



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences

**GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
for
GRADUATE STUDENTS**

2019-2020

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Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences

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Section One

1. Student Contact Information

Provide the Graduate Program Coordinator with your home address, personal cell phone number, and other email addresses you frequently check. This information is FERPA protected and is retained by the Graduate Program office for use in an emergency. It will not be provided beyond the Graduate Program Office. The student is also responsible for notifying the University of any changes in address.

Students that will be absent from class or the laboratory should notify their mentor. For absences one week or longer, students should also notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of their planned absence. Please leave an address, phone number, or email address where you can be reached.

The student's USD email account will be the official means of communication for the duration of the student's program of study. Students should be sure to check their USD email accounts daily for important emails. The use of 'forwarded' USD email to other accounts is not recommended as some accounts may restrict some USD emails from being delivered.

2. Cheating/Plagiarism Policy

At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught cheating or plagiarizing may be:

- a. Given a zero for that assignment.
- b. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
- c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- d. Dropped from the course.
- e. Failed in the course.

For the purposes of this policy document **Cheating** is broadly defined as, but is not limited to, the following:

- Having possession of (or knowing how to access electronically) test information or answers prior to or during the course of any exam or other graded class assignment.
- Using or giving any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests or examinations.
- Using derivative sources of information (e.g., someone else's bibliography) instead of researching primary literature yourself (e.g., via PubMed) when writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other graded assignments.
- Acquisition, without permission, of any academic material belonging to a member of the institutional faculty or staff. This includes attempting to access an exam outside of any scheduled review sessions and copying or reproducing from memory all or part of any test question(s).
- Excusing yourself from, or obtaining the postponement of, an examination under false pretenses.
- Any and all other actions that falsely enhance an individual's performance on an exam or other graded class assignment.
- Providing exam questions/answers, graded lab reports, data relating to academic activities or other testable material to students who entered the program after you.

For the purposes of this policy document **Plagiarism** is broadly defined as, but is not limited to, the following:

- The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment consistent with accepted practices of the discipline.
- The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person, previous work by yourself for which you may have already received academic credit, or an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

3. Contract And Intellectual Property Rights

All students must sign a contract and sign the form "Agreement to Assign Intellectual Property Rights". The South Dakota Board of Regents Intellectual Property Policy, Board Policy No. 4:34, may be found at <https://www.sdbor.edu/policy/documents/4-34.pdf>.

4. Student Support Resources

The Graduate School maintains a page outlining resources available to all graduate students at USD.

The page can be found at <http://www.usd.edu/graduate-school/student-resources.cfm>. Included on this resource page are links to various Graduate School policies, forms, deadlines, among other useful links. Students are advised to visit the Graduate Student Responsibilities and Deadlines page within the USD portal regularly. To assist students, this document includes a checklist for the student to follow. It is the student's responsibility to adhere to USD and Division deadlines and policies. Additional support services can be found in the appendix at the end of this document

5. Grievances And Complaints

The grievance procedure of the Division is in keeping with the policy of the Graduate School and the SD-BOR. Refer to the USD portal for the current policy on Grievance Procedures (<https://my.usd.edu/uPortal/p/graduate-school.ctf4/max/render.up?tab=39482-graduate-school-form>). There are forms relating to human rights complaint procedures, student academic misconduct, academic appeals, student code of conduct, and academic affairs. Students should carefully review the information when selecting a grievance path. Note there are specific time windows that must be followed for many of the grievance processes. Failure to start a grievance within the proscribed time frame will result in automatic denial of the grievance.

6. Lee Medicine (USD Building UMS) Access

Access to the Lee Medicine building and many interior rooms uses a USD-issued ID. Each student's access to Lee Medicine spaces will be specific to their needs. Students will be given key(s) that will permit them access to specific Basic Biomedical Sciences laboratories. The University Police Department (UPD) issues keys upon request by the Division. A fee will be required before the key can be issued. Key(s) should be returned when your employment with the Division is at an end. Please notify the Division if key(s) are lost. Cost to replace lost keys or USD ID's are paid by the student.

7. Mail

Graduate students based in Vermillion are assigned a "mailbox" (a shelf) on the second floor – northwest hallway. Graduate students based outside of Vermillion should take care to have mail properly directed to their desired location.

8. Nondiscrimination Policy

In accordance with the South Dakota Board of Regents Policy 1:19, the institutions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents shall offer equal opportunities in employment and for access to and participation in educational, extension and other institutional services to all persons qualified by academic preparation, experience, and ability for the various levels of employment or academic program or other institutional service, without discrimination based on sex, race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, gender, gender identification, transgender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status or any other status that may become protected under law against discrimination.

The Board reaffirms its commitment to the objectives of affirmative action, equal opportunity and non-discrimination in accordance with state and federal law. Redress for alleged violations of those laws may be pursued at law or through the procedures established by the provisions of 1:18 of this policy.

For additional information, please contact:

Director, Equal Opportunity and Chief Title IX Coordinator, Room 205 - Slagle, Vermillion, SD 57069. Phone: 605-677-5651 E-Mail: equalopp@usd.edu.

Admission decisions are made without regard to disabilities. All prospective students are expected to present academic credentials at or above the minimum standards for admission and meet any technical standards that may be required for admission to a specific program. If you are a prospective student with a disability and need assistance or accommodations during the admission/application process, please contact:

Disability Services
North Commons Room 116,
USD, Vermillion, SD 57069.
Phone: 605-658-3745
Fax: 605-677-3172
E-Mail: dservice@usd.edu

9. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The University of South Dakota recognizes the importance of confidentiality of student information and complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. The current policies of USD regarding the release of information and the rights of students with respect to information maintained on their records are included in the Student Handbook available in the myUSD Portal.

10. Safety Policies

All students pursuing research will be trained in safe laboratory procedures by the laboratory director, the faculty mentor, or their designee. If a student is injured while performing work for a faculty member, then that student is covered by the South Dakota Workers' Compensation program. The student must complete a First Report of Occupational Injury form ([FROI](#)). Sanford Vermillion is available and able to handle any foreseeable injury, but the student is under no obligation to use them. Students may use the physician of their choice. The supervising faculty member does not need to fill out any paperwork, except for assisting the student to complete the FROI.

11. Travel Policy

During your training at the Division, you will likely travel for professional purposes (meetings, trainings, etc.). Travel outside of the State of South Dakota for business reasons requires that a Travel Request be submitted regardless of how the travel is being paid for. This requirement is for insurance purposes. For questions refer to SD BOR policies, available at <https://www.sdbor.edu/policy/documents/5-12.pdf>. International travel requires a more complicated approval process and requires additional authorization. The travel request process should be started at least two weeks before the start of domestic travel and one month before the start of international travel. Students planning to travel on business are encouraged to contact the Division staff person assigned to travel well in advance of the actual travel.

Section 2

12. Program Description

The Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences at the Sanford School of Medicine of The University of South Dakota, henceforth referred to as the Division, offers graduate programs leading to the degrees of Master of Sciences (Plan A (thesis) and Plan B (non-thesis)) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Courses, seminars, research experiences, and conferences stress both classical and contemporary approaches to graduate training. In addition, the program will strengthen the student's ability to comprehend and critically evaluate the current scientific literature.

Divisional requirements reflect a research-oriented program in which the student will develop scientific interests, capabilities, and research potential. The faculty-to-student ratio is low, which facilitates personal and informal interaction between students and faculty.

13. Admission

- A. General Requirements: The USD Graduate School and the Dean of the Graduate School have the overall responsibility for admissions to the graduate program at the University of South Dakota. Admission to the graduate program in the Division is contingent upon satisfying the admission requirements of the Graduate School of the University of South Dakota and those of the Division. The University of South Dakota Graduate School requires a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 2.7, graduate GPA of 3.0, or better, based on a 4.0 scale. The baccalaureate degree must be from an accredited college or university. The Division accepts the standards of admission of the University. Students with undergraduate grade point averages of 3.25 or higher receive preference in the review process. The applicant must have an adequate background in biology, physics, mathematics, and chemistry. In most instances, candidates for admission who have earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry, psychology, biology, or any of the related life sciences possess adequate preparation for the graduate program. The Division prior to admission may require additional courses. Applicants who meet these requirements and are of interest to our faculty may enter the University of South Dakota with "Full Graduate Status."

Admission to the Division is competitive. Applications to the Graduate School open in September. The deadline for submitting an application is May 1st. Applicants who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States should submit their completed applications as early as possible but no later than May 1st. This will allow sufficient time for application review and, if acceptance to the program is supported, for required documentation to be processed. Failure to allow sufficient time for all documentation to be processed may result in the successful applicant having to delay entrance into the program for up to one calendar year. The Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences reviews all materials submitted by the applicant in its consideration of the student's potential success as a graduate student in our program of study, and as a future peer. This consideration includes the availability of a research mentor. Applicants interested in the Basic Biomedical Sciences program should review our program faculty profiles and identify possible research labs of interest.

B. Summary of Procedures for Admission to Graduate Program

1. Initial correspondence concerning the application for admission to the graduate program should be addressed to the Graduate Committee, Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences, Sanford School of Medicine of The University of South Dakota, 414 East Clark Street, Vermillion, South Dakota 57069-2390. The official application form is found at <http://www.usd.edu/graduate-school/how-to-apply.cfm>.
2. An application is complete when the following documents have been submitted to the Graduate School, The University of South Dakota, 414 East Clark Street, Vermillion, South Dakota 57069-2390:
 - a. One copy of the application for admission and one set of official transcripts from each college or university attended sent directly to the Graduate School from the issuing institution,
 - b. Three official letters of recommendation <https://www.usd.edu/-/media/files/graduate-school/recommendation-form.ashx?la=en> sent directly to the Graduate School by the recommender or mailed to the applicant in a sealed envelope with the signature of the recommender placed across the seal,
 - c. \$35 (US dollars) nonrefundable application fee,

- d. Completed *Supplemental Information Form* <https://www.usd.edu/-/media/files/graduate-school/basic-biomedical-sciences-supplemental-application.ashx?la=en>
3. Applicants who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States must submit additional materials as specified at <http://www.usd.edu/graduate-school/international-admissions.cfm> :
 - a. Proficiency in English using the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and scoring a 79 on the Internet-Based TOEFL (IBT) or 550 on the written TOEFL, or scoring 6.0 or higher on The International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) Exam, or scoring above 63 on the PTE Academic English Test. Official documentation of English being the primary language of previous educational experience can be submitted as a substitute for these tests and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis,
 - b. A completed Financial Ability Form (<https://www.usd.edu/-/media/files/graduate-school/international-admissions/international-graduate-financial-ability-form.ashx?la=en>)
4. All applications are considered on a policy of equal educational opportunity without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability, except to the extent allowed by law. Faculty members under the supervision of the Graduate Committee will carry out evaluation of the completed application.
5. Before final acceptance is given, the applicant may be asked for a personal interview with the faculty. The USD Graduate School will send official notification of acceptance/rejection. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that all documents are properly submitted to the Graduate School.
6. In the event that the applying student does not satisfy the standards for admission, that student will be notified by the Graduate School that they have not been accepted for admission. If students choose to appeal that decision, this policy governs that process. In the event that an applying graduate student does not satisfy the standards for admission to the Graduate School, the student is entitled to submit an appeal to the Graduate School. Denied students may write a letter of appeal to the Graduate Dean citing their justification for reconsideration within thirty days.

14. Full Time Status & Normal Course Load

A full-time graduate-student course load is typically 9 credit hours. Students on graduate assistantships must enroll for at least 9 credit hours during the fall and spring terms. Students receiving stipends also must enroll at least one credit hour during the summer term, and five credit hours in the summer to be eligible for financial aid. During the regular academic year, the normal maximum registration for a graduate student is 12 credit hours per semester. To be eligible for overload status (*i.e.* more than 12 credits), a student must have approval by the Graduate Dean. Students who provide evidence that fewer than 9 credit hours remain for graduation will be granted exceptions by the Graduate Dean or designee. Students requesting this exception may email their request to grad@usd.edu. A completed Program of Study should be included if the student has not already submitted one to the Graduate School.

15. Leave Of Absence

A Leave of Absence may be requested by students who are officially accepted to and enrolled in a graduate program at the University of South Dakota and who wish to temporarily suspend their program and maintain their active status. The Graduate School Registration Officer will place the student on hiatus status. Hiatus status will continue for each term the student is on leave, up to three consecutive terms. Students in hiatus status will not be required to reapply to re-enter the University. Please Note: Students not approved for a Leave of Absence or those who suspend from continuous enrollment and do not apply for a Leave of Absence will be inactivated and will need to reapply to re-enter the Graduate School. A Leave of Absence does not stop the time frame for degree completion and students will be subject to the time limits discussed below.

16. Time Limit And Validation Of Credits

The coursework applicable to the Master's program must be completed within a period of seven calendar years from the date of the first registration. Ph.D. requirements must be completed within seven years from the date of first registration. Graduate credits earned more than seven years prior to the date of intended graduation must be validated. The method of validation is to be decided upon by the student's advisory committee, sent to the Division's Graduate Committee for review and acceptance, and then the Graduate Dean for final approval. Normally, validation may include repeating of the course, satisfactorily completing a final examination for the course, demonstration of relevant professional experience, or specific additional questions on the comprehensive examination.

17. Graduate Assistantships Rules And Requirements

To apply for a graduate assistantship, applicants complete the [Assistantship application](#). Applications are submitted to the Graduate School for processing. Appointments may be for any duration up to 12 months and are typically done at the time of recommendation for admission. Assistantships in the Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences are mainly research assistantships with limited teaching assistantships. Renewal is not automatic; rather it depends upon the academic performance of the student, number of credits enrolled, the quality of work performed, and the needs of the University. The Graduate School reviews eligibility each term.

Faculty are responsible for monitoring the graduate assistant's performance and work hours. Graduate assistants are expected to provide a value added service during the academic semester awarded and during working hours as agreed upon by both the supervisor and student.

Minimum Requirements for Graduate Assistants

- Graduate assistants must be fully admitted graduate students in good academic standing in their degree program and the Graduate School.
- Graduate assistants must maintain active status and be registered for at least 9 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters and at least one credit hour during the summer semester.
- Graduate Assistants must successfully pass a criminal background check. Passage requirements are determined by Human Resources and may be based on appointment type and expected duties.
- If selected as a graduate assistant, students must successfully pass a criminal background check and sign an intellectual property and confidentiality agreement. Passage requirements for the background check are determined by Human Resources and the Graduate School and may be based on appointment type and expected duties.

Students receiving an assistantship are eligible for tuition reduction. Per Board of Regents [Policy 5:22](#), graduate assistants receive partial tuition funding for all credits enrolled and they become eligible for a special tuition rate for their remaining tuition owed. Resident graduate assistants and resident graduate student fellows shall be assessed fifty-three percent (53%) of the resident graduate tuition rate for all on-campus courses, in addition to 100% of the general activity fee and discipline fees. Non-resident graduate assistants and non-resident graduate student fellows shall be assessed sixty three percent (63%) of the resident graduate tuition rate for all on- campus courses, in addition to 100% of the general activity fee and discipline fees. Residency status is defined within Board of Regents [Policy 3.2](#). Graduate students enrolled in USD's online courses are eligible for a special discounted tuition rate. Graduate Assistants must be hired by the semester 100% refund deadline to receive a tuition discount. Further details of regarding the tuition and fees may be found at the link: <http://www.usd.edu/financial-affairs/business-office/tuition-and-fees/graduate>.

If a graduate assistant resigns from his/her position before the last day to drop a course with a W in a given term, the assistantship will be terminated and the tuition charges re-billed for the semester at the non-reduced rate. If a graduate student falls below the required number of credit hours for the semester, a meeting with the Dean of the Graduate School or designee will be required to be eligible for an assistantship the next semester.

Work Requirements

Graduate students on an assistantship are considered temporary employees of the University; again, a designation that confirms a work assignment. The primary purposes of a graduate assistantship are to provide students with professional experience and the necessary financial resources to attend a graduate program. Graduate students may not work more than 50% FTE. Graduate students are expected to work a full semester at their assigned percent of FTE (~48%) in order to receive a semester's worth of compensation. Graduate students receiving assistantships are considered part time employees by the State of South Dakota. They are considered as less than half-time employees (0.49) and are not permitted to work beyond this. Their faculty advisor will inform them of their work expectations at the start of their employment in the laboratory. Note that work directly related to a student's PhD studies is not considered part of their required work for the assistantship.

Graduate assistantships are considered taxable income. Students with questions regarding the applicable tax rate that will be applied to their stipend should contact the payroll specialist in USD's Human Resources office for guidance. The tax rate is considerably higher for students enrolled for less than full time for any semester.

Academic Standing

A graduate student must be fully admitted to both the Graduate School and an academic program. *Students admitted provisionally may not be graduate assistants. Contingent admittance for any other reason than receipt of official transcripts is not eligible. Moreover, a graduate assistant must make satisfactory academic progress each term toward completion of the graduate degree being sought. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress are subject to academic probation. If the cumulative GPA of graduate students receiving assistantships falls below a 3.0, the student will not continue to receive the assistantship without the expressed approval of the Graduate Dean.*

Personnel Rules

Graduate assistants are considered temporary employees and are not employed in a permanent classification. Graduate assistants are not required to work on official state employee holidays or during regular academic breaks. Any grievance arising from this employment relationship shall be brought under non-faculty exempt procedures ([Policy 4.8](#)). Graduate assistants are not eligible for benefits including sick and annual leave, health and life insurance, and retirement.

For more information about Graduate Assistantships, contact the Graduate School at grad@usd.edu or 1-800-233-7937. The University of South Dakota is an equal employment opportunity employer. Accommodation for students with disabilities will be made per the University's Disability Services Policy.

Outside employment

Graduate assistants are not permitted to be employed outside of the Division while receiving a stipend without the written permission of the student's academic advisor and the Division's Graduate Committee. This includes both full-time and part-time employment and seasonal employment.

18. Academic Standing, Probation, And Dismissal

If a student has more than one course of unsatisfactory work and/or has not maintained a 3.0 term or cumulative graduate GPA, the academic program places the student on warning, or probation or dismisses him/her from the program in keeping with department and Graduate School policies. **The students will lose their graduate assistantship for failing to meet the above standards.** Degree programs and the Graduate School review the academic standing of all graduate students each term, and program leaders notify students directly of academic warning, probation or dismissal. The Graduate School is copied on all student communication. A graduate student may be dismissed from the program at any time for failure to meet the academic performance and progress standards of the degree program's or Graduate School. The department is required to provide students a written notice of the issues and an opportunity to meet with the program director (face-to-face, teleconference, virtually) before dismissal action.

It is the policy of the Graduate School that the department, through due process, may deny a graduate student continued enrollment in a program in accordance with department policies. The reasons for dismissal include: (1) academic performance that does not meet the standards of the department and the Graduate School, or (2) conduct in violation or unfavorable of the ethical or professional standards of the degree program or discipline involved. Academic appeals are handled through the Graduate Academic Appeal Policy ([BOR Policy 2:9](#)). In addition, general campus rules and policies relating to student conduct are found in the Student Handbook available in the myUSD Portal.

19. Graduate Academic Appeal And Grievance Procedures

A procedure has been established for impartial review and hearing of any academic grievance. The University's graduate academic appeal procedures can be found at <http://www.usd.edu/graduate-school/student-resources.cfm>. A student pursuing an academic appeal may confer with the Graduate Dean before initiating the process. For other grievance proceedings, the student should contact the Director of Student Rights & Responsibilities (srr@usd.edu) or the Affirmative Action Director (equalopp@usd.edu). Note there are specific time windows that must be followed for many of the grievance processes. Failure to start a grievance within the proscribed time frame will result in automatic denial of the grievance.

20. Standards of Conduct

The University of South Dakota and the Graduate Program strive to foster a positive environment that enables all students to have their best opportunity for a successful and positive graduate experience. Students are expected to be courteous and respectful to other students, faculty and other members of the USD community. The Graduate Program expects students to at a minimum abide by the Board of Regents' *Code of Student Conduct* ([BOR Policy 3:4](#)).

21. Grades

In addition to overall satisfactory performance, graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA average of 3.0 or above in all work included in the program of study submitted for their degrees. Furthermore, no more than one-third of the credit hours with grades of "C" are permitted. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher is required to progress in the Graduate School. No grade below a "C" is acceptable for graduate credit. All grades of "Incomplete" on the program of study must be removed prior to graduation. Grades of "D", "F", or other unsatisfactory designations are not acceptable. This does not mean that grades of "D" and "F" may not be assigned to graduate students but that credit for courses in which such grades have been earned will not be counted toward a graduate degree although they are included in GPA calculations. For repeated courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, only the last grade is used in computing the grade point average. Repeated courses are marked with an "R" or "Repeated." The candidate's graduate committee, with approval of the Graduate Dean, may approve one course, not to exceed three credit hours, to be taken at the graduate level for a grade designation of S (satisfactory).

Students at the University of South Dakota who wish to audit a course may do so with the approval of the instructor and the dean of the school/college in which the course is offered, providing that there is space in the classroom after all registered students for credit have been accommodated. No USD credit is granted for courses that are audited. All auditors must submit a "Request for Audit" form to the Registrar's Office found in the myUSD Portal. Regular tuition and fees are charged for audited courses. An auditor wishing to change registration from audit to credit must do so during the 100% refund/last day to add deadline. The auditing fee is non-refundable after the 100% refund period. Grade Policy (South Dakota Board of Regents, [Policy Number 2.10](#)) Graduate Grades will be assigned to the Graduate Academic Level and to all Courses and Sections with course numbers of 500 or greater. Plus and minus grades are not used.

A	Exceptional	4.00 grade points per semester hour
B	Good	3.00 grade points per semester hour
C	Average	2.00 grade points per semester hour
D	Unsatisfactory	1.00 grade points per semester hour
F	Failure	0.00 grade points per semester hour
S	Satisfactory	Does not calculate into any gpa
U	Unsatisfactory	Does not calculate into any gpa
W	Withdrawal	Does not calculate gpa, no credit granted
AU	Audit	Does not calculate into any gpa
I	Incomplete	Does not calculate into any gpa
IP	in Progress	Does not calculate into any gpa
NG	No Grade	0 credit tracking course
NP	Normal Progress	Does not calculate into any gpa
NR	Grade not Reported by instructor	Does not calculate into any gpa
EX	Credit by Exam	Does not calculate into any gpa
CR	Credit	Does not calculate into any gpa

An audit (AU) grade may be granted only when the student has elected the AU option on or prior to the census date of the term.

A credit (CR) grade may be granted only for non-course credit that is not related to an examination or to equating transfer grades to the BOR grading system. This grade is not used for any Regental university course.

An examination for credit (EX) grade may be granted only for non-course credit validation obtained through a validation process. This grade is not used for any Regental university course.

An incomplete (I) grade may be granted only when all of the following conditions apply:

- A student has encountered extenuating circumstances that do not permit him/her to complete the course.
- The student must be earning a passing grade at the time the Incomplete is necessitated. Anticipated course failure is not a justification for an incomplete.
- The student does not have to repeat the course to meet the requirements.
- The instructor must agree to grant an incomplete grade.
- The instructor and student must agree on a plan to complete the coursework.
- The coursework must be completed within one calendar year; extensions may be granted by the Graduate Dean.
- If the student completes the course within the specified time, the grades that may be assigned are A, B, C, D, F, S, or U.
- If the student does not complete the course within the specified time, the Incomplete grade remains on the transcript.

An in progress (IP) grade may be granted only when all of the following conditions apply:

- The requirements for the course (for every student enrolled in the course) extend beyond the current term.
- The extension beyond the current term must be defined before the class begins.
- The instructor must request permission to award IP grades for a course from their Department Chair and Dean, and then approval must be obtained from the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.
- A definite date for completion of the course must be established in the course syllabus.

A grade of NG will be used only with those course sections that are designated as Tracking/Program Sustaining (Q) and those that are assigned the code for Master's Research Problems/Projects Sustaining, Thesis Sustaining, or Dissertation Sustaining (U).

A normal progress (NP) grade may be granted by an instructor when the instructor determines that a graduate student is making normal progress in a graduate Thesis/Dissertation course. If a graduate student does not enroll for a period of one calendar year, the NP grade may change to I (Incomplete) upon approval by the Graduate Dean. The NP grade calculates into attempted credits but does not calculate into completed credits or grade point averages.

A Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grade may be granted only when the entire course requires the S/U grade or the student has elected the S/U option on or prior to the census date of the term.

22. Last Date Of Academic Activity

Each university must have in place a practice for determining and recording the Last Date of Academic Activity, whenever reporting a final grade of F, U, or RU.

23. Program Of Study

A Program of Study must be filed with the Graduate School as soon as feasible. The program of study is determined after a student has consulted with his/her advisor. The Program of Study presented for fulfillment of degree requirements must be comprised of all graduate work and at least 50% of the course work at the 700-course level or above. Any substitutions or exceptions to the catalog requirements must be noted on the program of study and require pre-approval of the Associate Dean (program director). If they are significant, Graduate Dean approval is required. Approved transfer credits should be indicated on the Program of Study. The transfer approval and official transcript must accompany the Program of Study, if not already on file in the Graduate School. Only nine credit hours may be transferred from other institutions as part of a Program of Study. Forms are available electronically in the myUSD Portal and at this [link](#). The Graduate School cannot accept the Program of Study until the student's advisor has approved. Please contact the Program Director for details of courses that may be included in the Program of Study.

24. Academic Advisor

Upon admission to the program, the Director of the Division's Graduate Program or his/her designee will act as or appoint a temporary advisor to the student enrolled in the PhD or MSc Plan A (thesis) program of study. The temporary advisor will assist the student in selection of course work. The temporary advisor monitors the student's progress for the first two semesters or until an Advisor is selected. The final thesis/dissertation advisor should be selected no later than the end of the first year. The final decision to accept the student as an advisee rests with the faculty member with the advice and consent of the Graduate Committee. The Advisor supervises and coordinates the student's research and selection of appropriate course work.

The Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences recognizes the importance of the student/advisor relationship in the student's progress to become an independent and successful scientist and accepts the Association of American Medical Colleges' *Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors*.

Students seeking to change their advisor may do so by obtaining permission from the Graduate Committee, their current advisor, and, when identified, the new advisor. Requests for changing advisors must be done in writing and must include the reason for the change. Students seeking to change advisors but have not identified and been accepted by a new advisor will have 45 calendar days to complete this process. All advisor changes are subject to review and approval by the Graduate Committee.

During the first year of training, changing primary advisors is relatively easy and should have minimal impact on the student's time to graduation. Changing advisors after the first year of training may potentially extend the student's total time in the training program. As such, changing advisors becomes more difficult the longer the student is in the program.

Students in the MSc Plan B (non-thesis) program are advised by a three member advisory committee. This committee includes the Chair of the Division's Graduate Committee and the Associate Dean and Dean of Basic Biomedical Sciences.

25. Thesis And Dissertation Committee Requirements

The role of the committee will be to monitor the student's plans and progress, and ensure that general standards of scientific and academic rigor are enforced. If necessary, the committee will serve as mediator between a mentor and student. The principle responsibilities of the mentor are to help develop the student's critical thinking skills, instill professionalism, and train the student in the scientific processes, specifically developing testable hypotheses and designing experiments to test the hypotheses. In addition, the mentor will be responsible to help the student develop a project that generates publishable data and teach the student to be proficient in scientific writing including papers and grants. The student's mentor will advise the student regarding the composition of his/her committee. The student's mentor will also be responsible for organizing the timing of the committee meetings and will also be responsible for ensuring the student meets the benchmarks. All MSc-Plan A and PhD committees are required to include at least one University of South Dakota employed member of the Division of Basic Biomedical Sciences with graduate faculty status.

MSc-Plan A thesis committees consist of at least three graduate faculty members. The committee shall include the student's thesis advisor and at least one member from outside of the student's research field of interest, typically referred to as an outside member. PhD dissertation committees consist of at least five graduate faculty members and shall include the student's dissertation advisor and one member from outside of the student's research field of interest, the outside member. Students are strongly encouraged to build a diverse supervisory committee with members from multiple sites. The membership of each student's committee should be submitted to the Division's Graduate Committee for approval by the end of the first academic year for MSc-Plan A and the end of the fifth semester for PhD. If a change to the composition of the committee occurs, the Graduate Committee must approve this change. All committee members must be identified on the student's Program of Study form. In order for a student to be eligible for graduation, all committee members must sign the student's Approval of Degree form.

The Chair of this committee is elected by the faculty membership at the first meeting of the Committee. The chair of this committee will perform the following roles: oversee the execution of the comprehensive exam and record votes to determine if the student passes or fails, lead the dissertation proposal defense and record votes to determine committee approval. Once the committee is formed and the chair is determined, the committee will convene every 6 months until the student earns candidacy. Then, the committee must meet a minimum of once a year. Decisions regarding any significant changes to the student's project must be decided by majority committee vote.

In unusual situations, there may be a need or desire for an alternative committee member that does not hold Graduate Faculty status at USD. The **alternative** committee member must be in addition to the previously described thesis/dissertation committee requirement. The Division's Graduate Committee will review such alternative committee member requests. The approved alternative committee member, whether external or internal to the University, must be involved in the evaluation of the thesis or dissertation. The alternative member may or may not serve as a voting member of the committee, at the discretion of the regular members of the thesis/dissertation advisory committee. All degree requirements remain intact when an alternate committee member serves on a thesis/dissertation committee.

26. Comprehensive Examination – PhD Only

The purpose of the required Comprehensive Exam is to assess the student's core knowledge of the first two years of coursework/training to assess the student's ability to apply the knowledge towards answering specific scientific questions and to assess the student's potential to successfully complete Ph.D. degree requirements. At the end of the second year, a PhD student should be able to readily recall elements of their coursework, form a hypothesis, and detail experiments that will directly test the hypothesis. Further, the student can demonstrate the ability to apply their fundamental knowledge to a scientific question, to critically analyze the literature, and to develop a written proposal. To sufficiently test these skills, there will be a written and oral component to this exam.

The Comprehensive Exam should be completed no later than the end of the 8th semester, counting fall, spring, and summer semesters. The exam will encompass both a written and an oral component.

Written Section: The questions for the written component must be within the student's area of primary study but different from his/her main research project. The DAC selects the written question(s) to be presented to the student. For this selection, each member of the committee designs a question and submits this question to the chair of the committee. The committee determines the appropriateness of each question before dissemination of the questions to the student (e.g. paltering questions that are too like the student's current project/expertise). When more than one question is approved, the student must choose one of the questions to answer. The student is given between two and four weeks to answer the question in a 6-15-page paper, not including references (0.5" margins, 11-point font, 1-1.15-line spacing), which will include the following elements: hypothesis, specific aims, background and significance, and experimental design. The student is not allowed help with the writing of this proposal. The expectation is not for the student to write a fundable proposal but rather to be able to understand the basic composition and expression of scientific thought. For example, the experiments proposed may not be feasible, but they should reflect the student's ability to think through and articulate his/her thoughts in an intelligible manner. All committee members will 'grade' the written exam and feedback will be given to the chair of the committee, who will then share this feedback with the student. This should occur within three calendar weeks after the student has submitted the written exam. A majority vote of the committee to pass this portion of the exam and proceed to the oral phases is required. In the event the student does not pass the written exam, the student has the option to re-take the exam once. The retake opportunity must be completed by the end of the next full semester.

Oral Section: This portion of the comprehensive exam is when the student defends her/his "passed" written exam and is tested orally on knowledge obtained through coursework, especially as it pertains to the research question central to this examination process. In this oral section of the comprehensive examination, each committee member will have an opportunity to ask questions. As was the case for the written section, the student needs a majority vote to pass this portion of the exam. In the event the student does not pass the oral section, the student has the option to re-take the exam once. The retake opportunity must be completed by the end of the next full semester.

The Dissertation Committee is responsible for assigning a pass/fail grade to the student's performance on the Comprehensive Exam. In the event of a failure of either section, the student has the option to re-take the exam once. The retake opportunity must be completed by the end of the next full semester. Deviations from this process must be approved by the Graduate Committee. For recordkeeping purposes, the Graduate Committee must be notified of the dates of the Comprehensive Examination at least one calendar week before each section. The Graduate Committee is to be notified of the outcomes of these proceedings within 2 weeks of their completion.

27. M.Sc. (Plan A Thesis) Degree Requirements

Completion of requirements for the Master of Science Plan A (thesis) degree generally takes two years for students. There is a substantial research component to the program culminating in defense of a thesis whose basis is an original contribution to the discipline. The program of study requires completion of at least 31 credit hours. Required courses include CPHD 727 (Responsible Conduct of Biomedical Research, 1 credit), CPHD 790 (Seminar, 1 credit) and CPHD 798 (Thesis Research, 15+ credit hours). Failure to earn a 'B' or better in any required course will result in referral to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee will review the student's situation and may recommend repeating the course, specific remediation activities, academic probation, or dismissal from the program. This applies to students even if their overall cumulative grade point average for all graduate work is 3.0 or higher.

28. M.Sc. (Plan B Non-thesis) Degree Requirements

MSc-Plan B is a non-thesis program of study and does not require a thesis/dissertation committee. MSc-Plan B students are advised by a three member advisory committee consisting of the Chair of the Division's Graduate Committee, Associate Dean and Dean of Basic Biomedical Sciences.

Completion of requirements for the Master of Science Plan B (non-thesis) degree generally takes two years for students. The program is often used by students seeking to improve their qualifications for admission to a highly competitive professional program (MD, OT, PT, PA). The program of study requires completion of at least 32 credit hours and can be completed in one calendar year. Required courses include CPHD 727 (Responsible Conduct of Biomedical Research, 1 credit) and CPHD 704 (Teaching Fundamentals in the Basic Sciences, 3 credit). There is no expectation or requirement for research credits in this program of study. Failure to earn a 'B' or better in any required course will result in referral to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee will review the student's situation and may recommend repeating the course, specific remediation activities, academic probation, or dismissal from the program. This applies to students even if their overall cumulative grade point average for all graduate work is 3.0 or higher.

29. Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The PhD program in Basic Biomedical Sciences requires successful completion of a minimum of 81 credit hours of coursework. The average time to complete the PhD in Basic Biomedical Sciences is currently 5.1 years. The heart of the Graduate Program lies in laboratory research leading to the publication of a thesis or dissertation. Graduate students have the opportunity to pursue collaborative research at other universities and national laboratories and also present their research findings at a variety of regional and national meetings.

The required coursework for the PhD program of study includes CPHD 610 (Experimental Design and Analysis, 3 credit hours), CPHD 720 (Foundations I, 3 credit hours), CPHD 721 (Foundation II, 3 credit hours), CPHD 727 (Responsible Conduct of Biomedical Research, 1 credit hour), CPHD 890 (Seminar, 1 credit hour each Fall and Spring semester), and CPHD 898 (Dissertation Research, 30+ credit hours required). Failure to earn a 'B' or better in any required course will result in referral to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee will review the student's situation and may recommend repeating the course, specific remediation activities, academic probation, or dismissal from the program. This applies to students even if their overall cumulative grade point average for all graduate work is 3.0 or higher. An additional minimum of 18 credit hours are required in supporting coursework. PhD students must successfully pass a comprehensive examination, defend a dissertation proposal, publish at least one manuscript as first author on the dissertation project, and defend the written dissertation.

PhD students may seek a specialization degree designation for their official USD transcript in one of five research areas. The five areas are Cancer Biology, Cardiovascular Biology, Infectious Disease, Neuroscience, and Physiology and Pharmacology. The specialization designation requires dissertation research relevant to the specialization area and an additional 15 credit hours of coursework relevant to the specialization area, not including core courses or research credits, as approved by the Division's Graduate Committee.

30. Research Proposal (PhD and MSc-Plan A only)

The purpose of the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal is to evaluate if the student's research project is appropriate and feasible, to assess the student's clarity of thought and presentation, and to assess the student's ability to defend their ideas. At this stage, the student should be able to demonstrate that she/he has sufficient background knowledge in her/his specific field of study to be able to understand the scientific question that she/he is asking. The student should be able to clearly articulate the scope of her/his project by explaining the rationale of her/his hypothesis, specific aims, and research strategy. A successful student will be able to form and communicate a feasible project.

The proposal should be written with the assistance of the student's mentor, but it should also clearly reflect the student's thoughts and work in the project. The proposal should adhere to one of two formats: a 'predoctoral' fellowship or the format specified below. If the proposal takes the form of a "predoctoral" fellowship, the student and mentor must provide the funding agency's format to the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate Committee (for reference, not approval of the format). A non-predoctoral fellowship proposal should adhere to the following format: hypothesis and specific aims (1 page), research strategy (6 – 15 pages), and references (no page limit). The page layout will use 0.5 inch margins, 11 point font and 1-1.15-line spacing.

The proposal must be distributed to the committee a minimum of 10 working days prior to the defense. The defense should evaluate the student's ability to talk intelligently about all aspects of her/his proposal. Additionally, students are expected to understand and communicate relevant background information regarding their project. Approval of the dissertation proposal, including revisions, should be completed no later than the 3rd semester for MSc – Plan A students and 8th semester for PhD students, counting fall, spring, and summer semesters. Deviations from the specified timeline will need to be submitted to the Graduate Committee for consideration.

If the student fails the Proposal Defense, the Thesis/Dissertation Committee will initially determine if the student should be allowed to retake the proposal defense. At this time, the student may exercise the option to pursue a non-thesis degree for students in the MSc –Plan A or thesis Master's degree for students in the PhD program. If the student can attempt the proposal defense again, the student's Thesis/Dissertation Committee must devise a plan and timeline for remediation and retake of the proposal defense. The remediation plan should be tailored to the student's deficiencies, and the timeline should specify a definitive date by which this process will be completed. Ideally, this process should not extend beyond one full semester following the initial attempt.

The Graduate Committee, in collaboration with the student's Dissertation Committee, will determine the consequences of the inability to pass the Comprehensive Exam or Dissertation Proposal Defense. These consequences may include, but are not limited to, dismissal from the program with or without an option to pursue Master's degree. Appropriate consequences will be determined by majority vote obtained from the voting members of the Graduate Committee and the student's Dissertation Committee.

31. Admission to Candidacy

The requirements for admission to PhD candidacy include (but are not limited to) notification of the membership of the Dissertation Advisory Committee to the USD Graduate Committee, a "B" or better average in all course work taken prior to the request for candidacy, acceptance of the student's Program of Study, presentation and approval of a satisfactory research proposal, and successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Delays in the process of determining if a student is eligible for Ph.D. candidacy must be evaluated and approved by the Graduate Committee. Any approved delay must be accompanied by a new timeline.

A PhD student should enter candidacy by the end of the ninth semester following admission to the program and at least two semesters before graduation. The semester in which the student enters candidacy counts as one of these two semesters. The student must complete the program for the degree, including the dissertation and final examination, during a seven-year period after admission to the graduate program. The Graduate School only under the most unusual circumstances grants extensions of time. Failure to complete all requirements within the time allotted requires another application for admission to the Graduate School. Re-application to candidacy with the usual comprehensive examination, or other prerequisites as determined by the Division or program committee, may be necessary.

32. Thesis Or Dissertation Guidelines

Your dissertation or thesis should be neat and technically perfect in its final form. Use the style appropriate for your discipline. Follow the most recent edition of the guideline from the Graduate School (<https://my.usd.edu/uPortal/p/graduate-school.ctf3/max/render.up?tab=21025-graduate-thesis-guide>).

33. Thesis or Dissertation Defense

A candidate for the MSc-Plan A or PhD degree must present an acceptable thesis/dissertation from within the major field. The thesis/dissertation should demonstrate that the candidate has technical competence in the field and has done independent research. The results must add to, modify what was previously known, or present a significant interpretation of the subject based upon original investigation.

The Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee conducts the final defense and must certify to the Graduate Committee that the student is ready to defend their project. A copy of the abstract of the thesis/dissertation should accompany this certification. The student distributes completed copies of the thesis/dissertation to the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee and the Division's graduate office at least ten working days before the examination. The copy provided to the Division's graduate office will be available for non-Committee members to review prior to the defense. It is the student's responsibility to furnish these copies.

The Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee chair establishes the time and place of the examination. Immediately prior to the dissertation defense, the student will present a formal research seminar open to the public. The announcement of this public seminar shall include an abstract of the dissertation. This seminar, an overview of the dissertation project, should not exceed one hour in length. After the presentation, the student defends the research project to the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee. The Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee will decide in advance how other members of the Graduate Faculty will contribute to the discussion. The Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee reviews and evaluates the written dissertation, presentation, and defense to determine the final grade of pass, pass with conditions, or fail. More than one member of the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee voting Fail constitutes a failure. In the case of Pass with Conditions, the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee will specify in writing the conditions the student must satisfy and a reasonable timeline for completion. Failure to complete the conditions within the specified time for completion will result in the dissertation defense outcome converting to Fail. In the case of a Fail, the Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee will develop a written recommendation regarding the situation. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Graduate Committee for final action.

One manuscript from the dissertation project must be accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed publication. In the case of the PhD student, the student must also be the first or lead author of the manuscript. Under extraordinary circumstances, the Graduate Committee can authorize a waiver to this requirement.

34. Individual Development Plan (IDP) requirement

Students are required to submit an IDP to the Graduate Program Coordinator on a yearly basis along with the BBS program benchmarks. Students are required to use the [NIH/AAAS IDP](#) platform. IDP's completed for grants can serve as the student's program IDP.

Appendix

1. Learning Specialist
 - a. USD Vermillion Campus Learning Specialist: Kris Brady (ID Weeks Library 101N). Phone: 677-538 • Email: Kris.Brady@usd.edu, <https://www.usd.edu/acpc/learning-specialists>.
2. Confidential Mental Health Counseling
 - a. Vermillion
 - i. USD Student Counseling Center (Free)
 1. Cook House (Cook House on Clark St) 677-5777. Counseling services for a variety of mental health services and substance abuse treatment, as well as performance of learning assessments.
 - ii. USD Psychological Services (Free)
 1. SD Union Building, room 112 677-5354. Counseling services provided by doctoral level students under supervision of clinical psychologists. Couples counseling and learning assessments are also available.
 - iii. Counseling & Family Therapy Center (Free)
 1. Delzell Education Bldg, room 20 677-5250. Offers individual & family counseling services provided by doctoral level students under supervision for a wide variety of issues.
 - b. Sioux Falls
 - i. Stronghold Counseling. 4300 S. Louise, #200 334-7713
 - ii. Great Plains Psychological Services. Stephan Langenfeld, Ed.D, LP 323-2345. 4105 S. Carnegie Place
 - iii. Dakota Psychological Center. Sliding fee scale. 1601 E. 69th St., Suite 103 373-9066 Ext. 3
 - iv. Counseling & Psychological Services. Negotiable fee. Megan J. Spawn, MA, NCC, LPC-MH, QMHP 275-2277 Ext. 106. 5000 S. Broadband Lane, Suite 107
 - v. Wellspring Therapy Center. Negotiable fee. 6901 S. Lyncrest Place 335-1516
 - vi. Catholic Family Services. Sliding fee scale. Marcie Moran, RN, MA, Ed.D., Clinical Director 1-800-700-7867. 523 North Duluth Avenue or 605-988-3775
 - vii. Bartels Counseling Services. Sherry Bartels, MA, NCC, LPC-MH, QMHP 310-0032. 101 West 69th St., Suite 100
 - viii. Conrad Counseling. Roy Conrad, PhD, LPC-MH, RPT 361-8876. 5024 S. Bur Oak Place, Suite 214
 - c. Yankton
 - i. Stronghold Counseling. 610 West 23rd St., Suite 10 334-7713
 - ii. Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services. Sliding fee scale. Thomas Stanage, Ph.D. 665-4606. 1028 Walnut
 - iii. Heartland Psychological Services. Mary Sternhagen, MA, LPC-MH, QMHP 665-0841. 904 West 23rd Street, Suite 101
 - iv. Catholic Family Services. Sliding fee scale. Sr. Kathleen Crowley, LMFT, LPC, NCC 1-800-700-7867. 1000 West 4th Street