

Academic Standing Policy

Molecular Cell Biology and Neuroscience (MCBN) Program

Graduation Requirements:

Minimum GPA

The Molecular Cell Biology and Neuroscience program requires a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 (B average) to earn the PhD or MS degree. No student will be granted a degree if their cumulative GPA is less than 3.0.

Additional Program Requirements

The MCBN Program requires specific courses and achievement milestones for graduation (see the MCBN Program Description). Among them, a student must remain in Good Academic Standing to progress through the program. Good Academic Standing (GAS) is determined by grade requirements and achievement milestones:

GAS grade requirements:	
1	Minimum 3.00 cumulative GPA in all classroom courses* assessed at the end of each semester.
2	Minimum 3.00 cumulative overall GPA assessed at the end of each semester.
3	Minimum 3.00 cumulative overall GPA after completion of all year 1 and year 2 curriculum.

* Lab Rotations, Advanced Graduate Research, Thesis Research, and any other laboratory courses are not classroom courses.

	Achievement milestones:	GAS deadline:	Dismissal deadline:
1	Mutual Agreement with Mentor	DO/PhD: January 1 of 1 st Year PhD & MS: June 1 of 1 st Year	June 15 of 1 st Year
2	Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) nominated and approved	July 1 of 1 st Year	December 1 of 2 nd Year
3	Advisory Proposal Meeting (APM; DO/PhD & PhD)	September 15 of 2 nd Year	December 1 of 2 nd Year
4	Thesis Proposal/Qualifying Exam		MS: December 30 of 2 nd Year DO/PhD & PhD: July 1 of 2 nd Year
5	Complete and pass Thesis Research (DO/PhD & PhD)	End of each semester	End of following semester**
6	Successful Thesis Defense		7 years (PhD) or 5 (MS) years from first matriculation

** If a student does not pass Thesis Research, they must pass the following semester.

Academic probation:

A student who fails to meet one of the GAS grade requirements or GAS deadlines listed above will be placed on Academic Probation. Written notification of Academic Probation will be sent by the GSBS office to the student, the Program Directors, the Financial Aid office (if applicable), and the University Registrar. Notifications usually occur within 10 business days of the end of the semester.

Students on Academic Probation are ineligible to receive funds for exam proctoring, travel allowances, and poster award prize money (stipend and health benefits will not be affected). Students will again be eligible to receive these funds upon returning to Good Academic Standing.

Dismissal:

A student will be dismissed from the program if that student:

- fails to restore Good Academic Standing by one year after being placed on Academic Probation.
- fails to earn a classroom only GPA of 2.30 (C+) or an overall GPA of 2.30 (C+) by the end of the Spring semester of the 1st Year (PhD students only).
- fails to meet the dismissal deadline for an achievement milestone.
- fails to earn a Satisfactory grade in Thesis Research for two consecutive semesters.
- fails to earn an overall GPA that can mathematically become a 3.00 overall GPA in the allotted time on Academic Probation.
- fails to earn a minimum of 3.00 cumulative overall GPA after completion of all year 1 and year 2 curriculum.

Qualifying Exam:

A PhD student must be in Good Academic Standing to take their Qualifying Exam at the end of their second year (see MCBN Program Description). A student who does not take a Qualifying Exam by July 1 will be dismissed from the program. A student who does not pass their Qualifying Exam the first time is not placed on Academic Probation, and they may take a second exam by August 15 without any penalty. Students must appeal to Executive Council to explain any circumstances that require them to request an exception to the policy (see Appeals below).

Course repeats:

If a student must repeat a course to graduate, they may follow the procedures outlined in the Course Repeat Policy.

Incomplete grades:

An Incomplete grade will leave Academic Standing officially undetermined. Academic Standing will be determined once a final grade is submitted. The grade that replaces an Incomplete will determine Academic Standing for the prior semester in which the Incomplete was given. Per University policy, Incompletes must be completed by the end of the very next semester.

Leave of Absence:

Students who are unable to meet the requirements of the program for reasons beyond their control are encouraged to consider requesting a Leave of Absence (see the GSBS Leave of Absence Policy).

Appeals:

Appeals to deviate from these policies must be made in writing to GSBS Executive Council, who will decide whether or not to grant the appeal. Executive Council will consider whether the student's circumstances reasonably warrant an exception to the school's policies. A student should discuss their case with their Program Directors or another faculty advisor prior to submitting their letter. Letters must be sent to the Senior Associate Dean for GSBS, Dr. Carl Hock. At least one month is typically needed to decide each case. (See the GSBS Academic Appeals Policy.)

Adopted: September 12, 2019; retroactive to September 1, 2019
Amended: January 23, 2020
Amended: August 27, 2020
Amended: September 18, 2020; retroactive to August 15, 2020
Amended: October 14, 2021
Amended: December 9, 2021
Amended: February 10, 2022
Amended: August 9, 2022; program name change
Amended: July 20, 2023; APM deadline extension