correct section be created.

First-year students without an assigned faculty advisor must still enroll in a 6X98 Special Problems course and must have a named instructor. The departmental vice chair or the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) chair will serve as the instructor of record until an advisor is selected.

CREDIT HOUR LOAD REQUIREMENTS

You are required to enroll in 9 semester credit hours each fall and spring semester. A typical registration combines 3 or 6 hours of didactic coursework with one or more 6X98 research hours to reach the 9-hour total.

Two exceptions to the 9-hour requirement exist:

1. **Reduced Course Load (RCL):** Students approved for RCL are not required to carry 9 hours. Contact the graduate program staff before assuming RCL applies to your situation.
2. **Financial aid restriction:** A small number of financial aid arrangements permit only 5 credit hours. If your aid package includes this restriction, you are not required to enroll for 9 hours.
3. Summer enrollment is not required unless one of the following conditions applies:
 - You plan to graduate in August and must be enrolled to receive your degree that term.
 - UH requires enrollment for institutional reasons and will pay the Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) on your behalf.

If you believe you need to enroll in summer for any other reason, contact the graduate program staff before registering.

ENROLLMENT HOLDS AND THE 12 MILESTONE SYSTEM

An enrollment hold is placed on every student's account at the start of each registration period. The hold blocks course registration in MyUH until it is released. Holds are released only after the graduate program staff confirm that you are current on all twelve milestones listed below. The hold is released once you have completed the milestones that apply at your current stage. The graduate program tracks twelve milestone categories (a–l), completed on the following schedule:

- o **Year 1** — training sessions (a), the RA/TA Responsibilities form (b), policy quizzes (c), the plagiarism pledge (d), rotation reports where applicable (e), and faculty-advisor selection (f).
- o **Year 2** — dissertation committee formation (g).
- o **Years 3–5, annually** — dissertation committee meetings (h).

- o **On your program's examination schedule** — the written and oral qualifying or comprehensive examinations (i); see your program section for exact timing.
- o **Every year** — your Individual Development Plan (j), CITI research-ethics training (k), and health-insurance verification where applicable (l).

Registration remains blocked until the milestones due at that point are cleared. If a hold persists after you believe you have completed the applicable items, contact the Graduate Academic Advisor. Documentation confirming completion of each milestone must be uploaded to the Graduate Student Canvas site. Do not wait until the last moment — holds cannot be released until all required documents are on file.

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

The University of Houston (UH) holds a Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement (MUA) with member institutions of the Gulf Coast Consortium (GCC). This agreement allows graduate students to register for courses at partner institutions, earn credit that counts toward a UH degree, and have those grades appear on the UH transcript and factor into the UH grade point average calculation.

ELIGIBLE GCC PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

- o Baylor College of Medicine
- o MD Anderson Cancer Center
- o University of Texas Health Sciences Center Houston (including the Medical School and School of Public Health)
- o Rice University
- o University of Texas Medical Branch (Galveston)
- o Texas A&M University

COLLEGE-WIDE RULES (ALL PROGRAMS)

The following UH policies apply to every graduate student using inter-institutional enrollment:

- o A student may take a maximum of 12 credit hours at other institutions. This cap applies per student, not per degree.
- o All courses taken at partner institutions must be graduate level.
- o A student's total combined enrollment must be full-time (total credit hours ≥ 9).

- o International students must remain enrolled in at least one course (3 credit hours) at UH whenever taking an inter-institutional course.

The Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) pays tuition for inter-institutional courses. Fees may be assessed separately depending on the partner institution. If your billable UH enrollment falls under 7 credit hours, your financial aid will be adjusted accordingly. Consult the Graduate Advisor before registering if you have any questions about financial aid or fellowship impact.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Talk with your faculty advisor before selecting a course at another institution. Consult the Graduate Office for institution-specific administrative details, as these vary by partner. The general approval sequence is:

- o Obtain approval from the course director at the partner institution.
- o Obtain approval from your faculty advisor
- o Obtain approval from the UH Registrar.
- o Obtain approval from the registrar at the partner institution.

The Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs signs the form that completes the process. The enrollment form is available on Canvas (Home > Misc Forms).

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

Approved by College of Pharmacy (COP) faculty, 17 April 2015.

Graduate-level coursework completed at another institution may be applied toward degree requirements at the University of Houston (UH) College of Pharmacy, subject to the eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and credit limits described below. This policy applies to all College of Pharmacy graduate programs.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A course taken outside UH is eligible for transfer only if all of the following conditions are met:

- o The course was graduate level.
- o A grade of B or better was earned.
- o The course was taken at a U.S. institution within the previous three years.
- o The course is similar in rigor and content to courses offered in the College of Pharmacy graduate programs.

- o The course was not previously used to fulfill the requirements of another degree.
- o Courses graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis will not be transferred.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Students must provide the following to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs:

- o Original transcripts documenting the course, the grade received, and the number of credit hours.
- o A syllabus or list of topics from the course being transferred.
- o A written petition identifying which College of Pharmacy course the transferred credit will replace. (Students should obtain the relevant COP course syllabi to facilitate this comparison.)

APPROVAL PROCESS

The Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs forwards the documentation to the relevant departmental Graduate Education Committee (GEC) and to the relevant course director. The GEC has the option of requiring a competency examination before approving the transfer. If approved, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs notifies the student. The Registrar makes the final determination of the number of credit hours.

Department Chair or departmental approval required by individual programs operates within, not in place of, the college-level process described above.

TRANSFER CREDIT LIMITS

All programs — standard limit: Normally, no more than 9 semester credit hours (SCH) may be used as transfer credit.

College-wide PhD exception — student arriving with a new faculty member: If a student is coming to UH with a new faculty member from another institution, up to 50% of the credit hours required for the PhD may be transferred. This exception applies to PhD programs college wide. It does not apply to the Master of Science (MS) program in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA), which is a 36-credit-hour program with a 9-SCH transfer cap.

Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) PhD — UH MS in Pharmacy Administration exception: A PHOP PhD student who has completed the MS in Pharmacy Administration program at UH may transfer up to 18 credit hours of graduate coursework. This exception is separate from the new-faculty exception above; the two apply to distinct circumstances.

For all programs, only courses with a grade of B or above will be accepted. S/U grades will not be transferred. All transfer credits must be approved in accordance with the college and University of Houston credit transfer policy.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

PHOP (PhD): The department maintains a Transfer Credit Request Form as part of the official PhD degree plan documentation. Students must complete this form and obtain the signature of the Faculty Mentor and approval from the Chair of the departmental GEC.

PLA (MS): In accordance with University of Houston guidelines, the department may approve a maximum of 9 SCH of transfer credits from another institution for the MS degree.

LIMITS ON DURATION AND CREDIT HOURS OF GRADUATE STUDY

These rules apply to all doctoral (PhD) students in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) graduate programs. They originate from State of Texas regulations and University of Houston (UH) policy. No exception or leave of absence (LOA) stops either time clock.

TIME LIMITS

Ten-year total limit. You must complete all requirements for the PhD within ten years of first enrollment in the doctoral program. An LOA does not pause this clock. Time spent on leave counts toward the ten-year limit.

Five-year post-qualifying-exam limit. Once you pass your qualifying exam, you must complete all remaining requirements and receive the PhD within five years. An LOA does not pause this clock either.

If you approach either limit without completing your degree, contact the Graduate Program Director immediately to discuss your options.

THE 99-HOUR DOCTORAL CREDIT-HOUR CAP

The State of Texas limits the number of doctoral credit hours a student may accumulate at the resident tuition rate. Specifically, if either of the following conditions applies to you, the maximum number of doctoral credit hours you may take before being charged non-resident tuition is 99:

- o You have completed 30 or more master's-level credit hours at UH, **or**
- o You hold a master's degree in the same discipline earned at another institution.

- o Once you exceed 99 doctoral credit hours under either condition, you will be assessed non-resident tuition for all subsequent enrollment, regardless of your actual state of residency.

This limit is rarely an issue for PPS and PHOP PhD students, who typically begin graduate study at the doctoral level from the start and therefore do not carry a prior 30-hour master's credit load at UH in the same field.

ADVISING, MENTORSHIP, AND PROGRESS MONITORING

The advising, mentorship, progress-monitoring, and PhD grading policies here apply to the doctoral programs (PPS and PHOP). If you're an MS-PLA student, follow the guidance in your own section instead (Advising, Mentorship, and Milestones in the PLA track).

From your very first day at the UH College of Pharmacy, you're paired with an advisor. That relationship anchors your whole graduate experience — from planning courses and research rotations in Year 1, all the way through your dissertation defense and the launch of your career.

This section lays out how advising and mentorship work, how the faculty and the College keep track of your progress, the milestones you're expected to hit, and the career-development support available to you. Because the PPS and PHOP doctoral programs have different curricula and research models, any rules that differ by program are called out in labeled subsections.

WHAT'S COVERED:

Academic and Research Advisors — Selection, Roles, and Changes. Interim vs. permanent advisors, what your advisor is responsible for, degree-plan requirements, and how to change advisors if you need to.

Research Rotations and Faculty Mentor Selection. First-year rotations for PPS and PHOP students — including rotation deadlines, reporting, and the timeline for forming your dissertation committee.

Monitoring of Student Progress and Progress Reports. How the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), your faculty mentor, the Graduate Education Committee (GEC), and the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs work together to track your progress, how often you're expected to meet, and what a formal progress report must contain.

Program Milestones and Satisfactory Academic Progress. The full milestone schedule — advisor selection, committee formation, qualifying or comprehensive exams, committee meetings, Individual Development Plans (IDPs), and required trainings — plus the enrollment-hold system and what happens if milestones are missed.

Career Development and Individual Development Plans. Required IDPs (through myIDP or ImaginePhD), career-plan discussions at your committee meetings, concentration seminars, and the UHCOP LinkedIn alumni network.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH ADVISORS — SELECTION, ROLES, AND CHANGES

Every graduate student in the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) is supported by a structured advising framework that spans the full duration of the program. This section describes how advising is organized at entry, how students transition to a permanent advisor, what each advisor is responsible for, and under what conditions an advisor may be changed.

INTERIM ADVISING AT PROGRAM ENTRY

Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) PhD: From the first day of orientation, two interim advisors guide new students: the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) and the Assistant Chair of the PPS Department. The GAA confirms course enrollment each semester, assists with academic planning, manages student records, and meets with the student at least twice per semester. The GAA also coordinates the degree plan and facilitates communication among students, staff, and faculty. The Assistant Chair helps students acclimate to the department and the College. These interim advisors remain the student's primary sources of guidance until a permanent faculty advisor is selected.

Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) PhD: New PHOP students meet with all faculty members during the first semester to learn about research interests. These initial interviews should begin in the fall and conclude early in the spring semester of the first year. The GAA serves as the first point of contact for all administrative processes and checks in with each student once per long semester.

Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA) MS: Students are admitted into a structured cohort curriculum. The program does not designate a separate interim advisor role; students identify and select a faculty mentor in coordination with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) as thesis or project work begins.

SELECTING A PERMANENT FACULTY ADVISOR

PPS (PhD): After completing the first year and any required research rotations, the student selects a permanent faculty advisor. This is a mutual decision between the student and the faculty member. The selection is formalized by signing the Appointment of Major Advisor Form.

PHOP (PhD): Students complete initial faculty interviews in year one and submit the Initial Research Rotation Form to the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) by the last day before spring break (approximately March 15). A list of faculty available to take new students is provided by April 1. Students must complete intensive research rotations and submit a signed Faculty Mentor Selection Form to the GEC by August 1 before the start of the second year. This deadline is reflected in the program timeline milestone structure.

PLA (MS): The faculty mentor selection must be mutually agreeable between the student and the faculty member. The faculty mentor generally also serves as the student's major project or thesis advisor. Students are advised to review the thesis and coursework requirements before selecting their mentor.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR

All graduate students are expected to maintain regular, substantive contact with their faculty advisor throughout the program.

PPS (PhD): The permanent faculty advisor oversees all aspects of the student's academic and research progress and serves as the student's mentor and role model. The advisor is responsible for the student's overall academic and research development.

PHOP (PhD): All academic and research decisions should be discussed and approved by the faculty mentor prior to any action being taken. Faculty mentor signatures are required on all official university documentation and requests.

PLA (MS): The faculty mentor is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the student's academic and research progress. Students should consult their mentor in selecting electives, selecting field of research, and related academic decisions. The faculty mentor's evaluation of a graduate student's research must assess the student's ability to read and understand research articles and evaluate the literature, to design sound research protocols, to write scientific research articles, to conduct research without constant faculty supervision, and to master necessary statistical techniques. This evaluation is essential to ensure that the student and advisor maintain a clear understanding of what is expected.

REQUIRED MEETING FREQUENCY

All programs require ongoing engagement between students and their advisors. The minimum meeting requirements differ by program and milestone stage.

PPS (PhD): Faculty advisor meets with student at least once at the beginning of each semester; GAA meets with student at least twice per semester.

PHOP (PhD): PhD students meet regularly with their faculty mentor throughout the program. Dissertation committee must meet at least once per long semester after formation.

PLA (MS): Each graduate student must meet with their advisor and their thesis/project committee at least twice during an academic year, following the establishment of that committee.

RESEARCH ROTATIONS AND FACULTY MENTOR SELECTION

First-year doctoral students in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) programs each complete a structured

rotation process to identify a dissertation advisor or faculty mentor. Because the two programs operate different research models — bench laboratory science in PPS and outcomes-and-policy research in PHOP — the rotation structure, timeline, and deadlines differ by program and are described in each program's section — see Laboratory Rotations and Dissertation Advisor Selection (PPS) and Initial Research Rotations and Faculty Mentor Selection (PHOP). Both programs require students to confirm their mentor selection before the start of Year 2. The MS-PLA program does not use research rotations.

MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Academic and research progress is monitored continuously throughout every graduate program at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP). Multiple parties share oversight responsibility: the faculty advisor or faculty mentor, the dissertation committee, the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA), the departmental Graduate Education Committee (GEC), and the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. If areas of concern arise, the student is informed promptly and a remediation plan is developed.

Before doctoral candidacy, student assessment focuses on coursework (grades), research rotations, and qualifying or comprehensive examinations (written and oral). After doctoral candidacy is achieved, ongoing progress is monitored through scheduled committee meetings and formal progress reports submitted to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

OVERSIGHT ROLES

Faculty advisor or faculty mentor. The faculty advisor holds primary responsibility for monitoring academic and research progress and for guiding dissertation work. All academic and research decisions should be discussed with and approved by the faculty advisor before any action is taken.

Dissertation committee. Once formed, the dissertation committee reviews student progress at scheduled meetings and contributes to the formal progress report.

Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA). The GAA is the first point of contact for all administrative processes. The GAA monitors committee meeting schedules and coordinates administrative requirements.

Departmental Graduate Education Committee (GEC). The GEC oversees curriculum, student progression, and compliance with departmental policies and procedures.

Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. The Assistant Dean receives all formal progress reports and has college-wide oversight of graduate student progression.

COMMITTEE MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Meeting frequency is a program-specific requirement governed by each program.

Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) — PhD: Each graduate student must meet with their advisor and dissertation committee at least once per year. At least one annual meeting is mandatory. The PPS Department strongly recommends bi-annual meetings, ideally in September and March, especially once doctoral candidacy is achieved.

During the first year, interim advisors oversee progress using rotation reports submitted by both the student and faculty members. Oversight transfers to the permanent faculty advisor and dissertation committee after the first year.

Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) — PhD: Once the dissertation committee is formed, the committee must meet at least once per long semester. The occurrence of these meetings is monitored by the GAA and the Chair of the Committee. In addition to committee meetings, each PHOP student must check in with the GAA once each long semester for progression monitoring.

Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA) — MS: Progress is monitored by the faculty advisor, the GAA, and the Graduate Education Committee in accordance with the college-wide framework described in this section. Contact your program's GAA for the specific meeting schedule applicable to the MS program.

PROGRESS REPORTS

During doctoral candidacy, students must submit a formal progress report to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs following each regularly scheduled committee meeting. Programs determine the frequency of these reports. The minimum college-wide requirement is one progress report per annum.

The progress report is completed using the form located at **Canvas > Assignments > All Concentrations > Dissertation Committee Meetings Progress Report** (approved by COP Faculty, August 5, 2016).

Required report components. At a minimum, each progress report must include:

- o Previous Accomplishments
- o Current Progress
- o Research Plans
- o Predicted Completion Date

The faculty advisor and/or committee is also obligated to include a narrative, as part of the student's written progress report, describing any important issues that may affect the student's ability to complete their dissertation. For PPS students, the progress report is compiled by the advisor after each committee meeting and reviewed with the student and all committee members before submission.

Distribution and confidentiality. Progress reports are confidential documents. Access is limited to:

- o The student
- o All dissertation committee members
- o Chairs of the Departments
- o The Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs
- o The program Graduate Education Committees (GECs)

A copy is retained in the student's file held by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. Reports are not disclosed beyond the authorized parties listed above.

CHANGING ADVISORS

The advisor relationship is the center of your graduate experience, and most students complete their degrees with the advisor they started with. Occasionally, though, a change becomes necessary — and the College recognizes that. This section explains when a change may be warranted, what's genuinely at stake in making one, and how to approach it well.

WHY A CHANGE MAY BE NEEDED

There are legitimate reasons a student and advisor may need to part ways. Common ones include: your research interests and your advisor's have diverged over time; the working relationship or mentoring style isn't a good fit, despite good-faith effort on both sides; your advisor is leaving the University, retiring, or has lost the funding that supports your position; or your career goals have shifted in a direction your current advisor can't support. Wanting the right environment to finish your degree is a reasonable thing. The aim of this process is to get you to a productive placement, not to assign blame.

UNDERSTAND WHAT'S AT STAKE — AND ACT EARLY

Changing advisors is a serious step, not a routine one. However, it can be an effective way to deal with a lab or project that simply isn't a good fit, and in those situations it's a legitimate and supported path forward. But it's worth being clear-eyed about what a change does and doesn't address. A new advisor usually means a new research project, a reconstituted dissertation committee, and — often — starting significant portions of your research over. It can affect authorship on work already underway, extend your time to degree, and disrupt your funding.

Throughout your time in the program, our expectation is that you're performing to the best of your ability and demonstrating reasonable progress — and a change of advisor doesn't reset that expectation. If the underlying difficulties stem not from fit but from a general lack of productivity or engagement, and you've already received warnings about your own performance, then a request to change advisors will prompt a review of those concerns rather than a fresh start.

That's because changing labs is serious business: it's a step meant for cases of genuine poor fit, not a way around a preventable performance problem. To move to another laboratory, you'll need to show that you bring an appropriate level of engagement and a real ability to succeed there.

Two practical ground rules follow from this. You can't change advisors while on academic probation, and any change involves a documented review of your written evaluations and committee-meeting reports before it becomes official with the appropriate program authority's approval. If concerns about your progress do surface, you won't be left guessing — they'll be shared with you directly, along with a plan to address them. But if you receive repeated documented notices to correct performance issues with no sign that you're acting on them, that can ultimately lead to dismissal from the program.

Timing matters. A PhD represents a large body of work, and much of it is tied to a specific project and lab. The later a change happens, the more of that invested work may not carry forward — so a change late in your program is considerably harder to support than one early on. If problems are developing with your advisor, it is genuinely to your advantage to raise and address them sooner rather than later, while your options are widest and the cost of moving is lowest. Waiting rarely makes the underlying issue easier to solve, and it usually makes a change more expensive if one becomes necessary.

A RECOMMENDED PATH FORWARD

1. **Try to resolve the difficulty directly first.** Many advisor–student tensions are workable once they're named. Have an honest conversation with your advisor about what isn't functioning and what would need to change.
2. **Keep the Program Director informed — early.** Even while you're still trying to work things out, meet with the Program Director in the Office of Graduate Studies for an update and guidance. You don't have to navigate this alone, and looping in the Program Director early means the timeline, your options, and any risks are understood before decisions are made — not after.
3. **Coordinate the funding question with the department.** This is often the most consequential piece. Your assistantship type matters: RA funding is typically tied to your *current* advisor's grant and does not automatically follow you to a new advisor. A change may mean moving to a different RA line (subject to a new advisor's available funding) or to a TA position — neither of which is guaranteed. Sort this out with the department *before* a change is finalized, so you're not caught without support mid-transition.
4. **Secure a willing new advisor, then notify your current mentor.** A new placement is a fresh mutual agreement: another faculty member must be both able and willing to take you on. The program will try to help you either resolve the original problem or identify another advisor where possible, but a new placement cannot be guaranteed. Once you have secured a new lab, it is your responsibility to inform your current mentor of the change.
5. **Obtain formal approval.** The change is not effective until it has formal approval from the appropriate program authority (below).

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC APPROVAL AUTHORITY

PPS and PHOP (PhD). In both doctoral programs, the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) provides the evaluation — reviewing your advisor's written evaluations in rotation reports and your committee-meeting reports and working to help you either resolve the problem or identify another faculty advisor where possible. The Department Chair helps coordinate authorization of your continued support (your assistantship/funding) in connection with the change. As noted above, RA and TA positions are not guaranteed to transfer when you change advisors.

PLA (MS) — overseen by the GPD. If you can't work satisfactorily with your mentor, you may find another, as long as you're not on academic probation. In every case, the Graduate Program Director reviews your mentor's written evaluations and your committee-meeting reports and will try to help you either resolve the problem or identify another advisor.

PROGRAM MILESTONES AND SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Graduate students in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) doctoral programs must meet two parallel sets of requirements: graded coursework and non-grade milestones. Both are monitored each semester. Failure to stay current on milestones carries administrative and academic consequences described below.

COLLEGE-WIDE MILESTONE FRAMEWORK

Program-specific milestone deadlines and estimated dates for the current cohort appear in each program's Milestone Schedule and Enforcement section (PPS and PHOP). Milestones are required program checkpoints that do not carry a letter grade. They include, but are not limited to: required trainings, policy assessments, rotation reports, faculty advisor selection, dissertation committee formation, qualifying or comprehensive examinations, committee meetings, Individual Development Plan (IDP) updates, and Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) ethics training.

Enrollment holds. An enrollment hold is placed on every student's account each semester. The hold is not lifted until the student is current on all milestones. If you cannot resolve a missed milestone before registration opens, contact the Graduate Office immediately.

Escalating consequences. Continued failure to meet milestones may result in temporary employment suspension with loss of stipend, loss of the Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF), and possible dismissal from the program.

The College of Pharmacy Graduate Studies Committee has adopted college-wide policies that govern all graduate students, including the Transfer Credit Policy, Academic Standard Policy, and Responsible Conduct of Research Policy. The full policy and procedures document is available at <https://uh.edu/pharmacy/about-us/policies-and-procedures/>.

SUBMITTING FORMS AND TRACKING PROGRESS IN CANVAS

The central hub for tracking milestones and submitting program forms is a dedicated Canvas course: PHAR1398 185137F — COP Graduate Students. All PhD students are enrolled automatically upon entry into the program; no action is required to join.

The course is the primary repository for program forms, milestone documents, and reference materials. Use the navigation panel on the left side of the course to reach the areas you will need most:

- **Assignments** — all common forms that must be completed and submitted, including milestone verification forms. Download each form here, complete it and obtain the required signatures, then upload the finished form to the same assignment. A milestone is not recorded as complete until the signed form is uploaded.
- **Home > Documents** — handbooks, grievance procedures, and other reference documents.
- **Home > Miscellaneous Forms** — less frequently used forms not covered by the Assignments section.
- **Home (general)** — reference documents for information technology (IT) resources and materials for Teaching Assistants (TAs).

GRADING RULES THAT APPLY TO PHD PROGRAMS

Whole-letter grades only. Courses are graded A, B, C, D, or F. There are no plus or minus grades.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) courses. S/U grades do not factor into your grade point average (GPA). See program-specific rules below for the consequences of a U grade.

Incomplete (I) grade. If you receive an Incomplete, you have one year to complete the course requirements before the grade is automatically changed to F. To avoid misunderstandings, the student and instructor should complete an Incomplete Grade Agreement form (Canvas > Home > Misc forms). See the PHOP section below for an additional graduation-eligibility rule.

No Record (NR) grade. An NR grade means the instructor did not submit a grade. Alert your instructor immediately if you see NR on your grade report.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Career development is a required part of your doctoral training in the Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) PhD programs; these requirements do not apply to students in the Master of Science in Pharmacy Leadership and

Administration (MS-PLA) program. The College of Pharmacy (COP) provides the following structured resources to help you explore career options, build professional skills, and make connections in your field.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

You are required to complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP). An IDP uses brief surveys to assess your skills, interests, and values, then suggests career pathways and the steps needed to reach them.

Two recommended IDP platforms are available at no cost:

- o **myIDP** — hosted on the Science Careers website; designed for the laboratory and bench sciences, and typically the best fit for PPS students.
- o **ImaginePhD** — designed for the humanities, social sciences, and interdisciplinary fields, and typically the best fit for PHOP students.

Create a free account on whichever platform fits your background, complete each module, and save the completion certificates that are automatically emailed to you. Upload those certificates to **Canvas > Assignments > All Concentrations** by the end of the Spring Semester each year.

Only the certificate is collected — not the IDP content itself. Your IDP responses are confidential, and you are never required to share them with anyone unless you choose to.

Begin your IDP in the first year and review and update it annually thereafter. Some career paths require specific skills or experiences that take time to develop; starting early gives you the opportunity to build them before graduation. Direct questions about the IDP requirement to your Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA).

SEMINARS

Your program or concentration sponsors seminars by alumni and visiting speakers. Some seminars are dedicated to career topics; others are research seminars that include time for questions about professional development. Attendance at these sessions complements your IDP work by exposing you to real career trajectories and workplace perspectives.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

At each committee meeting — held once or twice per year depending on your program — you will be asked about your career plans. Committee members may offer insights into specific careers or workplaces, suggest skills to develop, and share professional contacts. Information about your career development must be documented in your regular committee report.

LINKEDIN ALUMNI NETWORK

The Graduate Programs Office maintains a group on LinkedIn for COP alumni and current students. Joining this group gives you access to a network for mentorship and job searching. Alumni and students are encouraged to participate.

ADDITIONAL CAREER RESOURCES

Beyond the College resources described above, students are encouraged to take advantage of the following:

Professional societies — join the professional organizations in your field and attend their meetings and conferences; departmental travel funding may be available to support conference travel.

University Career Services — UH's campus-wide career office offers résumé and CV review, interview preparation, and career fairs.

UH Graduate School professional development — workshops and events on topics such as grant writing, scientific communication, teaching, and the academic and industry job search.

OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION AND THESIS PROCESS

This section describes the doctoral (PhD) dissertation process. MS-PLA (thesis) students should follow Thesis, Defense, and Graduation — MS-PLA-Specific Requirements in the PLA section; where the general steps below apply to the MS thesis, the PLA section governs MS-PLA deadlines and thesis format.

Completion of a graduate degree in the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) requires more than finishing coursework. Every student must also carry out original research or a major scholarly project and present that work in a culminating written document — a dissertation (Doctor of Philosophy, PhD) or a thesis or major project (Master of Science, MS) — followed by a formal defense. This section and its subsections govern that process from committee formation through final degree conferral.

Three graduate programs are covered here:

- o **Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS)** — PhD program offering concentrations in Pharmacology, Pharmaceutical Sciences (PCOL), and Clinical and Experimental Therapeutics, Pharmacokinetics/Pharmacodynamics, and Medicinal Chemistry (PCEU).
- o **Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP)** — PhD program with research spanning Pharmacoeconomics, Pharmacoepidemiology, Health Services Research, Management and Marketing, and related areas.

- o **Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA)** — MS program requiring a major project or thesis.

Where a rule applies equally to all three programs, it is stated once without a program label. Where programs differ, subsections identify each program's specific requirement.

MILESTONES COMMON TO ALL PROGRAMS

Every student must complete the following sequence, in the order listed. Detailed requirements for each milestone appear in the subsections that follow this overview.

Form a dissertation or thesis committee. Committee composition requirements differ by program. The committee guides all subsequent work and must be formed within the timelines set by each program. See *Dissertation and Thesis Committee Composition and Meetings* (Section below).

Complete and defend a written research proposal. PPS and PHOP doctoral students must write a dissertation proposal and pass an oral defense of that proposal before advancing to candidacy. PLA MS students must complete a thesis proposal and defend it orally before the thesis defense.

Conduct original research. All research must comply with applicable University of Houston (UH) ethics and compliance requirements, including approval from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) / Institutional Review Board (IRB) when human subjects are involved (see <https://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb/>). Graduate students in the PHOP doctoral program must also meet specific publication requirements before they may schedule a dissertation defense; those requirements are described in *Dissertation Research, Authorship, and Publication Expectations* (Section below).

Meet program-specific pre-defense requirements. PPS doctoral students must deliver a 50-minute departmental seminar in the semester before the planned graduation semester. Requirements for that seminar are described in Student Seminar Requirement in the PPS chapter, under Year 5: PPS-Specific Dissertation, Defense, and Graduation Requirements.

Write the dissertation or thesis. The final document must meet the formatting requirements of the UH Graduate School and, for PHOP students, the additional format specifications set by the PHOP program. See *Dissertation and Thesis Format Guidelines* (Section below).

Defend the dissertation or thesis. All programs require a public defense consisting of an open seminar session followed by a closed session with the committee. Announcement requirements, document circulation deadlines, and defense format specifications are set out in *Defense, Degree Completion, and Graduation Process* (Section below).

Submit the approved document and complete graduation requirements. After a successful defense, students revise the document per committee direction, obtain required signatures, pass an originality check, and upload the final document to the UH electronic submission system (Vireo: <https://uh-etd.tdl.org/>). Students must also apply for graduation and pay the graduation-processing fee through the UH Graduation Office. Submission and graduation deadlines are strictly enforced; missing them requires enrollment in a subsequent semester.

THE ROLE OF THE GRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISOR

The Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) coordinates the administrative steps that run in parallel with research: monitoring committee formation deadlines, collecting and routing required forms, running originality checks on the written document, obtaining the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs' approval, and confirming Vireo upload eligibility. Build communication with the GAA into your planning timeline well before your expected defense date.

TYPICAL GRADUATION TIMELINES

PhD students in PPS programs typically graduate in the spring of their 10th long semester or the following summer. PHOP PhD students are expected to complete all degree requirements within the program's standard timeline (see the Milestones section). PLA MS students complete the major project or thesis over approximately three semesters, with annual deadlines published by the program.

Graduation is offered each spring and fall semester and after the summer session, but commencement ceremonies are held only in May. Students who complete all requirements by the published spring deadline may walk in the May commencement ceremony and have their name included in the printed program. Students who complete requirements later in spring may still walk, but their name may not appear in the printed program. There is no commencement ceremony following summer or fall graduation.

More specifically, the exact timing of completion determines your commencement options. If you finish all degree requirements by early April, you will graduate, may walk in the ceremony, and your name will appear in the printed commencement program. If you finish after early April but at least three days before commencement, you will graduate and may walk, but your name will not appear in the printed program. If you finish only by the last day of grading, you will graduate but may not walk in the ceremony.

The subsections that follow provide the binding requirements for each stage of this process.

DISSERTATION AND THESIS COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND MEETINGS

Every doctoral and master's student must form a research committee. Your committee guides the academic and research work of your degree, monitors your progress, and approves your dissertation or thesis. Composition requirements differ by program and are given separately below; the meeting and progress-reporting rules that apply across programs follow at the end.

FORMING YOUR COMMITTEE

Begin identifying committee members as soon as you've selected your dissertation or major advisor. The committee must be formally documented on your program's Dissertation Committee Form (doctoral) or thesis/project committee agreement (master's), signed by you and your advisor, and submitted to the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA).

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

PHARMACOLOGICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES (PPS) — PHD

Your doctoral dissertation committee must have at least five members:

Faculty Advisor (Chair). Your major advisor serves as chair. If your major advisor does not hold a doctorate earned with a dissertation (for example, a PharmD), you must appoint a co-advisor who holds an earned PhD. Alternatively, you may petition the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) to evaluate your advisor's credentials; these approvals are granted case by case.

Departmental members. Up to three additional members from the PPS department.

External members. Up to two members from outside the PPS department and/or outside the University of Houston (UH).

The specific credential requirements for each seat are listed on the Dissertation Committee Form.

Timeline and enrollment hold. Form your committee within six months of selecting your research advisor. If it is not formed by the end of your third long semester, an enrollment hold is placed on your account.

Postponing external members. If your research hasn't progressed far enough to identify suitable external members, you may postpone naming them. Notify the GEC Chair by memo (which is added to your student file) stating a target date by which the external members will be named. Use the same process for any later delays.

PHARMACEUTICAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND POLICY (PHOP) — PHD

Your doctoral dissertation committee must have at least five members, filled as follows:

- Chair (faculty mentor). Holds a doctoral degree and is a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the Department of PHOP.
- Two additional PHOP members. Each holds a PhD and is a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the Department of PHOP.
- One outside-department member. Holds an appropriate doctoral degree and comes from outside the Department of PHOP.
- One additional member. From within or outside UH; holds an appropriate doctoral degree.

Complete the Dissertation Committee Form, have it signed by you and your advisor, and submit it to the GAA. The GAA and your Committee Chair monitor compliance with committee-meeting requirements.

PHARMACY LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION (PLA) — MS

The major project/thesis committee for the MS degree generally has four members:

- o Your major advisor;
- o Another UH faculty member;
- o Your major project advisor from your home institution; and
- o Another member from that same institution.

Your major advisor must be consulted on the selection of every committee member. Identifying your committee is one of the first major tasks you and your major advisor complete together.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

At a minimum, every program requires the committee to meet at least once per year. Beyond that college-wide floor:

- o PPS (PhD): at least once per academic year.
- o PHOP (PhD): at least once per long semester (Fall and Spring); occurrences are monitored by the GAA and the Committee Chair.
- o PLA (MS): at least twice per academic year, once the committee is established.

PROGRESS REPORTS DURING DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

This section applies to all PhD programs (PPS and PHOP). Your PhD is assessed in two periods:

- o Pre-candidacy: coursework (grades), research rotations, and qualifying or comprehensive examinations (written and oral).
- o Post-candidacy: committee meetings and their associated progress reports.

Once you are in candidacy, submit a progress report to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs after each regularly scheduled committee meeting — at least one report per year. Each program sets its own reporting frequency to match its meeting schedule, but never below this once-a-year floor. Each report must include a description of previous accomplishments; current progress; future research plans; predicted completion date. Your faculty advisor and/or committee must also add a narrative describing any significant issues that could affect your ability to complete the dissertation.

Submitting the form. The progress report form is at Canvas → Assignments → All Concentrations → Dissertation Committee Meetings Progress Report.

Confidentiality. Progress reports are available only to you, the Department Chairs, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Program Graduate Education Committees (GECs).

Approved by College of Pharmacy Faculty, August 5, 2016.

DEFENSE, DEGREE COMPLETION, AND GRADUATION PROCESS

This section describes the final-phase procedures that apply to all graduate students in the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (COP). Additional program-specific requirements are noted where the rules differ.

PLANNING YOUR FINAL YEAR

Begin planning your graduation at least one year in advance. The Graduate Office periodically queries students about their graduation plans; accurate responses allow the College to manage enrollment and financial aid effectively. Inaccurate projections may affect your financial support.

Most PhD students graduate in the spring of their tenth long semester or in the summer following it.

YOUR FINAL SEMESTER

In January:

- o Apply for Reduced Course Load (RCL), if applicable.
- o Register to graduate through MyUH.
- o Apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) if you are an international student planning post-degree employment (see "OPT and CPT Timing at Degree Completion" under Outside Employment, Internships, and CPT).
- o Schedule your defense date.

Complete all degree requirements — including Vireo upload and Graduate Office approval in Vireo — at least one week before the last grading day of the semester. There is no commencement ceremony after summer or fall semesters.

REDUCED COURSE LOAD (RCL)

PhD students in their last semester may enroll in Doctoral Dissertation for a reduced number of credit hours — 3 semester credit hours (SCH) instead of the normal load. Take this step only if you are certain you will finish that semester and only after discussion with your advisor and the Graduate Office. The considerations are complex; consult the Graduate Office before applying. Most PhD students do not need to enroll in the summer. However, if you wish to graduate in August, you must enroll in Doctoral Dissertation (8X99)

REGISTERING TO GRADUATE

Early in your final semester, register to graduate through your MyUH account. If you do not graduate in the semester in which you registered, you cannot enroll the following semester until you cancel the prior graduation registration. Contact the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) to cancel. You must then register to graduate again for the subsequent semester. Students must apply for graduation and pay a graduation-processing fee. This deadline is typically at the beginning of the semester in which you wish to graduate. It is your responsibility to verify the deadline with your advisor and apply accordingly.

THE DISSERTATION / THESIS DEFENSE

Your defense is the final milestone of your degree. This section is organized by program — find your track below and read that one. Every defense, regardless of program, has two back-to-back sessions: an open public session, followed by a closed session with your committee.

PPS PhD

Before you can schedule. There is no manuscript-submission prerequisite for the PPS final defense.

Circulate the document. Send the full dissertation to every committee member at least 2 weeks (14 days) before your defense date.

Schedule early. Committee calendars fill up, so plan ahead. Your defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks before the official end of the semester (when grades are due), leaving time for revisions and final committee approval.

Announce it. Coordinate with the GAA to post a public announcement at least one week (7 days) before the defense; start that coordination no later than two weeks out. The announcement must include your name, the dissertation title, your mentor's name, and the location, date, and time, and must identify itself as a dissertation defense. It is posted publicly, copied to the Department Chair, the Associate/Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Dean, and the GAA forwards it to all faculty and students in the program.

Public session. A 45–60 minute seminar, followed by 15 minutes of questions. Your mentor introduces you and runs the Q&A, allowing enough time for you to address every question.

Closed session. The committee then meets privately with you to complete the examination and completes the UH signature forms as described in Section 16 of the PhD Handbook.

PHOP PhD

Before you can schedule. Two manuscripts based on your dissertation must already be submitted to peer-reviewed journals. You cannot schedule the defense until this is done.

Circulate the document. Send the full dissertation to every committee member at least 2 weeks (14 days) before your defense date.

Schedule early. Plan around your committee's calendars. Your defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks before the official end of the semester (when grades are due), leaving time for revisions and final committee approval.

Announce it. Coordinate with the GAA to post a public announcement at least one week (7 days) before the defense; start that coordination no later than two weeks out. The announcement must include your name, the dissertation title, your mentor's name, and the location, date, and time, and must identify itself as a dissertation defense. It is posted publicly, copied to the Department Chair, the Associate/Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Dean, and the GAA forwards it to all faculty and students in the program.

Public session. A 45–60 minute seminar, followed by 15 minutes of questions. Your mentor introduces you and runs the Q&A, allowing enough time for you to address every question. All students in the PHOP PhD program are required to attend each departmental dissertation defense.

Closed session. The committee then meets privately with you to complete the examination

PLA MS

Before you can schedule. You must submit your project results as a written manuscript, formatted for publication in a journal you and your major advisor choose. This manuscript is required for the committee to approve your project, and committee members must have at least one week to review it and give feedback.

Circulate the document. Send the full thesis to every committee member at least 2 weeks (14 days) before your defense date.

Schedule early. Plan around your committee's calendars. Your defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks before the official end of the semester (when grades are due). In addition, PLA has fixed annual deadlines: the defense must occur no later than the last Friday of March, and the thesis must be uploaded by the Friday of the third week of April.

Announce it. Coordinate with the GAA to post a public announcement at least one week (7 days) before the defense; start that coordination no later than two weeks out. The announcement must include your name, the thesis title, your mentor's name, and the location, date, and time, and must identify itself as a thesis defense. It is posted publicly, copied to the Department Chair, the Associate/Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the Dean, and the GAA forwards it to all faculty and students in the program.

Public session. A 25–30-minute seminar, followed by 15 minutes of questions. Your mentor introduces you and runs the Q&A, allowing enough time for you to address every question.

Closed session. The committee then meets privately with you to complete the examination. If the defense is unsuccessful, you may be given a second opportunity. Failing the second attempt results in dismissal from the program.

ABBREVIATED GRADUATION TIMELINES

The steps below outline the actions required in each scenario. Complete all steps in sequence.

Sequential path for all programs:

1. Defend the dissertation or thesis.
2. Revise the document (this may take several days to weeks).
3. Submit the document and signature page to the GAA (allow at least one week).
4. After receiving GAA permission, upload to Vireo.
5. All steps must be complete one week before the last grading day.

PARTICIPATING IN THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY ("WALKING")

To walk in the commencement ceremony, you must have obtained complete committee signature approval following the successful completion of your defense **by the end of the final exam period**. The remaining steps — revising the dissertation and uploading to Vireo — may be completed after that point, but you must register for the following semester as described in the "Missed Deadline" section below.

IF YOU MISS THE COMPLETION DEADLINE

If the deadline is missed, a PhD student must enroll in the subsequent semester for **3 SCH**. There will be no Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) awarded, and employment is not guaranteed. However, if the student then completes every degree requirement before the last day to add classes in that subsequent semester (the 12th class day), the student may reduce enrollment to **1 SCH** by submitting a petition to the Assistant or Associate Dean for Graduate Programs of the College of Pharmacy.

PHOP: If the dissertation document is not submitted and approved on time, students must postpone graduation and register for the next semester.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

This part sets out the academic and professional standards that apply to graduate students at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP). It covers five related areas: grading and grade point average (GPA) requirements; probation and dismissal; academic and research integrity; professional conduct, training, and dress requirements; and grievance procedures.

Policies that apply college-wide are stated as unified rules. Where requirements differ by program or degree level — in particular, where PhD requirements differ from those of the Master

of Science (MS) in Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA) — the applicable subsection identifies the standard for each program.

Students are responsible for knowing and following these policies from the first day of enrollment.

GRADING, GPA, PROBATION, AND DISMISSAL

Applies to: all UHCOP graduate programs — PPS (PhD), PHOP (PhD), and MS-PLA; program-specific rules are identified below.

GRADING CONVENTIONS

All didactic courses use whole-letter grades only: A, B, C, D, or F. There are no plus or minus grades.

Some courses are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). S/U grades do not factor into your grade point average (GPA). U grades are counted separately from C grades for probation and dismissal purposes (see "U Grade" below).

If your grade report shows NR, the instructor did not submit a grade. Alert your instructor immediately so the record can be corrected.

MINIMUM CUMULATIVE GPA REQUIREMENT

This requirement applies to all UHCOP graduate programs; for the PhD programs, it was approved by College of Pharmacy (COP) Faculty on 23 October 2015.

To earn a graduate degree from the College of Pharmacy, you must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00/B (A = 4.00) in all graduate-level courses required for your degree. The cumulative GPA is the governing standard: a single grade of C does not by itself require retaking the course, provided the cumulative GPA remains at or above 3.00 (see the grade thresholds below for limits on repeated C, D, F, and U grades).

A cumulative GPA below 3.00 triggers automatic academic probation and may result in loss of financial support; the full probation rules, including petitions for extension of probation, are stated under Probation and Dismissal below.

Graduation Requirement. You must have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher at the time of graduation.

GRADE THRESHOLDS AND DISMISSAL RULES — PHD PROGRAMS

C Grade Limit. The College of Pharmacy allows a maximum of two C grades, totaling no more than 8 SCH, across the entire PhD program. The first C results in a Letter of Warning. A second C places the student on automatic academic probation. A third C grade, or C grades totaling 8 or more SCH, results in dismissal.

D in a Core Course. A grade of D in any core course worth 3 or more SCH results in dismissal. The GEC may grant an exception if other aspects of your record — such as a high GPA, publications, or research progress — justify continuation under academic probation. If permitted

to continue, you must repeat the course and earn a B or better. A second attempt below B results in immediate dismissal.

F in Any Course. A grade of F in any course worth 3 or more SCH results in immediate dismissal with no appeal.

U Grade. One U grade in any course — including research credit, lab rotations, seminars, special problems, and doctoral research — results in automatic academic probation. A second U grade in any such course results in dismissal from the program, regardless of the credit hours involved.

Pharm.D./Ph.D. Students. Students enrolled in the combined Pharm.D./PhD program follow the same academic standards described above. If dismissed from the PhD program for any of the reasons above, you may remain in the Pharm.D. program.

GRADE THRESHOLDS AND DISMISSAL RULES — MS–PLA

The following rules apply to students in the MS–PLA program offered through the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Translational Research (PPTR). MS–PLA students are subject to the college-wide cumulative GPA requirement and probation rules; petitions for extension of probation go to the MS Program Advisory Committee (see Probation and Dismissal below).

C Grades. Students are allowed only 2 C grades throughout the MS program. A student is automatically placed on academic probation upon receipt of a second C grade and dismissed from the program upon receipt of a third C grade or upon receiving C grades totaling 8 or more SCH.

Grade Below C. A student is automatically placed on academic probation upon receipt of a grade below C in any one course and has one semester to improve their grades. Students who show dramatic improvement in course grades may petition the MS Program Advisory Committee for an extension.

U Grades. One U grade in any course — including thesis research credit — results in automatic academic probation. A second U grade results in dismissal from the program, regardless of the credit hours involved.

Graduation Eligibility — MS–PLA. A student with a D, F, or I as the most recent grade in a graduate-level course on the degree plan is not eligible for graduation.

THE INCOMPLETE (I) GRADE

Eligibility. An Incomplete (I) grade is conditional and temporary. It may be assigned when a student, for non-academic reasons beyond their control, has not completed a relatively small portion of all course requirements. The instructor or course coordinator must judge that you are currently passing the course, or that you have a reasonable chance of passing it.

Request Window. You have 90 days from the posting of the course grade to request an I grade.

Completion Deadline. You must satisfy all outstanding course requirements within 12 months of the end of the term or session in which the I grade was received. If you do not complete the requirements within that period, the I grade converts automatically to:

- **F** — for courses graded with letter grades, or

- **U** — for courses graded on the S/U scale.

Once an I grade lapses to an F, it cannot be changed back to an I or to a grade of W.

Re-enrollment. You must not re-enroll in a course in which your grade is currently recorded as I.

Effect on Graduation. A student whose most recent grade in a graduate-level course is I is not eligible for graduation.

Incomplete Grade Agreement Form. To document the requirements you must complete and the applicable deadlines, you and your instructor, faculty advisor, and course coordinator must complete an Incomplete Grade Agreement form. The form requires signatures from all four parties: student, faculty advisor, instructor, and course coordinator. All conditions specified on the form must be satisfied before the I grade can be changed to a letter grade.

Access the form at: **Canvas > Home > Misc Forms.**

PROBATION AND DISMISSAL

The University of Houston permits colleges to set academic standards more rigorous than university minimums. The University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) has done so for all graduate programs. The cumulative GPA requirement is stated under Minimum Cumulative GPA Requirement above; this section describes the probation process and petition procedures.

PROBATION

A student whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 is automatically placed on academic probation for the following semester. Once on probation, the student has one long semester — either the next Fall or Spring semester — to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above. If the GPA remains below 3.00 at the end of the probation semester, the student may be dismissed from the program.

The maximum probationary period is two long semesters (Fall and Spring), which corresponds to a maximum of 12 months.

PETITIONS FOR EXTENSION OF PROBATION

A student may petition for one additional semester of probation if either of the following conditions applies:

- o The required graduate courses are not offered during the next Fall or Spring semester; or
- o Insufficient graduate courses or credit hours are available to enable the student to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.00.

The petition must include detailed reasons justifying the extension and current transcripts.

PhD programs: Direct the petition to the departmental Graduate Education Committee (GEC). The GEC will evaluate the petition and recommend whether to grant an extension or dismiss the

student. The petition and GEC recommendation are then forwarded to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs of the College of Pharmacy for a final decision.

MS–PLA program: Students whose GPA is below 3.00 but who have shown dramatic improvement in course grades may petition for an extension to the MS Program Advisory Committee. The petition and the Committee's recommendation are then forwarded to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs of the College of Pharmacy for a final decision.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

The University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) affirms its commitment to the integrity of its academic mission. Academic and research dishonesty are treated with the utmost seriousness. The College follows the University of Houston (UH) and Division of Research policies and procedures, with adjustments specific to College of Pharmacy circumstances. The governing instrument for graduate students and all research trainees is the **Research Trainee Code of Professional Integrity** (approved by COP faculty, May 20, 2022), available in Canvas under Home > Documents.

The Research Trainee Code of Professional Integrity applies to all research trainees, including graduate students, professional students (e.g., Pharm.D., M.D.), postdoctoral fellows, postbaccalaureate students, and undergraduate student trainees.

CATEGORIES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

"Academic dishonesty" means employing a method, technique, or conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at UH or by a course instructor. The following categories constitute academic dishonesty:

Plagiarism Representing as one's own work the work of another without acknowledging the source. This includes submitting substantially identical laboratory reports or other materials by two or more individuals (unless specifically permitted by the instructor), and copying verbatim text from printed or electronic literature in written assignments, candidacy examinations, and theses or dissertations.

Cheating and Unauthorized Group Work

- o Openly cheating in an examination, such as copying from another's paper.
- o Viewing during an examination or in-class assignment any electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to unauthorized materials, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor.
- o Using or possessing unauthorized notes or similar aids to answer questions during an examination.
- o Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, including trading examinations, whispering answers, passing notes, or using electronic devices to transmit or receive information.
- o Securing another person to take a test in the student's place. Both the substitute and the enrolled student are at fault.

Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation

- o Changing answers or grades on a returned test to claim instructor error.
- o Using another person's laboratory results as one's own, whether or not that person gives permission.
- o Misrepresenting prerequisites or corequisites to enroll or remain in a course for which one is ineligible.
- o Representing oneself as having earned a degree without having earned it.

Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials

- o Stealing tests, grade books, or posted student materials from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen materials to fulfill academic requirements.
- o Mutilating or stealing library materials, or misshelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students.

Complicity in Academic Dishonesty Failing to report to the instructor or Departmental Hearing Officer an incident that a student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy.

Academic Misconduct Any other conduct that a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions for confirmed violations are commensurate with the nature of the offense and the student's record of prior infractions. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to: a lowered grade, failure on the examination or assignment in question, failure in the course, probation, suspension, expulsion from UH, or a combination of these. Sanctions involving disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion cannot be settled through a waiver of the departmental hearing. Any sanction involving suspension or expulsion must be reviewed in a college hearing unless that hearing is waived.

DEPARTMENTAL HEARING

When an instructor (including a faculty member, advisor, or mentor) has reasonable grounds to believe a student has committed academic dishonesty, the instructor must notify the Departmental Hearing Officer of the relevant department in writing within 5 class days of discovery. Students who believe they have witnessed academic dishonesty must report the incident to the instructor as soon as possible; the instructor must then file a written report with the Departmental Hearing Officer within 5 class days.

Students may report alleged violations directly to the instructor. The Departmental Hearing Officer is a tenured or tenure-track faculty member within the department. The Departmental Hearing Officer reports findings to the Department Chairperson and the Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs.

A student is eligible for a waiver of the departmental hearing only if the student has no prior waiver of a departmental hearing and no previous finding of a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy.

WAIVER OF DEPARTMENTAL HEARING

If the instructor chooses to suggest a sanction, the Departmental Hearing Officer will notify the accused student in writing within 5 class days of receiving the instructor's report. The notification must describe the alleged violation, the recommended sanction, and ask the student to choose between: (1) admitting the violation, waiving the formal hearing, and accepting the sanction; or (2) proceeding to a formal departmental hearing.

A waiver must be agreed to by the instructor, the student, and the Departmental Hearing Officer. If all three cannot agree, the case must proceed to a formal departmental hearing. Sanctions that may be resolved by waiver typically include reduced or zero credit on a test or assignment, or a grade of "F" in the course. Sanctions involving disciplinary probation or requiring a college-level hearing cannot be settled by waiver.

The waiver is completed by signing a departmental hearing waiver form. A copy is forwarded to the College's Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs and the University's Provost's Office. A waiver agreement does not result in a transcript notation. Following graduation, the student may request removal of their name from the recorded cases list.

If the Departmental Hearing Officer has not received a response from the student within 10 class days of the notification, the Departmental Hearing Officer must schedule a departmental hearing within the next 5 class days.

FORMAL DEPARTMENTAL HEARING PROCEDURES

Where no waiver applies, the Departmental Hearing Officer must schedule a departmental hearing within 10 class days of receiving the instructor's report. The instructor, the accused student, and the accusing party (if other than the instructor) must be notified at least 10 class days before the hearing. Notification includes the nature of the alleged violation and the time, place, and date of the hearing. Should any party fail to appear without good cause, the Departmental Hearing Officer may render a decision in their absence.

Both the instructor and the student may present their cases, including documents, physical evidence, and witness statements. A party intending to call witnesses must notify the Departmental Hearing Officer at least 3 class days before the hearing. If either party will be advised by legal counsel, the College Hearing Officer must be notified at least 3 class days before the hearing; legal counsel may attend but may not directly participate or enter into discussion with the parties. The hearing cannot be held with legal counsel present unless a representative from the UH Office of General Counsel is also present.

If physical evidence or witness testimony requires more time for review, either party may request a postponement; the Departmental Hearing Officer decides at their discretion.

The Departmental Hearing Officer must render a decision within 3 class days after the hearing and forward copies to the student, instructor, and College Hearing Officer of the responsible college. The College Hearing Officer is appointed by the Dean of the College.

Either party may appeal by filing a written request with the College Hearing Officer within 10 class days of receiving the Departmental Hearing Officer's decision. If no written appeal is received within 10 class days, the Departmental Hearing Officer's decision takes effect.

COLLEGE HEARING PROCEDURES

If a written appeal is received by the College Hearing Officer within 10 class days of the departmental decision, the College Hearing Officer must schedule a college hearing within 10 class days of receiving the request. The college hearing is a *de novo* hearing: the College Hearing Board considers all evidence on all issues as though no previous action has been taken.

COLLEGE HEARING BOARD COMPOSITION

The College Hearing Board consists of the College Hearing Officer and the College's Graduate Education Committee (GEC). The GEC is composed of:

- o the Graduate Education Committee Chair,
- o one faculty member representing each of the College's departments, and
- o one graduate student representing each of the College's departments.

All members of the College Hearing Board, including the graduate student representatives, have full voting rights.

At least 10 class days before the college hearing, the College Hearing Officer must notify the College Hearing Board, the instructor, the accused student, and the accusing party of the nature of the alleged violation and the hearing's time, place, and date. At least 3 class days before the hearing, each party must notify the College Hearing Officer in writing of any witnesses and the subject of their testimony, and submit copies of any documents they intend to present.

Should any party fail to appear without good cause, the College Hearing Officer, upon recommendation of the College Hearing Board, may render a decision in their absence.

Cases are presented by the accusing individual and the accused student. Neither party may directly question or solicit answers from the other party or its witnesses. The College Hearing Officer may request that the College Hearing Board pose questions to clarify disputed facts.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the College Hearing Board meets in closed session to deliberate. A student is found in violation of the Academic Honesty Policy by a vote of four or more members of the College Hearing Board. The sanction must be agreed to by three or more members of the College Hearing Board. The College Hearing Board then reconvenes with all parties to announce its judgment. The College Hearing Officer notifies all parties, the Dean, and the Provost in writing within 5 class days of the College Hearing Board's judgment.

PROVOST APPEAL

Within 5 class days of the College Hearing Board's decision, either party may file a written appeal with the Provost or the Provost's designated officer. The appeal must specify the issues to be reviewed. If no written appeal is received within 5 class days, the College Hearing Board's decision takes effect.

For graduate students, the Provost refers the appeal to the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School. The Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School completes the review within 10 working days. If the Graduate and Professional Studies Grievance Committee (GPSGC) is convened to hear the appeal, the GPSGC must schedule the appeal hearing within 30 calendar days of being formed.

RECORDS

Records of departmental proceedings are maintained by the department. Records of college proceedings are maintained by the College. A sanction of probation, suspension, or expulsion is noted on the student's transcript unless otherwise specified. A notation of expulsion is permanent. A doctoral student who receives a suspension must file a leave of absence for the duration of the suspension. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty may not receive a grade of "W" for courses in which the violation was found.

An agreement to settle an academic honesty infraction through a waiver of the formal departmental hearing does not result in a transcript notation.

The academic honesty policy is reviewed every two years by a joint subcommittee. Amendments must be approved by both the Undergraduate Committee and the Graduate and Professional Studies Committee.

Retaliation against any person who reports academic dishonesty is prohibited.

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

The research conducted within the College of Pharmacy follows the policies and procedures of the UH Division of Research. Resources on the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and the full Research Misconduct Policy are available through the UH Division of Research.

As defined by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), research misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research results, including:

- o **Fabrication:** making up data or results and recording or reporting them;
- o **Falsification:** manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record;
- o **Plagiarism:** the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Research misconduct does not include honest errors or differences of opinion.

LABORATORY SAFETY AND RECORD KEEPING

All laboratory information must be recorded in English. This requirement applies to laboratory notebooks, documents, and reagents. If reagents arrive in the laboratory labeled in a language other than English, they must be translated into English before entering the laboratory.

Discussing professional or laboratory matters in a language other than English — whether in the laboratory or in common areas — is considered misconduct under this policy.

Record keeping for funded research must be legible, clear, timely, thorough, complete, secure, and well-organized, and must be in English.

RESEARCH DATA OWNERSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Research data generated within the College of Pharmacy are the property of the College. All research data must remain in the College, Department, or laboratory upon graduation from the program or upon separation from the University or College. All research data must be recorded in English.

Research trainees are required to protect the intellectual property of the research advisor/mentor and the laboratory's research program. This includes understanding that there may be delays in the publication of data in journal articles, abstract submissions, or research presentations.

Royalty allocations from intellectual property are solely at the discretion of the advisor/mentor (i.e., Principal Investigator (PI)).

Inventorship on an intellectual property application is based upon two requirements:

1. Contribution of ideas resulting in a claim; and
2. Reduction to practice (i.e., the physical component of the inventive act, demonstrating that the invention works).

If a student believes they have been unfairly excluded from an invention disclosure, they must first raise the issue with their advisor/mentor. If the trainee and advisor/mentor cannot reach an agreement, the trainee should contact the UH Office of Technology Transfer (OTTI) to discuss their concerns and then submit a formal petition to the College of Pharmacy's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).

COLLABORATIONS

Research trainees must obtain prior approval from their advisor/mentor before beginning any collaboration with individuals or groups outside the research group. If the advisor/mentor does not approve a requested collaboration, and the student believes the collaboration should proceed, the student may submit a formal petition to the GSC.

Unauthorized collaborations — those begun without prior advisor/mentor approval — are prohibited.

CLAIMS OF AUTHORSHIP

The Research Trainee Code of Professional Integrity defines unreasonable claims of authorship as demanding authorship without significant intellectual or technical input. At a minimum, authorship decisions are made in consultation with and at the discretion of the faculty advisor/mentor. If the advisor/mentor does not approve a trainee's authorship claim, the university-wide Grievance Policy and Procedure for Graduate and Professional Students will apply.

RESEARCH TRAINEE PLEDGE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All research trainees must read and sign the Research Trainee Code of Professional Integrity pledge:

1. Before beginning their position as a research trainee; and
2. At the time of petitioning for advancement to their degree (Ph.D. or M.S.).

The pledge states:

I acknowledge and certify that I have read and understood the objectives and principles of the University of Houston College of Pharmacy Research Trainee Code of Professional Integrity, and further, I agree to uphold and abide by the provisions contained therein, effective immediately and until my enrollment in the University of Houston College of Pharmacy is terminated.

The Office of the Dean will deny admission into the graduate program and/or the capacity to function as a research trainee to any applicant or research trainee who refuses to sign this pledge.

By signing the pledge, the research trainee acknowledges agreement to comply with the following policies and procedures, in the order listed:

1. UH Student Code of Conduct
2. UH Ethical Conduct of Employees
3. UH Academic Honesty Policy
4. UH Division of Research Responsible Conduct of Research
5. UH Division of Research Full Research Misconduct Policy
6. UH System Board of Regents Policy — Intellectual Property
7. UH Grievance Policy and Procedure for Graduate and Professional Students
8. UH College of Pharmacy Pharm.D. Student Handbook
9. UH College of Pharmacy Professional Dress Code
10. UH Environmental Health and Safety Chemical Hygiene Plan
11. UH College of Pharmacy Ph.D. Student Policies and Procedures

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, TRAINING, AND DRESS CODE

This section applies to all graduate students enrolled in the Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) PhD programs, and to all graduate assistants (Gas) funded through the College of Pharmacy.

MANDATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY HR ONLINE TRAINING

As University of Houston employees, all graduate assistants must complete mandatory online training courses provided by Human Resources (HR). These courses are required by federal law, Texas law, or the UH Board of Regents. All new or returning university employees — including student workers — must complete the assigned courses within the first 30 days of employment. Annual refresher courses are also required. HR will notify you when training is assigned.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

The Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Policy was approved by College of Pharmacy (COP) faculty on 17 April 2015. All graduate students are required to complete RCR training, regardless of funding source.

PhD students must complete both components:

- o **CITI online training** — All PhD students must complete the required modules through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), a nationally recognized research training platform. Training must be completed within the first semester of enrollment. A score of 80% or higher is required to pass. Valid CITI training must be maintained throughout your graduate studies. Courses appropriate to biomedical sciences (PCOL, PCEU, and MedChem concentrations) and to social sciences (PHOP) are available through Canvas (Assignments > All Concentration > CITI Research Ethics Training). The University of Houston (UH) Division of Research will verify CITI completion; documentation must also be provided to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.
- o **Didactic RCR course** — PhD students must also complete a didactic course in RCR. The UH course that meets this requirement is BIOL 6120 (Responsible Conduct of Biological Research), offered by the Department of Biology. Topics include scientific misconduct, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, federal regulations, mentor/mentee responsibilities, data management, authorship, peer review, collaborative research, and the societal impact of research. This course must be completed within the first two years of enrollment. A letter grade of B or better is required. The course syllabus, credit hours, and grade must be documented and provided to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. BIOL 6120 currently meets the National Institutes of Health (NIH) requirement for RCR training. If an equivalent course is taken at another institution, documentation of covered topics and demonstrated competency must be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

MS students must complete the CITI online training only, following the same timeline and passing standard as described above.

The CITI online training meets the minimum requirements for students funded on National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grants. CITI training alone does not satisfy the NIH requirement; PhD students on NIH-funded projects must complete BIOL 6120 or its approved equivalent.

LABORATORY SAFETY AND ANIMAL RESEARCH TRAINING

Any trainee who performs work in a wet or research laboratory, or who works with experimental animals, must complete the applicable safety training before beginning that work:

- o **Laboratory safety training** — Required for all students handling human-derived materials, hazardous substances, or radioactive substances. Training requirements and procedures evolve over time. Contact PPS staff for current requirements. Individual faculty advisors may require additional training specific to their laboratory's techniques or hazards.
- o **Animal research training** — Required for all students who work with experimental animals (typically rodents). Contact PPS staff for current requirements. Each faculty advisor maintains a protocol specific to their project; students rotating into a new lab may be required to complete additional specialized training.

This requirement applies to PPS concentrations (PCOL, PCEU, and MedChem), and to PHOP students whose research activities place them in a wet or research laboratory or in an animal facility.

PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

All new Teaching Assistants (TAs) receive comprehensive pedagogical training during orientation. This training prepares Tas to assist in any professional course. Students who begin as Research Assistants (RAs) and later transition to TA roles will receive training at the appropriate time. Some professional courses require Tas to teach or demonstrate specific skills to Pharm.D. students; directors of those courses or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will provide that instruction.

Tas must submit time logs biweekly and may work no more than 20 hours per week.

POLICY TRAINING — PHD HANDBOOK QUIZ

All PhD students must study the PhD Handbook and pass a policy quiz in Canvas each fall in order to register for the spring semester. Graduate assistants must also review their responsibilities forms as part of this training. The quiz is accessible through Canvas under Quizzes.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND DRESS CODE

These standards apply to all research trainees — including graduate students, Tas, Ras, and scholarship students (whether funded by domestic or international agencies) — while pursuing their academic mission on the UH campus or while representing the College of Pharmacy at formal meetings and events.

GENERAL DRESS STANDARDS

Professional dress is always required while on campus or while representing the College. The following attire is not acceptable: Hats or caps (except those required for religious purposes); Baggy or sagging pants or bottoms; Shorts; Mini-skirts; Midriff-baring or low-cut tops; Backless

clothing; Tank tops; Spaghetti strap tops; Cut-off shirts; Pajamas; Slippers; Flip-flop sandals. These standards are intended to be self-regulated.

LABORATORY DRESS STANDARDS

When performing research activities in a research laboratory, the dress code follows the University of Houston Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) current Chemical Hygiene Plan.

Specifically: Closed-toe shoes are required (no sandals, open-toed shoes, or shorts); Legs and feet must be fully covered by long pants or skirts; Long hair must be confined before beginning work; Loose clothing and jewelry must be secured before beginning work.

This standard applies to any trainee — regardless of program — who is performing laboratory research activities.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS FOR FORMAL OCCASIONS

Professional dress is required during: Seminar presentations; Poster or oral presentations; Proposal defense presentations; Dissertation defense presentations; Local, regional, national, or international meetings, conferences, or symposia; TA assignments and duties (e.g., proctoring Pharm.D. quizzes, skills labs, and similar activities)

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION AT CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

When attending scientific conferences or meetings as a representative of the College of Pharmacy, all trainees are expected to fulfill their professional responsibilities. Unprofessional behavior includes: Not attending an assigned poster presentation; Leaving a poster unattended for extended periods; Using meeting time for excessive sightseeing rather than attending scientific sessions, workshops, or presentations Failure to represent the College professionally at off-campus scientific events can result in denial of funding for future conference attendance and in the faculty advisor or mentor withholding a letter of recommendation. Allegations of unprofessional conference behavior may be reported to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

ABSENCES AND SHORT-TERM LEAVE

An unexcused absence is defined as failing to attend classes or laboratory research sessions, or taking unauthorized or uninformed travel or vacation (including domestic vacations, international travel, and personal vacation time), without prior approval. This policy applies to all graduate students, including TAs, RAs, and scholarship students, regardless of whether funding is from a domestic or international source. Graduate students must obtain approval from their faculty advisor or mentor and the College of Pharmacy before making travel or vacation plans. Failure to follow this policy may be reported to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs as evidence of unsatisfactory academic progress. Additional guidance on short-term leave is provided in the PhD Student Policies and Procedures.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to all graduate students in the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP). They govern grievances arising from academic matters between students and faculty. These procedures are not to be used for contesting grades. A separate grade protest procedure is in development; consult the Graduate Office for current guidance when it becomes available.

Before any formal action is taken, an attempt to resolve the grievance within the College must be made. You may not advance to a higher level of this process without first completing each preceding level.

STEP 1 — INFORMAL RESOLUTION WITH THE FACULTY MEMBER

The student must first attempt to resolve the grievance directly with the faculty member. If an acceptable solution cannot be reached, the student may proceed to a formal written grievance.

STEP 2 — FORMAL WRITTEN GRIEVANCE AT THE DEPARTMENT LEVEL

Filing deadline. The formal grievance must be filed no later than 30 calendar days from the point in time when the grievant had knowledge, or should have had knowledge, of the problem being grieved.

For PLA (MS) students only: In addition to the 30-calendar-day deadline, the formal grievance must be filed within 10 working days after the decision is made that the grievance cannot be settled informally.

Required contents. The written grievance must state all four of the following:

- o When the student discovered the issue
- o A description of the grievance
- o Evidence supporting the grievance
- o The desired resolution

PPS and PHOP PhD students: Submit the written grievance and all supporting documentation to the Chair of the Department's Graduate Education Committee (GEC). If the GEC includes a student representative, that student must be excused from the proceedings. If the GEC Chair is the subject of the grievance, a designated GEC member will serve in that role.

PLA (MS) students: Submit the written grievance and all supporting documentation to the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Department, who chairs the Departmental MS Program Advisory Committee. If the Advisory Committee includes a student representative, that student must be excused from the proceedings.

STEP 3 — DEPARTMENT-LEVEL MEDIATION AND HEARING

Mediation. Upon receiving the formal grievance, the GEC Chair (or designee) will acknowledge receipt and share all documents with committee members. The GEC — or the MS Program Advisory Committee for PLA students — will then attempt to mediate the grievance and arrive at a decision acceptable to both parties. The Department Chair will be advised of the situation before any resolution is finalized.

Mediation deadline. The committee must reach a mediated decision within 10 working days from the day the grievance was filed.

Formal hearing. If mediation does not produce an acceptable resolution, the department's GEC (or MS Program Advisory Committee for PLA students) will hold a formal hearing with all parties involved and will recommend a resolution to the Department Chair. This recommendation must be delivered within **30 calendar days** after the failed mediation.

Department Chair decision. The Department Chair may accept the committee's recommendation, return the grievance to the committee for further consideration, or resolve the grievance in another manner. The Department Chair must make a decision within 10 working days of receiving the written recommendation, notifying all parties of the decision in writing. If the Department Chair is the subject of the grievance, the Vice Chair will serve in that role; if there is no Vice Chair, the GEC Chair will serve.

Record retention. A written record of the entire process — including the original grievance, all responses and evidence, and the final report of the outcome — will be kept on file in the department until graduation of the student.

STEP 4 — APPEAL TO THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

If either party is dissatisfied with the Department Chair's decision, that party may file a formal written appeal with the College of Pharmacy Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).

Composition. The College GSC is composed of four college faculty members and three graduate students, all of whom have voting rights. The student representing the program from which the grievance originates will be excused.

The College GSC will take action on the appeal within 10 working days and forward its recommendation to the Dean of the College of Pharmacy. The Dean may accept the GSC's recommendation, return the appeal to the committee for further consideration, or resolve the appeal in another manner. The Dean must make a decision within 10 working days of receiving the College GSC's recommendation, notifying all parties of the decision in writing.

STEP 5 — UNIVERSITY-LEVEL REVIEW

If either party is dissatisfied with the outcome of the College process, that party may petition for a University-level review as described in the Graduate Catalog. A grievant may not proceed to University-level review without first completing the College-level process described above.

FUNDING, EMPLOYMENT, AND STUDENT LIFE

This part covers the financial support and employment policies that govern doctoral study at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) — graduate assistantships, the Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF), health insurance, outside employment and internships, professional travel, and leave. It applies to students enrolled in the doctoral programs in the PPS and PHOP **concentrations**. If you're in the Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA) master's program, this part does not apply to you. PLA students are not eligible for the GTF and are covered by separate financial arrangements, except where a policy specifically says otherwise. The subsections that follow spell out your rights and responsibilities in each area. It's worth reading them before you accept an assistantship offer — and again whenever your situation changes, such as before you take on outside work, plan an internship, or request leave.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND THE GRADUATE TUITION FELLOWSHIP

Most doctoral students at UHCOP support their studies through part-time work as graduate assistants, 20 hours per week. This section covers the types of appointment, stipend amounts, the Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) and related aid, and the academic requirements you'll need to meet to keep your support.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT (RA)

Research Assistants are primarily responsible to their faculty advisors. RAs are expected to devote themselves to coursework and research in pursuit of their doctoral degrees. A faculty advisor may also assign project-specific tasks tied to a grant or contract, but total work hours may not exceed 20 hours per week. Funding typically comes from an external grant or other funds controlled by the faculty advisor. Students holding individual external fellowships are expected to focus primarily on that fellowship's project. Limited contributions to other lab work are acceptable after discussion with the advisor. A form detailing RA responsibilities must be signed and uploaded to the Graduate Students Canvas site before the fall of each academic year (Canvas > Assignments > All Concentrations > RA Responsibilities Form).

TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA)

Teaching Assistants are responsible to the directors of the courses to which they are assigned, and to the College. TAs assist with instruction and support activities in the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) program and, to a limited extent, in some PHOP graduate courses. TAs may not work more than 20 hours per week. TAs must record all hours worked; time logs are submitted to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs on a biweekly basis. TAs are also expected to devote significant time to their own coursework and research.

TOEFL Requirement for International TAs: International TAs who have extensive oral communication with Pharm.D. students must score 25 or greater on the Internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (iBT TOEFL) Speaking sub-test. This requirement applies even if

the student's overall iBT total score meets the general admission threshold of 79. International TAs who do not meet this standard will instead serve as Instructional Assistants (IAs).

INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT (IA)

Instructional Assistants receive the same financial support as TAs. The IA designation is used when an international TA does not meet the TOEFL Speaking threshold described above.

A form detailing TA responsibilities must be signed and uploaded to the Graduate Students Canvas site before the fall of each academic year (Canvas > Assignments > All Concentrations > TA Responsibilities Form).

STIPENDS

Whether you're an RA, TA, or IA, you'll receive an annual stipend paid in 12 monthly installments at 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE). Current base rates for 2026-2027 are:

- o PHOP: \$29,630 per year
- o PCOL, PCEU, and MedChem concentrations (PPS): \$30,725 per year

The College honors the financial commitment in your admission offer letter, and our program makes every effort to maintain your support throughout the length of your studies. Your specific role (RA, TA, or IA) may shift over time as faculty funding or PharmD teaching needs change, and your continued support depends on the availability of funding and your good academic standing. While support cannot be guaranteed in every circumstance, we are committed to working with you to keep your funding in place — and a student admitted with assistantship support would not have that support withdrawn without serious cause, such as a chronically low GPA, serious misconduct, or a demonstrated inability to carry out research.

GRADUATE TUITION FELLOWSHIP (GTF)

The GTF is one of the most important pieces of your financial support: it pays your tuition and fees while you pursue your PhD in the PHOP or PPS program. This section explains who qualifies, how to keep the fellowship, how long it lasts, what it covers, and the rules on outside employment.

WHAT THE GTF COVERS

The GTF pays the current UHCOP PhD tuition rate per SCH for the fall and spring semesters. That rate applies even when you take an approved course at another institution.

Summer. The GTF is normally not paid in the summer, with three exceptions:

- o A course you need is offered only in the summer.
- o You plan to graduate in August and must be enrolled to do so (unless you took a Reduced Course Load the preceding spring).
- o Other situations, reviewed case by case.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

The GTF is for PhD students only — master's students do not qualify. To remain eligible, you must:

- o Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.
- o Be enrolled full-time. For a long semester, full-time means 9 semester credit hours (SCH). The GTF covers up to 9 SCH; if you register for more, you pay tuition on the extra hours yourself.
- o Make satisfactory academic progress. In practical terms, this means completing your key milestones on time: passing your qualifying exam, selecting a faculty mentor (your advisor appointment), and forming your dissertation committee. Falling well behind on these milestones can cost you the GTF.

GPA REQUIREMENTS AND PROBATION

A 3.00 cumulative GPA protects both your assistantship and your GTF. If your cumulative GPA drops below 3.00:

- o You are placed on academic probation.
- o Your GTF is revoked immediately, although you may keep your stipend during the probation semester.
- o Your GTF is restored automatically as soon as your GPA returns to 3.00 or higher.

If you have extenuating circumstances. If you fall just short of 3.00, you can petition the University for a probationary period. You will need to present a realistic plan for raising your GPA. If the courses you need to recover aren't offered during your probation semester, you can petition the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) to extend the probationary period.

If your GPA stays below 3.00. After one probation semester with a GPA still below 3.00, you may lose your assistantship entirely, along with your eligibility for in-state tuition, and dismissal from the program becomes possible.

Act early. If you are heading toward probation, talk to the Graduate Office as soon as possible — the options above work best when you act before the semester gets away from you.

HOW LONG THE GTF LASTS

Standard eligibility: 10 long semesters. You may hold the GTF for up to 10 long semesters.

One limited extension. After your 10th long semester, the GTF can extend into the immediately following summer or fall — but for no more than 3 SCH in that term. After that, the GTF normally ends. If you do not graduate within 10 long semesters plus the following summer, you generally become ineligible for the GTF.

Employment rules around the 10-semester mark:

Teaching Assistants. The College will not employ you as a TA beyond your 10th long semester plus the following summer, except in special circumstances.

Research Assistants. You may continue as an RA beyond 10 long semesters only if your faculty advisor supports it. RAs who keep working after GTF eligibility ends remain eligible for the in-state tuition waiver as long as they remain employed as RAs.

University ceiling. UH does not permit any form of graduate assistant employment beyond 12 long semesters, regardless of appointment type.

The CPT 11th-semester path. If you complete Curricular Practical Training (CPT) in the summer after your 10th long semester, you may be supported for one additional (11th) long semester, provided that (a) that fall is your final semester of enrollment and (b) you take a Reduced Course Load (RCL). This support counts against the 3-SCH extension cap above; it does not add GTF beyond that limit.

A note for Graduate Research Assistants. If you are a GRA, your GTF is guaranteed throughout the eligible period (up to 10 long semesters plus the permitted following term), as long as you keep a 3.00 cumulative GPA and stay in good academic standing. Once the eligible period ends, RAs who continue working shift from the GTF to the in-state tuition waiver.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

While you hold the GTF, you may not take on additional off-campus employment, except when classes are not in session or during a term when you are not enrolled. If you have a specific situation in mind, you can appeal to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

IN-STATE TUITION WAIVER

The in-state tuition waiver lets non-resident students pay tuition at the **Texas resident rate**. If you're a graduate assistant, your tuition is already covered by the GTF — so this waiver mainly matters once your GTF eligibility ends or doesn't apply.

You're eligible for the waiver if you are:

- o A **graduate assistant**, for as long as you hold a GA appointment — this includes RAs who continue past the GTF eligibility window;
- o A **self-paying student** holding a UH-approved competitive annual scholarship of **\$1,000 or more**; or
- o The **spouse of a graduate student** — spouses can use the waiver to take courses, usually as non-degree objective (NDO) students. Contact the Graduate Office for the form.

If you're a graduate assistant, you don't need to do anything — the waiver is applied for you. Everyone else who's eligible (spouses, scholarship students) needs to complete a separate form from the Graduate Office.

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY SCHOLARSHIPS

Each spring, the College invites graduate students to apply for scholarships, and we encourage you to take advantage of it. These are one-time awards ranging from \$250 to \$2,000, funded by a range of private donors and foundations. You don't need to match yourself to a specific source —

the College Graduate Studies Committee reviews applicants and pairs deserving students with the right funding. Watch for the call for applications each spring, and apply when it goes out.

UNIVERSITY RECRUITING FELLOWSHIPS

Some students receive a University fellowship as an incentive to enroll — the Presidential Fellowship is one example. If you have one of these awards, keep in mind two things. First, like the GTF, it requires you to maintain a 3.0 GPA. Second — and this is the important difference — if you lose the award because your GPA drops below 3.0, it is not restored automatically when your grades recover. You can petition the University to have it reinstated, and it may be restored under some circumstances, but it isn't guaranteed. (This is unlike the GTF, which comes back on its own once your GPA returns to 3.00 or higher.)

EXTERNAL PREDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

We strongly encourage you to apply for predoctoral fellowships from outside funding agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the American Heart Association. It's more attainable than many students assume — success rates at a number of agencies run roughly 25–50%. Winning one is genuinely worth the effort: it strengthens your CV and career prospects, makes you less dependent on your advisor's grant funding, and can reduce or even eliminate your teaching duties. You won't be doing this alone. The College offers scientific writing training and administrative support to help you put together a competitive application.

A couple of practical notes:

- International students: fewer of these fellowships are open to you, though the American Heart Association is a notable exception. It's worth keeping an eye on the landscape, since eligibility rules shift over time.
- Bringing your own funding: if you arrive with an external scholarship, we'll work out the details with you individually, depending on whether it covers tuition, stipend, or both. And if you lose outside scholarship support partway through your studies, know that while the College can't guarantee it will step in, we will make a genuine effort to help you continue.

HEALTH INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

All doctoral students in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) programs are subject to the health insurance requirements described in this section.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students are required by law to maintain health insurance throughout their enrollment. Student Health Insurance is automatically deducted as a university fee. The fee covers the entire academic year, though it is typically split between two charges — one at the start of the fall semester and one at the start of the spring semester. Students who need coverage for dependents or who require more extensive coverage should contact the University of Houston

(UH) Human Resources office for additional options. The student health insurance requirement may be waived if equivalent coverage is provided in its place — for example, Employee Health Insurance (see below).

DOMESTIC STUDENTS (US CITIZENS AND EQUIVALENT)

UH does not require domestic students to carry health insurance. However, the College of Pharmacy (COP) requires that all domestic students have some form of coverage and will ask for evidence of it. Options include:

- o Coverage as a spouse or domestic-partner dependent under another plan
- o Coverage as a dependent on a parent's plan (available until approximately age 25)
- o Employee Health Insurance purchased through UH Human Resources (see below)

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

As a UH employee, graduate students may purchase employee health insurance. Employee coverage is more extensive than student health insurance and includes options to add family members, but the premiums are higher. Visit the UH Human Resources insurance page for current plan options and costs.

WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Graduate students employed at 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) receive no additional fringe benefits beyond their stipend and tuition benefits. However, UH does provide Worker's Compensation coverage to all part-time UH employees who are injured on the job, whether the injury occurs in a classroom or laboratory setting. Visit the UH Human Resources Worker's Compensation page for claims information and procedures.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT, INTERNSHIPS, AND CPT

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The federal government prohibits international students on F-1 visas from holding employment off campus beyond their Graduate Assistant (GA) appointment. An F-1 student's immigration documents authorize work as a Graduate Assistant for no more than 20 hours per week at their designated campus site. If a separate on-campus appointment would bring total hours slightly above 20, an "overload" arrangement may be possible; contact the graduate staff for the required forms and approvals before accepting such an appointment.

All graduate students holding a Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) — domestic or international — are subject to University of Houston (UH) policy:

Graduate students holding the GTF must not be employed, on or off-campus, for more than twenty (20) hours per week (50% of Full-Time Equivalent [FTE]). Any violation of this provision without prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate School will result in withdrawal of the funding during the semester in which the violation occurs.

Exception: Approval is not required to work additional hours when class is not officially in session — specifically during periods between semesters and during spring break. This exception does not apply to weekends or evenings while classes are in session. Students may not take a full semester away from their studies to work a full-time outside job. The University's continuous enrollment requirement (see the Continuous Enrollment section of this Handbook) governs this restriction. Students pursuing a consecutive PharmD-PhD degree may be subject to different conditions; consult the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

REMOTE EMPLOYMENT IN THE FINAL SEMESTER

If you intend to be away from campus during your final semester, you cannot be supported as a Teaching Assistant (TA). You may be supported as a Research Assistant (RA) if your faculty advisor has the resources and you are performing research related to your project; however, special permission must be obtained at least one month before the semester begins. Contact the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. A General Petition and written justification will be required.

INTERNSHIPS

Working in the pharmaceutical industry, a biotech firm, a consultancy, or a similar setting is a valuable professional experience. Faculty advisors consistently identify internships as among the most formative experiences available to doctoral students.

Finding a position. In many specialty areas, positions are actively sought after. Students often learn of openings through web postings or faculty connections. Begin searching in the fall semester for a position the following summer.

After you have an offer. Before any internship can proceed, the prospective employer must provide a letter stating the job title, salary, a description of job duties, expected hours per week, job location, and start and end dates.

Academic good standing requirement. Students must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher and must have made adequate progress on their dissertation project, as attested by their faculty advisor.

SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

PPS AND PHOP (PHD) — SHARED BASELINE:

During the summer (May through August), internships may be part-time or full-time.

If a position is paid, the GA appointment must be suspended for the duration of the internship. Notify the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) and the College Business Office (CBO) in advance of the start date.

Additional conditions apply:

- Teaching Assistants (TAs) must not leave before the end of the spring final exam period and must return before the start of fall TA duties.

- Students enrolled in any spring course other than research hours must complete the course before departing.
- For international students, the internship process involves immigration requirements and is handled as Curricular Practical Training (CPT); see the CPT section below.

FALL AND SPRING INTERNSHIPS

Fall and spring internships are more complex to arrange than summer internships because students remain enrolled and subject to their GA obligations.

PPS and all programs without a program-specific gate: Work must be closely related to the student's dissertation topic. Because the process involves multiple offices — the home department, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office for international students — begin arrangements at least 4 weeks before the intended start date.

PHOP (PhD) — additional eligibility requirement: Fall and Spring Internship and CPT employment is limited to part-time only (20 hours per week or less). PHOP PhD students must have passed the written comprehensive examination before they are eligible for Fall and Spring Internship or CPT employment. Approval from the Major Advisor is required.

Approval authority — all programs: The Major Advisor approves the student's eligibility for any internship or CPT arrangement. Any arrangement that would cause total employment to exceed 20 hours per week during a fall or spring semester still requires prior approval from the Dean of the Graduate School, as required by the GTF policy above.

There may be nominal processing fees associated with fall and spring CPT; in some cases these are reimbursed. Contact the graduate staff for current reimbursement practices.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students on F-1 visas may not participate in off-campus employment (including internships) without authorization. The immigration mechanism that permits such work is called Curricular Practical Training (CPT).

Key CPT requirements:

- Students must be enrolled in a designated CPT sub-plan during the internship period.
- Students are not eligible for CPT until they have been continuously present in the United States for at least 12 months.
- The employer letter described above is required.

- o All other internship conditions (good academic standing, GA suspension for paid positions, TA scheduling obligations) apply equally to CPT.

CPT after the 10th long semester. A student who completes a summer CPT internship after their 10th long semester of enrollment may be eligible for one additional semester of program support — an 11th long semester — under a reduced course load (RCL). Contact the graduate staff and the ISSS office to determine whether this provision applies to your situation.

The fall and spring CPT process involves the student's home department, the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, and the ISSS office. Because coordination among these offices takes time, begin the process as early as possible and no later than 4 weeks before the intended start date.

OPT AND CPT TIMING AT DEGREE COMPLETION

If you will complete your degree requirements early in the semester and plan to begin employment between your defense and the end of the semester, you must make special arrangements with the International Students and Scholars Services Office (ISSSO) immediately. The Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) process takes 2–3 months. Contact the ISSSO and the GAA as soon as you know your intended completion date.

PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL

Graduate students in the Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) and Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) doctoral programs may receive financial support to attend professional conferences. Support is contingent on meeting the eligibility conditions below and following University and departmental procedures.

ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for travel support, a student must:

- o Have submitted an abstract for a poster or oral presentation on which they are the first author, and have that abstract accepted; and
- o Have applied to the professional society for a travel award.

A student will be funded whether they win the society's travel award. The application effort is required, however, because society travel awards are career achievements and reflect well on the program. Pay close attention to abstract submission deadlines, which typically fall four to six months before the conference. Book flights early to secure lower fares, and reserve conference hotel rooms as soon as they open — preferred-rate blocks sell out quickly. Double occupancy may be required to keep lodging costs within allowable limits.

Each department has its own travel procedure. Consult your faculty advisor and departmental administrators before initiating any travel request. Staff receive specialized training in university travel rules and can guide you through the current process. If you receive travel support from another source, a Cullen Fellowship Travel Grant (GTF supplement) may be used to supplement that funding.

TRAVEL INITIATION DEADLINES

The State of Texas and the University of Houston impose strict rules on employee and student travel. As a baseline rule, you must begin the travel process — completing required forms and obtaining approvals — at least 30 days before your departure date.

LEAVE POLICY, VACATION, AND CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

YEAR-ROUND WORK EXPECTATION

Graduate study is a year-round commitment. PhD students in the PPS and PHOP programs are expected to work on their degrees throughout the full calendar year, summer included. You may not take an entire summer off unless it is for an approved internship. An unapproved summer absence can cost you your stipend and raises legitimate questions about your degree progress and commitment; scholarship students also risk violating their funder's terms and falling behind. If you need an extended stretch of personal time, the best window is the break between the fall and spring semesters, when UH is closed.

SHORT-TERM LEAVE

Short-term leave is unpaid time away while you remain enrolled. It is different from a Leave of Absence (Sections 15.1–15.3), in which you stop enrolling for one or more semesters. Because Graduate Assistants (GAs) — Teaching Assistants (TAs), Research Assistants (RAs), and Instructional Assistants (IAs) — are 0.5 FTE employees, they receive no paid vacation, so any significant time off must be taken as short-term leave.

How much you may take. Beyond UH holidays and the end-of-year closure, GAs may take up to 10 working days of unpaid leave per calendar year. Additional time may be granted at the discretion of your faculty advisor, Course Coordinator, Department Chair, and the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

Limits on a single leave. No single leave period may exceed 4 weeks, counting any public or school holidays that fall within it. No more than 1 week of that period may overlap with the official close of the fall or spring semester, as defined by the UH academic calendar.

During PharmD final exams. TAs and IAs may not be absent during PharmD final-exam periods, without exception.

Extended leave. If you need longer, a combined maximum of 2 years may be approved by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. This requires a written request explaining why the extended leave is necessary.

If you are enrolled in courses. To take leave during a term in which you are enrolled, you must arrange with each instructor — before you go — to complete course requirements remotely or by another approved means. The graduate office staff can help you work this out.

GETTING APPROVAL

Secure every required approval *before* you finalize any travel plans. Presenting faculty or staff with plans already booked — a *fait accompli* — is strongly discouraged and is grounds for denial.

Obtain approvals in this order:

1. Course Coordinator — required for TAs and IAs
2. Faculty advisor — required for all students
3. GEC Chair — required for all students
4. Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs — final approval

To begin, ask the graduate office staff for the leave request form (Canvas → Home → Misc Forms).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA), MEDICAL LEAVE, AND CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

To complete the Ph.D., the State of Texas requires continuous enrollment from one long semester to the next (summers excluded), with no gaps. When a gap becomes necessary, a student may apply for a Leave of Absence (LOA) so as not to violate the continuous-enrollment requirement. Consult first your faculty advisor, then the Chair of your GEC; with their approval, contact the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, who will begin administrative procedures.

GENERAL (PERSONAL) LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A general LOA is appropriate for personal, family, or similar circumstances requiring you to miss one or more semesters. An LOA is typically for a semester or longer and may be renewed within program limits. Before requesting one, be aware that:

- o You will perform a term withdrawal from all courses. See the graduate staff to process this.
- o Your GTF and assistantship may be revoked, and tuition is refunded only on the University's sliding scale.
- o Because you are no longer enrolled, an LOA does not preserve any status that depends on enrollment (see 15.3 for international students).
- o Discuss with your advisor and GEC Chair whether your assistantship funding will still be available on your return, as circumstances (e.g., grant expiration) may change.

MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A medical leave is a leave taken when a temporary health condition prevents you from maintaining normal degree progress. This includes mental health. A serious bout of depression or

anxiety, a panic or trauma response, an eating disorder, a substance-use problem you are working to address, the effects of grief, or simply reaching a point of burnout where you can no longer function academically are all legitimate grounds for a leave, exactly as a broken leg, a surgery, a chronic-illness flare, or a pregnancy complication would be. Graduate school is demanding, and needing time to recover is not a failure or a mark against you. It is a normal, supported part of how the program works, and students at every stage use it.

Many students hesitate because they assume their situation "isn't serious enough" or that stepping back will look bad. If a health issue — physical or mental — is interfering with your ability to attend, concentrate, meet deadlines, or do your research, it is worth raising early. The earlier you do, the more options are available to you. You often have options short of withdrawing.

Depending on your situation, the right step may be:

- Academic accommodations arranged through UH's Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (for a documented psychological condition or temporary impairment), which can adjust deadlines or conditions while you stay fully enrolled;
- A reduced or zero course load while remaining enrolled (see 15.3 if you are an international student, as this is handled differently for you); or
- A full medical LOA, where you withdraw for one or more semesters

Part of the reason to talk to us early is so we can help you find the least disruptive of these that fits your needs, rather than defaulting to a full withdrawal.

How to initiate a medical leave. Notify your faculty advisor and the Program Director in the Office of Graduate Studies as early as possible and be prepared to provide documentation from a licensed medical or mental-health provider: a physician, psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, or licensed clinical psychologist. Mental-health documentation is treated exactly like documentation for a physical condition. Wherever possible, request the leave *before* dropping courses or stopping attendance, since retroactive action is difficult or impossible to arrange, particularly for international students.

Confidentiality. Documentation you submit is handled sensitively and shared only with the offices and individuals that must act on it. typically the Graduate Office and, for international students, the Designated School Official. It is not circulated to your dissertation committee or your lab. As with any medical information, there are narrow limits to confidentiality where safety or law requires disclosure, but your health information is not treated as general knowledge within the program.

- Where to get help. You do not have to have a diagnosis, or even be sure a leave is what you need, before reaching out:
- UH Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free, confidential counseling to enrolled students, including brief walk-in "Let's Talk" consultations. Counseling records at CAPS are separate from, and confidential from, the administrative process of requesting a leave — talking to a counselor does not put anything in your academic file.
- Crisis support is available 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or call or text 988 (the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). In a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

- o Your advisor and the Program Director can walk you through the leave and enrollment options themselves; you are welcome to start there.

While on medical leave:

- o Coordinate with the Office of Graduate Studies and Human Resources regarding your assistantship, stipend, and critically health insurance continuity, since withdrawal can affect your enrollment in the Student Health Insurance Plan.
- o The degree clock continues to run: semesters on medical leave still count toward the 10-year completion limit and the 5-year post-qualifying-exam limit.
- o Plan your return with your advisor and the Graduate Office before the leave ends, including confirmation of assistantship availability and re-enrollment.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS — ADDITIONAL LIMITS

Federal immigration rules impose requirements that do not apply to domestic students, and getting these wrong can end your lawful status. Before dropping below full-time enrollment, withdrawing, or leaving the U.S., F-1 and J-1 students must first consult the Program Director in the Office of Graduate Studies, who will coordinate with UH's International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSSO). Only ISSSO's Designated School Officials (DSOs) — not the College — can authorize the actions below in SEVIS. See the Program Director for current ISSSO contacts and the applicable request forms.

Key limits:

- o Full-time enrollment is the default. F-1 and J-1 students must maintain a full course of study each fall and spring unless specifically authorized to do otherwise.
- o Medical Reduced Course Load (RCL) is capped. A DSO may authorize an F-1 student to carry a reduced or zero course load for medical reasons for a maximum aggregate of 12 months per program level, and must reauthorize it at the start of each term. This authorization requires documentation from a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, or clinical psychologist. Once the 12-month aggregate is exhausted at a given level, no further medical RCL is available at that level. A properly authorized medical RCL keeps your SEVIS record active while you are on reduced or zero enrollment.
- o A full LOA is different from an RCL. A general LOA (15.1) generally results in termination of your SEVIS record. If you are outside the U.S. for more than five months and not enrolled, you cannot maintain student status and must return on a new initial Form I-20, which affects work-authorization eligibility timelines (CPT/OPT). A medical RCL avoids this because the record is not terminated.
- o J-1 students are not subject to the fixed 12-month medical cap but must obtain authorization from their program sponsor before any reduction or leave.
- o Health insurance. F-1 and J-1 students are required to carry the UHS Student Health Insurance Plan; confirm with the Program Director and HR how a leave affects that coverage before you act.

When in doubt, route the question through the Graduate Office Program Director *first* — the immigration consequences of an unapproved gap are far harder to fix after the fact than before.

6



■ PART SIX

APPENDIX

FORMS AND TEMPLATES

IN THIS PART

- Forms and templates reference
- Dissertation and thesis format guidelines

FORMS AND TEMPLATES REFERENCE

The appendix describes the official forms and templates used across the University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) Graduate Programs. The forms and templates themselves are not included in this handbook: they are maintained and distributed separately so they can be revised without republishing the handbook. Always obtain the current version of a form from the Graduate Programs Office rather than relying on a saved copy. Each form is listed with its purpose and the program(s) it serves. The section is organized by function: advisor and mentor selection; research rotations; degree planning; committee appointment; qualifying and comprehensive examinations; proposal and dissertation approval; evaluation rubrics; and policy-bearing forms. Cross-references to the relevant policy sections of this handbook appear in each subsection.

A. ADVISOR AND MENTOR APPOINTMENT FORMS

A.1 APPOINTMENT OF MAJOR ADVISOR FORM (PPS)

Applies to: Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS) — PhD

This form formally records a student's selection of a major advisor. The student circles the applicable program — Pharmacology/PCEU, Pharmacology/PCOL, or Medicinal Chemistry/MedChem — and signs to acknowledge two specific commitments:

1. The student will organize a thesis committee within **6 months** of signing this form.
2. The student will take oral and written qualifying examinations by the **end of the seventh long semester**.

The form requires signatures from the student, the major advisor, the co-advisor (if applicable), the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee (GEC), and the Chair of PPS.

Cross-reference: Qualifying Examinations (PPS); Committee Formation and Composition (PPS).

A.2 FACULTY MENTOR SELECTION FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP) — PhD

This form records the student's selection of a faculty mentor and requires signatures from both the student and the faculty member. The signed form is submitted to the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, Department of Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy (PHOP). A copy is provided to both the student and the faculty advisor.

The final, signed form must be submitted to the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) by **August 1** before the start of the student's second year.

Cross-reference: Mentor Selection and Research Rotations (PHOP).

B. RESEARCH ROTATION FORMS

B.1 INITIAL RESEARCH ROTATION FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

Students use this form to record all faculty members they have met during the first semester of the program. Students collect faculty signatures at each initial visit. The completed form is submitted together with the Faculty Mentor Selection Form to the GEC Director of Graduate Studies.

The completed form must be submitted to the GEC by the **last day before Spring Break** (approximately March 15) of the first year.

Cross-reference: Research Rotations (PHOP).

B.2 STUDENT RESEARCH ROTATION REPORT FORM (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD

Students complete this fillable form after each research rotation. The form captures: rotation number; rotation dates; program; a description of the major problem studied in the faculty laboratory; the studies performed (minimum **150 words** required); and techniques learned or attempted. The form requires signatures from both the student and the supervising faculty member.

After obtaining signatures, the student prints the form and sends a scan to the Graduate Program Office Manager.

Cross-reference: Research Rotations (PPS).

B.3 FACULTY RESEARCH ROTATION EVALUATION TEMPLATE (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD

Faculty complete this template to evaluate a student's performance during each research rotation. The evaluation covers 10 criteria: **(a)** Organization of time; **(b)** Neatness in the lab; **(c)** Enthusiasm for science; **(d)** Diligence; **(e)** Working with others; **(f)** Experimental skills; **(g)** Intelligence and learning ability; **(h)** Communication skills; **(i)** Initiative and drive; **(j)** Integrity.

The form captures the student's name and rotation dates.

Cross-reference: Research Rotations (PPS).

C. DEGREE PLANNING FORMS

C.1 PHD DEGREE PLAN FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

Students develop an initial degree plan in consultation with their mentor and the Graduate Academic Advisor (GAA) using this form. The initial plan must be approved by the advisor and

the GEC within **one year** of enrolling in the program. A copy of the approved plan is provided to the student and the faculty mentor. All subsequent changes must be signed by both the student and the faculty mentor.

A completed final degree plan — approved by the mentor and committee members, with the "final plan" box checked — must be submitted no fewer than **60 days** before the student applies for graduation.

Cross-reference: Degree Plan Requirements (PHOP).

C.2 TRANSFER CREDIT REQUEST FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

Students requesting transfer credit complete this form, which captures the student's name, PS ID, PhD track, semester first enrolled, anticipated graduation date, and the courses requested for transfer. The following limits apply:

- Transfer credit from another institution: up to **9 credit hours**.
- Transfer credit if the student completed the Master of Science in Pharmacy Administration at UH: up to **18 credit hours**.
- Only courses with a grade of **B or above** will be considered.
- Courses with S/U grades will **not** be transferred.

The form requires the faculty mentor's signature and must be approved by the Department Chair and the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, PHOP.

Cross-reference: Transfer Credit Policy.

D. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT FORMS

All PhD programs require a dissertation committee of **at least 5 (five) voting members**. Committee composition requirements differ by program, as set by each program's Graduate Education Committee; see the program-specific requirements below.

D.1 DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT FORM (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD

This form records the composition of the PhD dissertation committee and carries the committee composition rules and conflict of interest (COI) policy. The form accommodates the Major Advisor, a co-advisor (if applicable), and up to four additional members.

Composition requirements (PPS):

- The committee must consist of **at least 5 (five) voting members**.

- In addition to the dissertation advisor (Chair), **2 members** must be primary or joint appointees in Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- **2 members** must be from outside the department. Adjunct faculty is considered outside the department. Faculty with a joint appointment in PPS is **not** considered outside of PPS.
- Only **1 member** may be from a non-academic institution (e.g., industry); that member must demonstrate a scholarly track record within the **recent 5 years**.
- Only **1 non-tenure-track (research) faculty** member may serve; that member must demonstrate a scholarly track record within the **recent 5 years**.
- A non-Ph.D.-degree holder serving as Advisor/Chair (e.g., Pharm.D., M.D.) must select a PPS faculty member with a Ph.D. as co-advisor; an exception requires a formal petition to the PPS GEC. The petition must demonstrate: (i) a strong research/scholarship track record; and (ii) successful co-mentoring of a minimum of **2 PhD students**. New UHCOP faculty must also demonstrate **5 years of tenure at UH**.

Conflict of interest (COI) policy (PPS):

- Each committee member initials the form to certify that they have not been a former student or post-doctoral trainee of the student's advisor within the last 5 years and are not employed by the student's advisor (except as a co-investigator on a funded project). Faculty members with a conflict of interest may still serve as non-voting members.
- These requirements are effective for all committees formed after October 1, 2009; the exception to the co-advisor rule was modified February 13, 2015.
- The form is acknowledged by the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, PPS.

Cross-reference: Dissertation Committee (PPS).

D.2 DISSERTATION COMMITTEE SELECTION FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

This form records the student's dissertation committee. The student lists the anticipated field of research and the names and affiliations of all committee members; members sign to confirm acceptance. The form is received and approved by the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, PHOP, and a copy is provided to both the student and the faculty advisor.

Composition requirements (PHOP):

- o The committee must consist of at least 5 (five) voting members.
- o The Chair (faculty mentor) must hold a doctoral degree and be a full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the Department of PHOP.
- o 2 additional members must hold a Ph.D. and be full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members in the Department of PHOP.
- o 1 member must be from outside the Department of PHOP and hold an appropriate doctoral degree.
- o 1 additional member from within or outside the university must hold an appropriate doctoral degree.
- o The completed form must be submitted to the GEC by Year 4, Fall semester (see Program Timeline).

Cross-reference: Dissertation Committee (PHOP).

D.3 MS THESIS COMMITTEE SELECTION FORM (PLA)

Applies to: Pharmacy Leadership and Administration (PLA) — MS

This fillable form records the student's thesis committee membership for the Master of Science program. The form captures: student full name; anticipated field of research; committee member names and affiliations (up to 4 members); member acceptance signatures; and Graduate Program Director approval.

Roles documented:

- o Faculty Advisor Position: Chair
- o Committee Co-Chair Position: Co-Chair
- o Committee Member Position: Member
- o Committee Member Position: Member

A copy is provided to both the student and the faculty advisor upon completion.

Cross-reference: Thesis Committee (PLA MS).

E. EXAMINATION AND PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORMS

E.1 COMPLETION OF WRITTEN QUALIFYING EXAM CERTIFICATION FORM (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD

This certification form documents that a named student has passed the Written Qualifying Examination for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. The student circles the applicable program: Pharmacology, Pharmaceutics, or Medicinal Chemistry. The form requires the advisor's signature and date.

Cross-reference: Qualifying Examinations (PPS).

E.2 APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL BY DISSERTATION COMMITTEE FORM (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD

Committee members initial next to their printed names to signify approval of the student's research proposal. The form captures: student name (Last/First/Middle); title of proposal; date of presentation; and initials from the Major Advisor, co-advisor (if applicable), and members 2 through 5. The form is acknowledged by the Director of Graduate Education with date.

Cross-reference: Dissertation Proposal Defense (PPS).

E.3 COMPREHENSIVE EXAM AND PROPOSAL DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

This form records the dates on which a student has successfully completed each of the three examination milestones:

- ☐ Written Comprehensive Exam
- ☐ Area of Emphasis Exam
- ☐ Dissertation Proposal Defense

The form also records the dissertation title. It is received and approved by the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, PHOP, and a copy is provided to the student and the faculty advisor.

Cross-reference: Comprehensive Examinations (PHOP); Dissertation Proposal Defense (PHOP).

E.4 MS THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL FORM (PLA)

Applies to: PLA — MS

This form documents that the student has successfully defended the MS thesis proposal and is approved to proceed with research. The form captures: student full name; thesis title; expected graduation semester; and the committee-determined deadline for scheduling the final defense.

The form is signed by:

- ☐ Committee Chair
- ☐ Committee Co-Chair
- ☐ Two Committee Members

- o Graduate Program Director for MS, PLA

A copy is provided to the student and the faculty advisor.

Cross-reference: Thesis Proposal (PLA MS).

F. DISSERTATION AND THESIS FINAL APPROVAL FORMS

F.1 DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM (PHOP)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

This form certifies that the student has completed all dissertation requirements and has received approval to upload the dissertation to the Vireo Thesis and Dissertation Submission System. It is signed by the Committee Chair and received and approved by the Chair of the Graduate Education Committee, PHOP. A copy is provided to the student and the faculty advisor.

Cross-reference: Dissertation Submission (PHOP).

F.2 WRITTEN THESIS/DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM — UH GRADUATE SCHOOL

Applies to: All programs (Doctoral and Masters)

The University of Houston (UH) Graduate School is required for final written thesis or dissertation approval. This form is used for both doctoral and master's degree submissions (check one on the form). Committee members record their printed name and signature alongside either an Approve or Disapprove selection. The form accommodates up to 7 committee members plus the Collegiate Dean or Associate Dean, as required by the program.

After approval:

- o Students submit the thesis or dissertation via Vireo in PDF format at:
<http://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/thesis/>
- o The Graduate Coordinator/Advisor submits this form as "image only" to the Graduate School via IRIS.
- o Submission must occur by **4:00 p.m.** on or before the deadline published by the University of Houston.

Cross-reference: Thesis/Dissertation Submission (All Programs).

F.3 DISSERTATION DEFENSE ANNOUNCEMENT (PHOP — EXAMPLE TEMPLATE)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

An example dissertation defense flyer is distributed separately with the PHOP forms and templates. The announcement must contain: student name; dissertation title; mentor's name; location; date; time; and a statement that it is a dissertation defense. The announcement must be posted at least 7 days before the defense date. Students are requested to send an electronic copy to the GAA for distribution to all faculty and students in the program.

Cross-reference: Dissertation Defense Process (PHOP).

F.4 EXAMPLE DISSERTATION DOCUMENT FRONT MATTER (PHOP — TEMPLATE)

Applies to: PHOP — PhD

Example templates for the first three pages of the dissertation document — cover page, copy authorization page, and signature page — are distributed separately with the PHOP forms and templates.

G. COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT FORM

G.1 PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT FORM

Applies to: All PhD programs

This form documents each dissertation committee meeting. It captures:

- Meeting number; date of current meeting; date of last meeting
- Student name; mentor name; program; cohort
- Academic progress report (courses completed and courses still remaining)
- Career development activities (internships, workshops, training, networking, job searches)
- Accomplishments since the last meeting (abstracts, manuscripts, awards, fellowships, scholarships)
- Project progress report
- Plans to complete the degree
- Projected completion date (academic year and semester)
- The form requires signatures from the mentor and the student.

Cross-reference: Monitoring of Graduate Student Progress (All PhD Programs).

H. EVALUATION RUBRICS (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD

Confidentiality instruction (applies to all five rubrics): Completed forms are confidential.

They are turned in to the Principal Investigator (PI), who forwards them to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. Completed forms are not given to the student. The Graduate Studies office provides the student, the major advisor, and committee members with a summary copy of written comments and the overall evaluation.

H.1 WRITTEN PROPOSAL RUBRIC

Committee members evaluate the written proposal on two dimensions; each scored on a three-level scale (Does Not Meet Expectations / Meets Expectations / Exceeds Expectations):

- o **Quality of the science proposed** — evaluates clarity and coherence of arguments, definition of objectives, knowledge of the relevant literature, understanding of theoretical concepts, originality, and creativity.
- o **Quality of the writing** — evaluates writing strength, grammatical accuracy, organizational logic, and overall document quality.
- o An **overall assessment** (Does Not Meet / Meets / Exceeds Expectations) is required.

The rubric also includes a Specific Aims checklist with Yes/No items covering: abstract (overview and level of detail); specific aims (relevance and progression of what is known to what is unknown, clarity of the research question, preliminary experiments, experimental approach, methods adequacy, study parameters, statistical approaches, prediction of outcomes, additional approaches, relevance of expected findings); and other features (adherence to page and word limits, correct use of references, correct use and presentation of figures/tables and legends).

H.2 ORAL PROPOSAL DEFENSE RUBRIC

Committee members score the oral proposal defense on three dimensions (Does Not Meet / Meets / Exceeds Expectations):

- o **Quality of the presentation** — organization, clarity, communication skills, and slide readability.
- o **Breadth of knowledge** — depth of knowledge, critical thinking, scope of the presentation, and acceptability of topic coverage.
- o **Quality of response to questions** — completeness of responses, quality of arguments, knowledge of the subject area, and performance relative to program-level expectations.
- o An **overall assessment** is required.

H.3 STUDENT SEMINAR RUBRIC

Both students and faculty complete this rubric for student seminar presentations. Evaluators rate the presenter on a four-level Likert scale: Excellent (4), Very Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1).

Dimensions evaluated:

- o Delivery: Speaking skills; audience interaction; eye contact
- o Presentation visuals: Slide quality; graphics; layout
- o Organization: Logical sequence; transitions; use of time
- o Content — Subject knowledge: Depth of knowledge; background/literature review; hypothesis; research plan; methods
- o Content — Results and analysis: Clarity of figures; accuracy of interpretation
- o Content — Conclusions and significance: Support by evidence; discussion of implications; future directions

H.4 WRITTEN DISSERTATION RUBRIC

This rubric parallels the Written Proposal Rubric but is applied to the completed dissertation document. The two scored dimensions are:

- o **Quality of the research performed** — evaluates coherence and correctness of arguments, definition of objectives, originality, and creativity.
- o **Quality of the writing** — same criteria as the Written Proposal Rubric.
- o An **overall assessment** and space for comments and recommendations are included.
- o The **Specific Aims and Results checklist** parallels the proposal checklist and adds Yes/No items for: results obtained from experiments; discussion of results and significance to the field; and presentation of future directions.

The "Other features" section checks adherence to program policies, correct use of references, and correct use and presentation of figure/table legends.

H.5 ORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE RUBRIC

This rubric parallels the Oral Proposal Defense Rubric and uses the same three dimensions and three-level scoring scale (Does Not Meet / Meets / Exceeds Expectations):

- o Quality of the presentation
- o Breadth of knowledge
- o Quality of response to questions

An overall assessment is required.

I. POLICY-BEARING FORMS (CROSS-LISTED FROM TOPICAL SECTIONS)

The following forms carry binding policy language. Full policy text appears in the topical sections of this handbook; the forms themselves encode the policy conditions that must be met before a signature may be applied. Links to the topical sections are provided.

I.1 GRADUATE TUITION FELLOWSHIP (GTF) POLICY AND FORM

Applies to: PhD students only (all PhD programs).

Master's students are not eligible for GTF.

The GTF pays tuition and fees for eligible PhD students. The following requirements govern eligibility and duration:

- o **GPA requirement:** Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of **3.00 or above**. The GTF is revoked immediately if the GPA falls below 3.00 and is not restored until the GPA returns to 3.00 or above.
- o **Full-time enrollment:** Students must be enrolled full-time — **9 credit hours** in a long semester. Students pay tuition for any courses beyond 9 semester credit hours (SCH).
- o **Duration limit:** The GTF may be held for **no more than 10 long semesters**, plus the following summer or fall semester (but no more than **3 SCH** beyond the 10 long semesters).
- o **Outside employment:** PhD students receiving the GTF must not be additionally employed off-campus, except when classes are not in session or when the student is not enrolled. Exceptions require an appeal to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.
- o **Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs):** GRAs are guaranteed the GTF as long as they meet the GPA requirement and are making adequate academic progress.
- o **Rate:** GTF pays only the current COP PhD tuition rate per SCH in fall and spring semesters, even if the course is taken at another institution.
- o **Summer GTF:** The GTF is not paid in summer except when: (1) a required course is offered only in summer; (2) the student plans to graduate in August and must be enrolled (unless the student took a Reduced Course Load/RCL in spring); or (3) another exception is approved on a case-by-case basis.
- o **Satisfactory academic progress:** Progress includes successful completion of the qualifying examination, selection of a mentor, and appointment of a dissertation committee. Undue delays result in loss of the GTF.

This policy was approved by COP Faculty on August 5, 2016, with minor changes in July 2017 and May 2018.

Cross-reference: Funding and Fellowships.

I.2 INCOMPLETE GRADE AGREEMENT FORM AND POLICY

Applies to: All programs

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is conditional and temporary. It is assigned when, for non-academic reasons beyond the student's control, the student has not completed a relatively small part of all course requirements.

Eligibility: The student must be currently passing the course or, in the instructor's or course coordinator's judgment, have a reasonable chance of passing.

Request deadline: Students have **90 days** from the posting of the course grade to request an "I" grade.

Re-enrollment restriction: A student must **not** re-enroll in a course in which a grade of "I" is currently recorded.

Completion deadline: The grade of "I" must be changed by completing course requirements within **12 months** of the end of the term or session in which the "I" grade was received. If not changed within 12 months, the "I" converts automatically to a grade of "F" (or "U" in S/U-graded courses).

Lapsed grade: An "I" grade that has lapsed to an "F" grade may **not** be changed back to an "I" or to a grade of "W."

The form requires signatures from the student, the faculty advisor, the instructor, and the course coordinator.

Cross-reference: Academic Standards and Grading.

I.3 GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL REQUEST POLICY AND FORM (PPS)

Applies to: PPS — PhD (full-time doctoral students in good academic standing)

Eligibility: Applicants must be first-author presenters at the conference or meeting for which they are requesting support.

Submission deadlines:

- o Travel within the continental United States: request must be submitted at least 30 days before departure.
- o Travel outside the continental United States: request must be submitted at least 60 days before departure. Note: departmental funds are not available for travel outside the continental United States.

Funding limits:

- o Maximum departmental funding: \$800.00 per travel request (subject to change).

- o Departmental funds are available once per student per Fiscal Year (September 1 – August 31 cycle).
- o Unused travel allowances cannot be carried over from one fiscal year to the next.

Transportation: Only the least expensive means of transportation is accepted. Car rental and gas expenses are not allowed in addition to air travel. Personal vehicle mileage is reimbursed at the authorized standard rates set by the State of Texas, if proven more cost-effective than air travel.

Required documentation: A copy of the meeting information and the accepted abstract must be submitted with the travel request.

Receipt submission: All receipts must be submitted within 30 days upon return; reimbursement will not be issued if this deadline is missed.

Prior consultation: Students must consult with office staff before initiating a travel request. Reimbursement will be denied if program guidelines are not followed.

The form captures: faculty advisor signature; Department Chair signature; and separate cost center allocation lines for each approver.

Cross-reference: Graduate Student Travel (PPS).

DISSERTATION AND THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES

All doctoral dissertations and master's theses submitted at the University of Houston (UH) must conform to two overlapping sets of requirements: (1) the UH Graduate School front-matter template, which applies to every UH graduate program, and (2) program-specific formatting rules that govern the body of the document. Both sets of requirements apply simultaneously. Neither supersedes the other; they govern different parts of the document.

The complete dissertation and master's degree guidelines are provided as a source book in the **COP Graduate Students Canvas** course.



College of Pharmacy
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2026–2027

OFFICE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

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GO COOGS