

THE Program IN
Molecular
Biology

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus



Student Handbook

2024 - 2025



University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY PhD PROGRAM

University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus
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<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/programs/Molbio/Pages/home.aspx>

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***Disclaimer for Student Handbook**

This handbook, which includes parts of the Graduate School Rules and the Molecular Biology Program Guidelines, does not constitute a contract with the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus Graduate School, either expressed or implied. The Molecular Biology Program reserves the right at any time to change, delete, or add to any of the provisions at its sole discretion. Furthermore, the provisions of this document are designed by the Program to serve as firm guidelines rather than absolute rules, and exceptions may be made on the basis of extenuating circumstances.

**Items in this handbook will be updated as decisions and guidance are made/given during the transition of the MOLB program from the Graduate School to the School of Medicine Office of Research Education.*

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Helpful Links

Academic Calendar - see Graduate School calendars- <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/registrar/academic-calendars/2024-2025>

Campus Holiday Schedule - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/human-resources/holiday-schedules>

Bursar's Office - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student-finances/billing-payments>

Graduate School - <https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/forms-resources/resources>

- [Graduation Deadlines Thesis \(2024-2025\), Anschutz](#)
- [Format Guide for Theses and Dissertations](#)

Office of Disability, Access, & Inclusion - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/office-of-disability-access-and-inclusion/home-page>

Central Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Community Engagement - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/diversity-equity-inclusion-community>

Office of Research Education - <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/ore>

Office of Student Affairs - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student>

Registrar's Office - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/registrar>

- Resources Directory - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/registrar/student-resources/directory>

Student Finances/Financial Aid – <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student-finances/financial-aid>

Student Health Insurance - <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student/health-wellness/student-health-insurance>

Welcome to the Molecular Biology PhD Program
(<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/graduate-programs/molecular-biology>)

The Molecular Biology Program at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is dedicated to providing rigorous training to its students in a supportive environment. The molecular biology faculty are members of fourteen different departments who are applying the techniques of molecular biology to answer questions in diverse areas at the forefront of modern biology. The Program offers a unique opportunity to study a wide variety of research areas in a student-centered environment, all in the inviting setting of Denver, Colorado, just a short distance from the Rocky Mountains.

Molecular biology, the science of how living things work at the molecular level, has spearheaded the recent revolution in our understanding of human disease and led to the birth of a major new industry based on biotechnology. The goal of the Molecular Biology Program at CU is simple: to equip students for careers at the cutting edge of biology. The faculty are committed to providing students with the training they need to carry out the highest quality research using state-of-the-art techniques. The teaching philosophy here is to instill the theoretical knowledge and practical experience that enables our students to identify important questions in science, to design experiments that address those questions and to critically evaluate results. Special emphasis is placed on learning to communicate research results to others effectively. Previous graduates of the program are now working in academic, medical and biotechnology industry positions.

Molecular Biology Program faculty include members of the Departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, Cell and Developmental Biology, Medicine, Immunology and Microbiology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Pediatrics, Craniofacial Biology, Pharmacy, and Obstetrics/Gynecology and include internationally recognized experts in genetics, genomics, immunology, virology, developmental biology, cancer biology, molecular endocrinology, cell signaling, and structural biology. Their diverse interests provide students with an enormous choice of areas in which to pursue their thesis research.

The Molecular Biology Program provides students with more than classroom and research training. Students learn to present their research by participating as featured speakers in the program's excellent seminar series. Students are encouraged to interact with the seminar series' invited guests during student-centered social hours. An annual retreat to the Rocky Mountains encourages interaction between students and faculty and familiarizes the students with the research goals and progress of each faculty member. Also, the MOLB program, along with the university, continues in its efforts to increase the number of minorities, disabled, and disadvantaged students, with the goal of training all students to become important contributors to the biomedical research field and their communities.

The training of each graduate student is carefully monitored by a committee selected by the student to ensure completion of a top-quality PhD thesis project in a timely fashion (five to six years on average). Because these committees are comprised of faculty from different departments, the committee meetings have always sparked exciting discussions of the student's research.

The Molecular Biology Program has been recognized as a Center of Excellence at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. A \$5 million grant awarded in 1989 by the Lucille P. Markey Charitable Foundation allowed the program to grow and mature. In 1999, the program was awarded a highly competitive NIH pre-doctoral training grant that was renewed in 2004, 2010, 2015, and 2020 providing the funding to support and train students for years to come.

In 2001, the Program secured an endowment, the "Bolte Gift Fund", to provide travel funding for MOLB students to participate in national and international conferences and workshops. To date, more than 91 students have attended meetings or workshops with support from the Bolte Fund. The Bolte Fund also supports an annual, student hosted distinguished Bolte lectureship. In 2011, Dr. Victor Bolte passed away, and left a generous endowment to our program. Starting in 2013, the "Earleen and Victor Bolte Scholarship Fund" supports stipends for up to 3 students per year (based on anticipated income from this ~\$2 million endowment).

Molecular Biology Faculty Members

(* = non-training/emeritus faculty members)

<u>Member</u>	<u>Department</u>
Alper, Scott	NJH – BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH
Anderson, Steve	PATHOLOGY
Appel, Bruce	PEDIATRICS
Asturias, Francisco	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Barton, David	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Bates, Emily	PEDIATRICS
Bentley, David	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Black, Joshua	PHARMACOLOGY
Breuss, Martin	PEDIATRICS
Burchill, Matthew	MEDICINE
Caino, Cecilia	PHARMACOLOGY
Churchill, Mair*	PHARMACOLOGY
Cittelly, Diana	PATHOLOGY
Colgan, Sean	MEDICINE
Cooper, Julie	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Dai, Shaodong	PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
DeGregori, James	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Dunn, Julia	PEDIATRICS-GASTROENTEROLOGY
Ernst, Patricia	PEDIATRICS
Evans, Thomas	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Fantauzzo, Katherine	CRANIOFACIAL BIOLOGY
Franco, Santos	PEDIATRICS
Ford, Heide	PHARMACOLOGY
Forester, Craig	PEDIATRICS
Guthmiller, Jenna	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Heasley, Lydia	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Hesselberth, Jay	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Holers, V. Michael	MEDICINE
Hooper, Joan*	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Hu, Cheng-Jun	CRANIOFACIAL BIOLOGY
Hughes, Ethan	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Jagannathan, Sujatha	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Johnson, Aaron	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Jordan, Craig	MEDICINE
Kogut, Igor	DERMATOLOGY
Kovacs, Elizabeth	MEDICINE – Surgery-GI, Trauma, and Endocrine Surgery
Kutateladze, Tatiana	PHARMACOLOGY
Macklin, Wendy	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
McClure, Allison	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
McManaman, James*	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
McMurray, Michael	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Moore, Jeff	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Mosimann, Christian	PEDIATRICS
Mukherjee, Neelanjana	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Musselman, Catherine	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Nelson, Jessica	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Nichols, James	CRANIOFACIAL BIOLOGY
Pearson, Chad	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Pietras, Eric	MEDICINE
Potter, Huntington	NEUROLOGY
Prekeris, Rytis	CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Ramachandran, Srinivas	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Reis, Tânia	MEDICINE
Reyland, Mary	CRANIOFACIAL BIOLOGY
Richer, Jennifer	PATHOLOGY
Rissland, Olivia	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Russo, Brian	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Sagerstrom, Charles	PEDIATRICS
Santoro, Stephen	PEDIATRICS
Sartorius, Carol	PATHOLOGY
Sikora, Matt	PATHOLOGY
Sussel, Lori	PEDIATRICS

Taliaferro, Matt	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Tamburini, Beth	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Tucker, Chandra	PHARMACOLOGY
Van Dyk, Linda	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Vázquez-Torres, Andrés	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Vladar, Eszter	PULMONARY SCIENCES
Vogeli, Beat	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Voskuil, Martin	IMMUNOLOGY/MICROBIOLOGY
Watt, Kristin	DENTAL MEDICINE
Williams, Trevor	CRANIOFACIAL BIOLOGY
Zhao, Ning	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS
Zhao, Rui	BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR GENETICS

The success of each student admitted to the Molecular Biology Program is our goal. During the first two years of graduate school, there are clear and tangible milestones every graduate student must meet. In the first year, students must obtain passing grades in their coursework, successfully complete three research rotations, identify a lab for thesis research, and pass the year-end preliminary exam. In the second year, they must begin thesis research and successfully pass the comprehensive exam by the end of the Fall Semester of their third year. In the subsequent years of thesis research, the milestones become much more individualized, and success relies on a student's own self-motivation, intellectual drive, and hard work. Graduate school is not a job – it is training for a challenging career. A student's success at this stage of their training and in subsequent steps will depend on the student's own efforts. The thesis advisor and thesis committee are in place to provide scientific and professional guidance and support. It is the student's responsibility to take the initiative to work with their advisor and committee to achieve success in research and in a career. Ultimately, a student's success lies with the student!

The Molecular Biology Program has the following expectations for a student's thesis career:

1. A student must be self-motivated. Motivation should come from within and not be determined by the mentor or arbitrary deadlines.
2. A student should work the necessary hours in the lab to complete the experiments. Graduate school is not a five day a week, 9-5 job. The effort each student puts in will be reflected in the level of success and the timetable for graduation.
3. A student should be intellectually engaged in the research project. Initially, the project is often conceived by the mentor; however, by the comprehensive exam, the student should be actively participating in experimental decisions and research directions. In subsequent years, the student should take progressively more control in the execution and direction of the research.
4. A student must take initiative for their own career and take responsibility for research successes and failures. If things are not working out in the lab or with the advisor, the student should initiate actions to correct the problem. The thesis committee and student advisor exist to help, but the student must seek out that help.

(The first two years of curriculum are covered here with additional information for all MOLB students' curriculum located under Molecular Biology Program By-laws – Student Guidelines.)

The Molecular Biology Program curriculum includes didactic courses, laboratory rotations, a seminar series, and selected electives. The heart of the first-year curriculum is a basic core course (IDPT) taken by students in a number of different graduate programs at CU Anschutz during the fall semester. In addition, students rotate through three training laboratories in their first year; at the conclusion of the three rotations, the student chooses a thesis laboratory.

The CU Anschutz Graduate School requires at least 30 semester hours in course work pre-comps (rotations and research courses taken prior to the completion of the comprehensive examination and given a letter grade) and an additional 30 semester hours of thesis credits for the PhD. All work undertaken as a graduate student must comply with the academic Code of Honor (see CU Anschutz Graduate School website for details, <https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/forms-resources/resources> and listed under the 'Policies' tab. There is no maximum number of credits; if a student has accumulated the additional 30 semester hours post-comps, and is still pursuing the PhD degree, the student must continue to register for credits in increments of 5 credits per semester.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

First Year

Foundations in Biomedical Sciences, BMSC 7806, 6 credits (Fall semester)

Core Topics in Biomedical Sciences A & B, BMSC 7810, 4 credits (Fall semester) (2 credits per Topic)

*Research in Molecular Biology, MOLB 7650, 3.0 credits total (one credit per section) (Sect. 001 **and** 002 in Fall, and Sect. 001 in Spring)

3 laboratory rotations during first year, with choice of thesis lab at end of first year

See appendix for rotation dates and project guidelines

Advanced Topics in Molecular Biology, MOLB 7800, 4.0 credits (Spring semester)

This course is intended to teach graduate students how to critically evaluate scientific literature and incorporates a writing component to prepare students for the preliminary examination. A section of the course is specifically designed to prepare students for the preliminary examination at the end of the first year (see below)

Elective of student's choosing (Spring semester) (Students are encouraged to speak to their rotation lab or GAC faculty mentors, along with current program students.)

Molecular Biology Seminar (Fall and Spring semesters) *All Molecular Biology students* are required to attend these weekly seminars, but only second year students are required to register for the seminar course.

Summer Semester: No summer course work is required, but MOLB students must register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990, or 3 credits of MOLB 7650 (if instructed).

*Rotation Student Lab Questionnaire

(Students should be asking these questions before committing to the laboratory for rotation)

- 1) How often and when should I expect to meet with the lab PI? What should I prepare in advance that I should bring to those meetings (notebook, raw data, slideshow presentation, written summary of completed work)?
- 2) How should I communicate with the PI outside of any scheduled meetings? Unscheduled office visits? E-mail?
- 3) Who is the best person in the lab to consult for day-to-day technical advice?
- 4) Where can I find descriptions of standard lab protocols? When is it appropriate to search the internet for protocols that I will perform in the lab?
- 5) What is the expectation for the hours/days I should be working in the lab, in my rotation and if I were to join as a permanent member?
- 6) What is the preferred notebook format for the lab?
- 7) How do I order something? When should I re-order a lab supply before it's empty?
- 8) What do I do with dirty lab dishware?
- 9) Where are the appropriate waste containers in the lab?
- 10) What should I do in the event of a lab safety issue? Where are clean-up supplies? Where is the lab safety reference guide?
- 11) What areas do I only have access to during business hours (7am-6pm)?
- 12) Is there a weekly lab meeting or other lab/department events that I should be aware of?
- 13) How can I contact someone with a lab question after hours?
- 14) How should I store digital data files from my research in the lab?

In-state Residency Status

New students must immediately obtain documentation to support the petition for State Residency. This is a very important priority for first year students. After the first full year, only in-state tuition will be covered (assuming satisfactory academic progress), which requires that the student qualifies as an in-state resident*. The documents that must be obtained include local checking account, driver's license or State ID, and voter's registration, as well as proof of Colorado domicile. Further information will be provided during the School of Medicine Graduate Student Orientation, and you may also refer to the Registrar's Office for more information,

<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/registrar/residency>

*All US citizens and permanent residents are eligible to become Colorado residents.

**International students cannot gain residency and will remain coded at the out-of-state tuition rate; these students are NOT personally responsible for the tuition differential.

Second Year

Responsible Conduct of Research, BMSC 7811, 1.0 credit (Fall semester)

This course has been re-designed to introduce graduate students to issues around ethics of research, publication, and reviewing of manuscripts and grants.

Research in Molecular Biology, MOLB 7650, sec. 0V3 (variable credits) (Fall and Spring semesters)

At least one credit should be registered for, but more credits may be taken to get the student enrollment up to 5 credits as required in the fall and spring semesters.

Molecular Biology Seminar, MOLB 7661, 1.0 credit (Fall and Spring semesters)

The seminar series provides a forum for the presentation of scientific experiments and information in molecular biology by faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.

****All Molecular Biology students*** are required to attend these weekly seminars, but only second year students are required to register for this course.

Biostatistics and Informatics, MOLB 7950, 4.0 hours (*Fall semester) (*This course may skip years. MOLB students will be required to take the course in the term in which it is offered, or as instructed by the program.)

This course provides an overview of fundamental concepts in statistics such as hypothesis testing and estimation, and it provides an overview of statistical methods (for example, regression and analysis of variance) that apply to many areas of science. Restrictions: Enrollment in CU Anschutz graduate program or permission of the instructor.

*Rigor and Reproducibility in Biomedical Research MOLB/PHCL 7801 1.0 credit (Spring Semester) – This course is being updated for Spring 2023. More information to come.

Optional: Electives of student's choosing - from online Course Catalog and with the input of the MOLB Faculty Mentor

**Please check your didactic credits to make sure that you are on track for 30 credits minimum required for the comps exam in the fall semester of your 3rd year. Courses graded as Pass/Fail will not count towards the 30 credits.*

Summer Semester: No summer course work is required, but MOLB students must register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990 to be considered full-time and not have retirement taken from their monthly stipend.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

According to financial aid, "...In order to avoid retirement withholding from your stipend checks, Financial Aid requires students to be registered for a minimum of 5 credit hours." The exception to this is in the summer semester, students will only need to register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990 to meet full-time status.

During the first academic year, the SOM Office of Research Education (ORE) will provide students with a stipend of \$37,000 per year, paid monthly on the last working day of each month. Monthly checks are automatically deposited into the bank account specified by the student. ORE also pays tuition, fees, and health/dental insurance for first year students. After the first year is completed, the chosen thesis faculty mentor will pay thereafter. Students are responsible for books, housing, etc.

Not registering and paying a tuition bill by the set deadlines of the Registrar and Bursar's Offices will result in a \$60.00 late fee. Students are personally responsible for paying all late fees and fines.

Students' academic expenses, including stipend, will be paid until graduation contingent on the student meeting the following conditions:

- 1) Satisfactory academic progress.
- 2) Eligibility for in-state tuition after the first year. Students who fail to qualify for in-state residency will be personally responsible for the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition (international students excepted).
- 3) Preliminary examination is passed at the end of the first year.
- 4) Comprehensive examination completed and passed by end of fall semester of 3rd academic year.
- 5) Chosen research advisor will provide financial support to the student beginning in the second year and continuing to graduation. Support includes stipend, tuition, fees, and health/dental insurance.

GRANT SUPPORT

Students are encouraged to explore the possibility of obtaining grant support whenever possible. Information for federal and non-federal funding is available online through the university's Office of Grants and Contracts and through the Graduate School's website.

HEALTH INSURANCE

For the most up to date student health insurance information regarding eligibility, dates, deadlines, and the process to waive insurance, please visit: <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student/health-wellness/student-health-insurance>

Fall 2024

Coverage Period:

August 1 – December 31, 2024

Waiver Period:

July 22 – September 7, 2024

Spring 2025

Coverage Period:

January 1 – July 31, 2025

Waiver Period:

December 13, 2024 –
February 8, 2025

Summer 2024 ONLY

Coverage Period:

June 1 – July 31, 2024

Waiver Period:

May 1 – June 14, 2024

Only students who are *newly* admitted and enrolled for Summer 2024 are required to enroll or waive for the Summer semester.

If you have any questions, email the Office of Student Insurance at studentinsurance@cuanschutz.edu or call 303-837-2127.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Checking Account

It is important to establish a checking account as soon as possible. The University issues all pay checks, including student stipends, as automatic deposits. Students should be sure they have a voided check or savings account deposit slip available when filling out payroll forms. Students are also required to produce a Social Security card for payroll purposes.

UC Identification Card/Badge

Everyone on campus must carry an Anschutz Medical Campus security access badge, which also acts as a photo identification card. This badge serves many purposes including enabling students to access the library, obtain parking, gain access to buildings after hours, and attend special University functions.

E-mail Access

Graduate students will be provided with an email address (cuanschutz.edu) by which the university and the MOLB program will communicate. It is your responsibility to check and maintain this address. If you have questions regarding e-mail access or encounter difficulties, please contact the Office of Information Technology, <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/office-of-information-technology/about-oit>

Molecular Biology Program By-Laws

Mission of Program: To foster excellence in molecular biology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and at the Graduate School.

Vision Statement for Program: The Molecular Biology Program at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is one of the premiere molecular biology training programs nationally. This is accomplished through the enhancement of creative, original research as presented in well-recognized journals and at national symposia; by increasing the level of peer-reviewed support; and through the influence of our graduates and their accomplishments. We recognize that the achievement of our goals is inseparable from the recruitment and training of the highest quality graduate students; thus, these activities represent our primary vehicle. Since success of the program is dependent upon the dedicated individual efforts of our faculty, the program facilitates their efforts by (i) fostering communication and interaction among all molecular biology researchers, (ii) providing a resource for the dissemination of information regarding the application of molecular biology to all areas of medical research, (iii) helping to increase funding of the program membership, (iv) providing common facilities and shared instrumentation, and (v) enhancing faculty recruitment by individual departments. These achievements are realized through full open participation of all program members as a team in which each member has the opportunity to influence the direction of the program and recognizes their individual responsibility to work in support of the program's activities.

Program Administration: The Director of the Molecular Biology Program is elected by MOLB Training faculty. The Program Director serves a 5-year term with possible re-election for another 5-year term. The Associate Director is also elected by MOLB Training Faculty; however, the final appointment of Associate Director rests with Program Director. Both Program Director and Associate Director will serve as MOLB T32 co-PIs and are responsible for administering and renewing the T32.

The Director is responsible for the vision and direction of the Program, funding, budgets, and overall administration. The program has a steering committee (five members, plus the Director and the PI of the T32 training grant, plus Associate Director and co-PI on T32 training grant) that coordinates the policies and administration of the program. The steering committee is appointed annually by the Program Director. The steering committee members serve as Chairs of the Program subcommittees including seminar, curriculum, admissions & recruitment, membership and Graduate Student Advisory (GAC). A Program Administrator is responsible for maintaining and monitoring the academic records of students, financial records and budgets, and providing administrative support for committees, program-specific activities, and courses.

Selection of Committee Chairs and Committee members: Each committee Chair will serve for a maximum of three years with one more year as a regular committee faculty to help with a transition. To ensure that all training faculty have an equal opportunity to apply, a call-for-applications will be sent to all MOLB faculty. Committee Chairs will be selected by Program Director and Associate Director from all applicants. If possible, preference will be given to faculty who are already serving on the corresponding committee or have served on a similar committee in the past. Regular committee faculty will be selected from applicants by the Committee Chair. To apply for Committee Chairs or Committee Faculty, MOLB training faculty should submit a bio sketch and short (no more than 1 page) Personal Statement. Personal Statement should include but is not limited to a statement of why the applicant wants to serve on the committee, as well as a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Each Committee will also have at least two (more if needed) student representatives with full voting rights. Students will serve for a maximum of two years and will be selected by the Committee Chair. To ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to apply, a call for applications will be sent to all MOLB students.

Admissions and Recruitment Committee: The Admissions and Recruitment Committee is charged with making policy proposals to the faculty and implementing the approved policies to enable recruitment of the top students seeking graduate education in the diverse molecularly oriented fields represented by our training faculty. The committee is charged with devising strategies for “marketing the program”, for informing prospective applicants and advisors of the advantages of our program, for actively pursuing qualified students who express an interest in molecular biology, for collecting application materials, coordinating student interview visits, informing faculty and students of the purpose of these visits to maximize their recruiting utility, for making admissions decisions, and for conducting post-admissions surveys to improve future recruiting efforts. The committee should coordinate efforts with the Student Advisor so that special conditions, deficiencies, etc. can be recognized and rectified or accommodated.

Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GAC): The GAC advises students and approves their individual curricula, explains program and graduate school regulations and meets with the students regularly to discuss their progress, problems, questions, concerns and suggestions. All rotations also need to be approved by GAC. Specifically, the GAC duties are to:

1. Integrate first year students into the program and serve as their main academic advisor until they join a thesis laboratory at the end of the first year.
2. Serve as a liaison between students and the steering committee and faculty.
3. Work with second year students to ensure they are appointing their committees and preparing for their comprehensive examination.
4. Prepare an annual report on the students' progress to be presented to the year-end general faculty meeting.
5. Work with the administrator and the program director to monitor the progress of students, making certain that students are meeting program requirements or remediating deficiencies in a timely manner.
6. Establish regulations and guidelines for student performance and oversee documentation of these guidelines consistent with graduate school regulations by working through the steering committee and the faculty.
7. Oversee students receive proper documentation and filing of a signed acknowledgment of the receipt of all regulations and guidelines.
8. Supervise the administration of the preliminary examination at the end of the first year.
9. Approve rotations.

Seminar Committee: The Molecular Biology Seminar Series is a key element that bonds the program on a regular basis. It should be organized to maximize participation and be an enjoyable scientifically stimulating experience for the speakers and the audience. This committee is charged with soliciting suggestions from students and training faculty regarding potential seminar speakers, formulating policy recommendations regarding the seminar program, selecting quality outside speakers that will give the audience a balanced interesting seminar series, and for coordinating arrangements for speakers and the maintenance of the seminar schedule. Working together with the Program Administrator, the committee coordinates travel arrangements for invited speakers, and supports the host who made the invitation. The committee should see that seminars are widely advertised so that all faculty and students and academic leadership of the Anschutz Medical Campus that we serve are aware of our seminars. The committee should maximize attendance and participation by Molecular Biology students, faculty, and associated laboratory members. The committee should ensure that all participants in the program receive advance notice of their seminar dates, understand their time limitations and the audience they are addressing and understand how to operate the lights and projector in the room that they are using.

Curriculum Committee: The curriculum offered to our students should provide them with both a foundation in basic knowledge and the skills to pursue necessary knowledge throughout their careers. Coursework should provide students with basic skills in critically evaluating the literature. With beginning students, these skills will need to be further developed through work in their thesis labs and with their committees, but courses should provide a firm foundation to enable this development. The curriculum committee is charged with making recommendations to the steering committee (and the faculty) regarding course offerings for trainees. The committee should annually evaluate the quality of our current courses, make specific recommendations to the course directors and instructors, and evaluate proposals for new courses. The committee should evaluate the curriculum and make recommendations regarding unmet needs. The committee should solicit input from faculty, students and graduates in evaluating our didactic accomplishments and needs.

Symposium Committee: The committee's responsibilities are to plan and organize the annual Molecular Biology symposium, including coordinating student participation, registration, fundraising and timely announcements regarding the symposium.

Faculty Membership Committee: Maintaining a faculty who are committed to graduate education and who effectively conduct imaginative research programs is critical to the success of the program. The membership committee is charged with 1) evaluating new faculty member applications, and 2) reviewing current members' credentials and participation.

1) New Faculty Membership

Application and Evaluation Process. The membership committee is the initial contact for prospective faculty and advises potential applicants of the criteria and Program requirements for membership. The membership committee receives and evaluates written application forms and CVs. Applicants who meet the criteria of the Program on paper are invited by the committee to present a research seminar, meet with students, and interview with the committee. The committee then

makes a recommendation to the Steering Committee regarding the suitability of the candidate. To aid in the committee's evaluation, confidential comments from faculty and students are solicited after the research seminar and meeting with students. The Steering Committee considers the recommendation from the Membership Committee and then decides whether to take the candidate's application forward to the general faculty meeting for a vote. Admission to the Program requires a 2/3 affirmative vote by a quorum of the Program faculty. A quorum is defined as 2/3 of the total faculty. Ballots will be sent to all members by email. They can vote Yes, No or ask that the candidate be discussed at the next faculty meeting.

Criteria for Selection of Program Faculty ("Training Faculty). Faculty membership does not require research in a specific area of molecular biology. Individuals will be favored for membership who have an active program of hypothesis-driven or discovery-based research of fundamental regulatory processes at the molecular level. Just using the techniques of molecular biology to study problems at the cellular or organism level may not qualify.

The criteria for the selection of program faculty include all members of CU faculty who (i) are active as a principal investigator on an NIH R01 or equivalent grant with a stable pattern of funding (with the exception noted below for junior faculty), (ii) are active in the training of graduate students or postdoctoral fellows, (iii) have a history of active participation in graduate training activities including support for departmental PhD training programs and graduate (PhD) teaching activities, (iv) are actively involved as a major research interest in molecular biological research as defined above, (v) are independently appointed, not subservient to the aims of other investigators, and at the rank of assistant professor or above¹. Full-time faculty at National Jewish Center (NJC) with university-equivalent rank of Assistant Professor and above, with joint appointments in a CU basic sciences department, and who meet all other criteria as stated above, are also eligible for membership. Since the Molecular Biology Program is dependent on active participation, faculty will be favored for admission who are members of only a few other interdepartmental or departmental graduate training program. Faculty are required to have independent programs since they are expected to be able to protect the academic training opportunities for their students. Thus, generally, only faculty in the regular series as defined by the CU School of Medicine criteria will be considered for program admission. Exceptions can be made for faculty in the Research Professor series if they are able to devote significant effort to education.

For exceptionally qualified new assistant professors (M.D. or PhD), the funding criterion is temporarily waived for a period of up to three years provided the candidate's chair writes a letter stating that the department will guarantee the stipend, tuition, insurance, fees and funds to support the student's research until the completion of the PhD, if the faculty member fails to obtain grant funding and exhausts available setup funds. The membership committee must also be provided with the junior faculty candidate's application file including the letter from the candidate's chair, etc., an updated current research plan, and any other materials that are required to assure that the candidate will provide a quality graduate training experience that fulfills the program's goals.

2) Non-training Faculty Members

a. Non-training faculty members have all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of training faculty members except non-training faculty will not serve as primary mentors for graduate students in the MOLB Program.

Non-training faculty members, like MOLB Program Training Faculty, are expected to regularly:

- i. serve on MOLB graduate student comprehensive and thesis committees,
- ii. teach in MOLB courses,
- iii. attend MOLB Program seminars, retreats and symposium,
- iv. serve on MOLB Program standing committees,
- v. attend and vote at MOLB Program Faculty Meetings.

Non-training faculty membership will be recommended for MOLB Program faculty who wish to participate in the academic aspects of the MOLB Program but are unable to support graduate student thesis research in their labs. Non-training faculty members also need to maintain active graduate school appointments.

¹Generally defined as a tenure track appointment.

3) **Review of Current Training Faculty**

Program Membership for both training and non-training faculty members will be reviewed at least every five years. The faculty undergoing review will be contacted by the Program Administrator and will provide a bio sketch and training statement. The statement should include a description of faculty participation in MOLB, a statement of their efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the faculty member's training record. Specifically, the training record will include: (a) names of all students that are either currently training in the laboratory (all programs, not just MOLB) or graduated from the laboratory in the last 5 years; (b) number and bibliographical information of papers published by all students; (c) all the conferences attended by students in last 5 years; (d) all intramural and extramural funding and awards received by students in last 5 years; and (e) current employment information of students that graduated in last 5 years. The membership committee will evaluate whether re-appointment of program faculty as a training or non-training member is warranted based on the faculty member's previous involvement in the MOLB Program, their promise of continued contributions, mentorship success and the criteria described above for new faculty members. Recommendations by the membership committee will be approved or disapproved by Program Director and Associate Director. If the majority of the steering committee does not support continued membership, the affected faculty member will be notified by the Program Director. If the faculty member wants to continue membership, the matter will be discussed by and brought to a vote of the program faculty. A simple majority is required to enable continued membership.

Student Admissions Requirements: A baccalaureate degree in biological or physical science or in engineering is required. There is no absolute requirement for grade point average above that required by the graduate school, but successful applicants will generally have GPAs above 3.2 (A=4.0). Students seeking admission should have taken Organic Chemistry (2 semesters; 1 semester of laboratory), General Physics, college level mathematics through Calculus or in Probability and Statistics or Computer Science (1 year). Students with deficiencies may be admitted, but these must be rectified during the first year. Courses in Biochemistry, Biophysical Chemistry, and Biology or Genetics are recommended, as is prior substantive research experience either as part of undergraduate training, summer programs, or work responsibilities.

Advisor's Financial Responsibilities: The School of Medicine Office of Research Education (ORE) is financially responsible for first-year student stipends, plus student tuition and all associated expenses and fees (including health and dental insurance). ORE will cover these expenses only until July 1 of the student's first year. The student's thesis advisor is financially responsible for these expenses for the remainder of the training program. The advisor is responsible for making a financial projection for the student's expected tenure and assuring the MOLB Program Director and ORE that they have reasonable expectation of being able to support the student during this entire period. This projection/assessment must be completed before a student is given permission to begin their thesis research in the advisor's lab.

Molecular Biology Program By-Laws – Student Guidelines

First Year Requirements:

Colorado Residency: First year students who are U.S. citizens must take proper steps at time of arrival on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus to begin the process of establishing Colorado residency, so that this is completed ***prior to the start*** of the Fall Semester of the student's second year. For more information, <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/registrar/residency>

If residency has not been established by this deadline (start of fall semester of second year), the student is responsible for the non-resident portion of tuition that exceeds the resident amount.

Course Work

During the first year, students are required to take the “**Foundations in Biomedical Sciences**”, **BMSC 7806**, (6 credits) and “**Core Topics in Biomedical Sciences (A and B)**”, **BMSC 7810**, (at least 2 credits for each A and B blocks), for a total of at least 10 credits in the fall semester. These are required courses for all first year PhD graduate students at CU Anschutz, and cover the fundamentals of biochemistry, cell biology, molecular biology, and genetics. Molecular Biology students will now take Responsible Conduct of Research (**BMSC 7811**) during the fall semester of their second year.

An additional required course taken in the spring semester is **Advanced Topics in Molecular Biology**, **MOLB 7800** (Spring, **4 credits**.) (*see below for more information regarding 7800). This course is intended to teach students how to critically evaluate scientific literature, design research projects, and communicate research projects in the form of written proposals. Papers are chosen by the instructors and formal presentations are made by students. The topics vary somewhat each year, but typically cover nucleic acids, chromatin structure, DNA replication, RNA transcription and processing, and cell biology at the molecular level. MSTP students that join the MOLB program are not required to take this course.

One additional elective course is taken in the Spring semester. Electives should be chosen to meet the research interests of the student and should be made in consultation with the MOLB GAC members. Elective courses change from semester to semester and year to year. The best way to find out about elective courses being offered is to watch your email for course announcements, check the online course catalog to see what is being offered, talk to senior students, those in the labs in which you rotate, and your GAC members.

First year students must complete three laboratory/research rotations over the first year for 1 credit each (**MOLB 7650 Research**), *register for both sec 001 and sec 002 in the **fall** semester, and sec 001 in the **spring** semester.*

In some instances, a 4th rotation may be needed. Decisions will be made with input from the MOLB GAC Advisor, MOLB Program Director and the Associate Dean of Research Education.

***MOLB 7800** (course directors will have some leeway in deciding the exact number of days for different sections):

- 1) The first class of MOLB 7800 provides an overview (goals, expectations, grading, etc.) by course directors.
- 2) The second class will be an introduction to writing research proposals, as students will be asked to write a short proposal for each block of the course.
- 3) Blocks 1-3 of MOLB 7800 focus on specific areas of Molecular Biology. Each block consists of 8 classes, including an introductory lecture, 5-6 paper discussions, and the final class to discuss the proposals submitted by the students. Every student writes a short proposal based on the papers from that block. Proposals are critiqued by course faculty and students.
- 4) Block 4 focuses on proposal writing. Each student chooses one “miniproposal” from the earlier blocks to expand into a ~7-page document with formatting requirements equivalent to an NIH F31 application. A short section on rigor, repeatability, and reproducibility is required. Proposals are critiqued by course faculty and students. The final grade is based on the quality of the proposal, critiques, and in-class participation.

Students are required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average throughout the program. Additionally, the Molecular Biology Program requires students to earn a grade of B (3.0) or better in all required courses, regardless of the overall grade point average. If a student receives a B- in any required course, they may be allowed, at the discretion of the program faculty, to either retake the course or perform remedial work acceptable to Molecular Biology faculty. Should the student be allowed

to retake a required course in which they have received a grade of less than a B (3.0), it must be done by the end of the next academic year. Students are placed on probation by the Graduate School if their grade point average falls below 3.0 and are dismissed from the program if the grade point average is not raised to 3.0 within one semester.

Summer Semester: No summer coursework is required, but to be considered a full-time student MOLB students must register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990, Thesis Research.

Research Rotations: Students are required to take research rotations in the laboratory of three different faculty members of the program. Each rotation lasts for ten weeks, and they are conducted over the fall and spring semesters. While taking Core I, students will be expected to approach several faculty they are considering for their first rotation. In August, MOLB will also organize “lightning talks” by MOLB faculty that are accepting rotation students. As part of this process, beginning of September trainees will attend 1-2 lab meetings of several possible rotation labs. Just before picking their first rotation trainees will self-report to MOLB Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GAC) how many lab meetings (and in which labs) they attended. Note that lab meeting attendance does not imply that the trainee is committed to a lab rotation but is designed to help trainees decide what will be their choices for lab rotations. Attending lab meetings from several labs will also be an opportunity to get exposed to different scientific topics, as well as to start learning scientific thinking and analysis. Finally, trainees will attend the annual MOLB Program Retreat at the end of October; the exposure and opportunities for interaction with potential rotation faculty will only help with second and third rotation selection, since trainees will have already begun their first rotation.

Academic Year 2024-2025 – Rotation schedule

- Trainees will get one week off in between each 10-week rotation.
- **First rotation** will start on September 9, 2024 and will end on November 15, 2024.
- **Second rotation** will start on November 25, 2024 and end on February 21, 2024, includes time off for holiday break, 12/18/24-1/5/25
- **Third rotation** will start on March 3, 2025, and end on May 16, 2025.
- Towards the end of each rotation, First Year students will be scheduled to present a rotation talk (see below).

Selection of laboratories for research rotations should be a decision made mutually by the student and the participating faculty. However, all rotations must be approved by GAC. Factors such as space, number of students in a laboratory and how much time and effort a faculty member can spend should be considered. Projects are selected to challenge the student but are adjusted in scope so that a logical conclusion can be reached within a one-rotation period. These rotations are used to introduce students to the techniques of molecular research, facilitate the development of the logic required for conducting research, and give the student an opportunity to view, first-hand, laboratories in which they may choose to perform their thesis research.

At the beginning of the rotation students will be expected to develop (together with faculty) a 2–3-page research proposal that includes “Significance” and “Specific Aims”, to be submitted to GAC at the end of the first week of the rotation. Additionally, rotation faculty and rotation student must fill and sign the “Expectations Form” that can be obtained from GAC.

Rotations with non-MOLB faculty are strongly discouraged and will only be allowed in exceptional cases. These rotations must be approved by GAC and Program Director.

The success and quality of the rotation will be judged more on the knowledge of the rotation topic rather than amount of the data they collected. At the end of each rotation, trainees will give a ~10-15 min presentation (the “rotation talk”). The presentation should focus on the questions that were investigated, specifically: 1) what is the main hypothesis, 2) what is the significance and innovation (conceptual or technical), 3) what were the main questions tested, 4) what would be appropriate short and long term future directions. The rotation should not emphasize data collected during the rotation. At the beginning of each rotation, training faculty must communicate clearly to a trainee that collecting data is not the primary goal of the rotation. Instead, while doing experiments, trainees should focus on reading literature related to the project and discussing the goals, approaches, and significance of the project with their rotation mentor and lab mates. Students should consult with the director of the rotation laboratory in putting together and practicing their talks.

Students will complete three research rotations for 1 credit per rotation (MOLB 7650, Research). Students are evaluated on the basis of their performance by each rotation lab mentor, and this will be used as one criterion for advancement to the second year of the program. Evaluations will be two-fold. The director of the rotation laboratory will not only grade the student for 1 credit of research but will provide a written critique of the student's understanding of the material, ability to design experiments, bench and organizational skills, and quality of laboratory notebook. Evaluations are completed electronically on the Graduate School website by the faculty, discussed with the student, and placed in the student's file.

Seminar Program: The program holds a weekly seminar in which faculty, postdoctoral fellows, students and invited outside speakers present talks on their research. The seminar series is a major focus for the program in that it draws everyone together weekly and keeps individuals abreast of research in progress as well as scientific techniques and expertise present within the program. This seminar series is beneficial to all participants. It helps students learn and practice presentation skills that will be important in their careers and helps enormously in finding the appropriate colleague to consult when problems arise in individual research efforts. Outside faculty speaker visits are scheduled to maximize interactions between both students and faculty. Starting in their second year, students will register for a course (MOLB 7661) and receive credit for attending the seminars. Students do not register for this course in the first year but are required to attend.

Retreat: The program holds an annual two-day scientific retreat at an off-campus site. (For 2023, the annual retreat will be held at YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch (Granby, CO).) Faculty, students, and other members of faculty laboratories present either poster or oral presentations of their research in progress. The schedule for the retreat is arranged to ensure a vigorous exchange of information and to promote collegiality among participants. All students are required to attend and present a poster or talk at the annual retreat.

Preliminary Examination (See more detailed guidelines in Appendix 2): At the completion of the first year, students must take a Preliminary Examination which is required by the Graduate School and facilitated by each program for their students. The Preliminary Exam format is in the form of a written mini-proposal, which is defended in a one-hour oral exam, administered in or around the third week of June by a standing committee within the program.

The general format for the Preliminary Exam administered by the Molecular Biology Program is a written research proposal with an oral examination.

- 1) Students will be given a group of papers (3-5) on a single topic.
- 2) The students are to write an NIH/NRSA fellowship style proposal based on the papers provided (1-page Specific Aims plus 6 pages Research Strategy) maximum). Organization into the sections specified for an NIH/NRSA grant is recommended. An additional page addressing rigor, repeatability and reproducibility including a detailed Methods section is required (as of Spring 2017).
- 3) Students will be given 3-4 weeks to write the proposal
- 4) A tutorial will be provided in the spring semester of each year in MOLB7800 (see below) to provide the students with information on guidelines, fundamentals, and strategies of grant writing.
- 5) A standing (and rotating) committee consisting of 5 members of the Molecular Biology Program will choose the topic and papers, read the proposals, and administer the oral exam. In addition, each student will be assigned a mentor from this committee. Typically, a committee member will have no more than 2 students to mentor, reviewing the proposal with the student and offering broad suggestions on content.
- 6) Students will be graded on a Pass or Fail basis.
- 7) If a student fails, they may have one opportunity to re-take the exam in the next 2-3 months. One option for this re-take format might be that the student is told about their deficiencies and asked to revise and rewrite/represent that part of the proposal based on the criticism.

Evaluation and Selection of Thesis Advisor: The program faculty will evaluate the overall performance of the student based on three areas: course work, laboratory rotations and the preliminary examination. This will take place at the general faculty meeting in late June. Upon successful completion of this evaluation, students then select a thesis advisor

and a project. Selection of the thesis advisor should be the mutual decision of the student and the program faculty member. If a student does not match with a thesis advisor by the end of the third rotation, a fourth rotation in the summer can be performed (see Appendices 5 & 6) with the approval of the Program Director and ORE, provided the student is otherwise in good standing in the Program (B or better in all required courses and has passed the Preliminary Exam). The Program will make every effort to assist a student in finding a suitable thesis advisor. Nonetheless, matriculation into a thesis lab is required for continuation into the second year in the Molecular Biology Graduate Program.

Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GAC): Students in their first year should consult on a regular basis with the GAC. This provides a mechanism for continuous rapport to be established between one faculty member and students throughout the critical first year. This permits continuous monitoring of potential problems and a useful way for students to have input into the program. The GAC consults regularly with program faculty regarding student questions and concerns.

Program Transfers: For students matriculating directly into a Basic Science PhD Program, there is an expectation that you will remain in that Program. You have matriculated into that Program by virtue of having applied and been accepted. Thus, there is a substantial bilateral commitment. Transferring from a Program, at any point, is actively discouraged. If there are issues with an individual mentor or a perceived lack of research laboratory options, it is expected that solutions will first be explored within the Program. Program transfer will only be approved under exceptional circumstances, and then only after successful completion of the preliminary exam at the end of the first year.

Second Year Requirements:

Course Work: In consultation with the program student advisor and the thesis advisor, students may choose additional elective courses to round out their expertise in selected areas and to provide general knowledge in others. For the fall semester, students must register for Responsible Conduct of Research, BMSC 7811, 1.0 credit. This course has been re-designed to introduce graduate students to issues around ethics of research, publication, and reviewing of manuscripts and grants. Also, Biostatistics and Informatics (MOLB 7950, 4 credits (as offered)). Continued participation in the Research Seminar Program is required and students must now register for this as a course for credit (MOLB 7661, 1 credit, fall and spring semesters). The seminar course will be graded based on participation, and the spring semester grade will in part be based on the student's research seminar presentation (see below). Additionally in the spring semester, students must register for Rigor and Reproducibility in Biomedical Research (BMSC 7812, 1.0 credit (Pass/Fail)). Additionally, students must register for MOLB 7650 sec. OV3 (Research in Molecular Biology) (variable credits) each semester during their second year.

Graduate School requirements stipulate that students must accumulate or be registered for 30 credits (letter graded credits and not including credits of 8990) prior to taking the comprehensive exam, scheduled no later than the end of fall semester of the third year. Thus, students are urged to transfer credits for any graduate level courses taken from their previous universities. Please check your didactic credits to make sure that you are on track for 30 credits minimum for the comprehensive exam in the fall semester of your 3rd year. Courses graded as Pass/Fail will not count towards the 30 credits.

Summer Semester: No summer course work is required, but MOLB students must register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990 to be considered full-time.

Research Seminar: In the spring, second year students present a seminar on their research in progress. This is given as part of the program's weekly research seminar series. This serves to focus the student's research project and to provide training in oral presentation skills. Students should meet with their thesis advisory committee (see below) immediately following the spring seminar presentation.

Retreat: Students are required to attend and participate in the annual Molecular Biology Program Retreat, fall semester.

Symposium: A valuable component of the Molecular Biology Program is the annual Symposium covering seminars on timely topics of interest. The annual topic is selected jointly by faculty and students (3rd years) of the curriculum committee. The symposium seminars are given by prominent visiting scientists and program members, who are experts on

the topic of interest. Although the symposium is not taken for a grade, all students are expected to participate, beginning in their second year and throughout the remainder of the program. All 3rd year students are expected to assist in organizing and implementing the symposium which will occur in their third year.

Round Tables: Beginning in the second year and throughout the remainder of the training program, all students are expected to participate and help organize Round Table Journal Club. Round Table Journal Club is monthly meeting that will be held once a month (September – May). The Molecular Biology Program will provide light snacks. Training grant appointed students will serve as coordinators and decide on a topic and the guests to be invited. The basic format is flexible, but generally one or two students (from any year) will present a paper of their choice to be discussed by all participating students. Alternatively, a student may choose to present their research project or an idea about new possibilities. Twice a year (once every semester) students will invite local outside speaker of their choice. Generally, the goal is for students to learn about a new area of interest, including alternative career options. Thus, speakers may be either academic researchers, representatives of industry or other potential alternative career pathways.

Selection of Thesis Advisory Committee (See more detailed guidelines in Appendix 4): Students are expected to form a thesis advisory committee by March of their second year. This should be done in consultation with the program student advisor and the thesis advisor. The committee will have its first meeting with the student ideally on the afternoon following the spring seminar presentation, or as soon thereafter as possible. The first charge of the thesis advisory committee will be to guide and evaluate the student's research progress to this point, to set the guidelines for the upcoming comprehensive examination and to set a tentative date for the comprehensive examination. The committee is composed of four members, with at least three members coming from MOLB Program faculty; the Chair must be a Molecular Biology faculty member. All committee members must have appointments in the Graduate School; it is the responsibility of the student to ascertain that a proposed committee member has an active appointment in the Graduate School. Additional committee members can be added during the course of the thesis work to provide expertise if needed. After the comprehensive exam is completed and the student has advanced to the PhD candidacy, the student's mentor may become a member of the committee, and one of the former committee members may be dropped. The mentor may be a voting member but may not be the Chair.

The primary focus of faculty serving on student thesis advisory and comprehensive exam committees should be the education of the student. If a faculty member identifies or foresees any conflict of interest, they should recuse themselves from the committee or decline an invitation to serve. One potential source of such conflicts is the presence on the same committee of a faculty member's spouse. Accordingly, thesis advisory and comprehensive exam committees for students in the Molecular Biology PhD Program should not include spouse pairs. Training faculty in the Molecular Biology PhD program outnumber students, and students are allowed to include faculty from outside the program on their comprehensive exam and thesis advisory committees. Additionally, students are encouraged to seek advice from faculty outside of their committees. Restricting spouses from serving on the same committee is therefore not expected to create any practical burden.

It is the duty of the committee to advise the student and to monitor the student's progress, and report to the student advisor. Students must meet with their committee at least annually; more frequently is advisable. This committee is also charged with administering the comprehensive examination and guiding the student throughout their thesis project. It is the responsibility of the student to form the committee, submit the names of all members to the Molecular Biology office, arrange annual committee meetings (to take place after the seminar), inform the members and the Molecular Biology office in writing of the date and place of the meetings (at least two weeks in advance), and prepare a written progress report of their research.

Students will meet with their committee in the spring semester of the 2nd year to discuss the format of the comprehensive examination (see below). This "pre-comprehensive exam" meeting is for the student to introduce themselves and their project and get advice on their project from the committee, and for the student and committee to ensure that everyone is aware of general exam format and requirements.

It is the responsibility of the committee chair to complete the on-line evaluation of each committee meeting through the web site (<https://gs.ucdenver.edu/gaia/pprog/>), which is automatically submitted to the program administrator who then sends a copy to the Student Advisor. This summary should include: 1) the student's progress since the last committee meeting; 2) planned studies for the immediate future; 3) indication of how student's progress relates to the specific aims of the thesis proposal presented in the comprehensive exam; 4) manuscripts published, in press, or in preparation; and 5)

number of years in the program as well as anticipated date of completion. Summaries are signed off by committee via the web site and completed within one week following the committee meeting.

Third Year Requirements:

Course Work: In the fall semester of the third year, students register for MOLB 7650 sec. OV3 (Research in Molecular Biology for 5 credits) if they still need research hours to complete the required 30 hours prior to the comprehensive exam. If the student has taken additional electives or has transferred credits from other schools, the 30 hours may already be fulfilled. In such cases, students will register for MOLB 8990 (Doctoral Thesis in Molecular Biology for 5 credits) throughout the remainder of time in the program.

Summer Semester: No summer course work is required, but MOLB students must register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990 to be considered full-time.

Comprehensive Examination (See more detailed guidelines are in Appendix 4): Students are expected to have demonstrated competence in research during their second year and to have generated preliminary data to prepare for the comprehensive examination. This exam requires the written submission of a research proposal that describes the actual thesis project planned by the student. The proposal should be written in an NIH grant format to contain the following sections: specific aims, background and significance, preliminary data, experimental design and approach, and a supporting bibliography. While the overall project goals are formulated in consultation with the mentor, at least one aim should be based on the student's ideas. Students should consult with their committee chair and NIH guidelines for how to format the written portion of the exam. The proposal should be written to be as close as possible to the realistic goals of the thesis project and should not be an overly ambitious proposal for an entire laboratory group. The thesis advisor should read the proposal and provide general comments to the student prior to submission. The student can also seek advice from other colleagues, but again, advice should be limited to general comments so that the proposal is developed by the student. The student defends this proposal orally at the examination. The oral portion of the exam will also test general knowledge through questioning related to the proposal. Started in Spring 2017, all students must add a section on rigor, repeatability and reproducibility, similar to what is now being required for new NIH R01 grants, <http://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm>

To schedule the exam, students must have completed or be registered to have 30 credit hours (letter graded credits only). A packet of appropriate forms and instructions must be obtained online from the Graduate School website and returned with all signatures at least two weeks prior to the date of exam. Also, students should submit their completed written portion to committee members at least two weeks in advance of the exam date. Students must obtain written approval of the topic of their proposal from the chair of their advisory committee and submit this to the Molecular Biology Office before beginning preparation of the written portion of the exam. This is accomplished sometime after the "pre-comprehensive exam" meeting in the previous spring semester (see above). The format of the oral portion of the exam will be set by the committee chair. During the exam, the student and the mentor will be asked to step outside individually, to allow each to briefly address the committee with any concerns. Students are required to take the exam no later than the end of the fall semester, though earlier in the summer or fall is preferable. Upon successful completion of this exam, the student is advanced to PhD candidacy.

Research Seminar: In the fall semester (if the schedule permits) of the third year, students present a seminar on their research progress at the weekly program seminar series. Students do not register for Research Seminar for credit in the third year or in subsequent years, but attendance at the weekly research seminars is mandatory. Students must meet with their thesis advisory committee immediately following their annual seminar presentation.

Retreat: Students are required to attend and participate in the annual Molecular Biology Program Retreat.

Round Tables: As in the second year, students are expected to participate in the Round Table sessions.

Symposium: Third year students continue to be required to attend and participate at the annual Molecular Biology Program Symposium.

*Third year students are responsible for organizing the annual symposium.

Fourth Year and Beyond:

Course Work: It is the goal of the program for students to complete their thesis research and to successfully defend their thesis by the end of their fifth year. The fourth years and beyond are devoted almost entirely to research. Students during this period continue to participate in the symposia, the weekly seminar series, Round Table, and the annual retreat (4th year students organize the annual retreat). Students also participate in individual research group meetings during this period. Students are strongly encouraged to make presentations at national meetings during their final two years. The program makes efforts to aid the students in developing independence and leadership skills during this period and to devote considerable thought to their career and postdoctoral research plans. Students are required to continue to meet at least annually with the thesis advisory committee during their final year(s). Again, it is often advisable to meet more frequently than this as the student nears completion of the thesis work.

Students continue to register for MOLB 8990 (Doctoral Thesis in Molecular Biology, 5 credits) during their fourth year and beyond, keeping in mind the necessity to complete 30 hours of thesis credit prior to thesis defense and graduation.

Refresher in Ethics in Research BMSC 7811 – Per NIH guidelines <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-019.html> “...Frequency of Instruction: Reflection on responsible conduct of research should recur throughout a scientist’s career: at the undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, predoctoral, postdoctoral, and faculty levels. Institutional training programs and individual fellows/scholars are strongly encouraged to consider how to optimize instruction in responsible conduct of research for the particular career stage(s) of the individual(s) involved. Instruction must be undertaken at least once during each career stage, and at a frequency of no less than once every four years.” Relevant BMSC 7811 information will be sent out to fourth year and above MOLB students regarding the requirement of a refresher course in Ethics and the options available for the fall semester. It is preferred to complete this refresher by your 5th year.

Summer Semester: No summer course work is required, but MOLB students must register for 1 credit of MOLB 8990 to be considered full-time.

**If a student will be defending their thesis during the summer semester, then the student needs to register for 5 credits of MOLB 8990.*

Research Seminar: In the fall of the fourth year, students present a seminar on their research progress. This is presented as part of the program’s weekly research seminar series. This serves to focus the student’s research project and to provide training in oral presentation skills. Students must meet with their committee following seminar presentations or as soon as possible thereafter.

Retreat: Students continue to be required to attend and participate at the annual Molecular Biology Program Retreat.

**Fourth year students are responsible for organizing the annual retreat.*

Symposia/Round Tables: Students are expected to continue participation in the symposia and round tables.

Thesis/Dissertation (See more detailed guidelines in Appendix 4): All doctoral students are required to submit a thesis (or dissertation) to their Thesis Committee, **at least two weeks** prior to the date of thesis defense, as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree, Doctor of Philosophy. The thesis **must be approved** by the thesis advisor before submission to the Thesis Committee. All forms and applications needed are available online through the Graduate School’s website. The form and scope of this thesis is determined by the student, the thesis advisor, the advisory committee, and the Program. The thesis should be based upon original investigation and showing mature scholarship and critical judgment as well as familiarity with tools and methods of research. Starting Fall 2019, all students are required to add a section on rigor and reproducibility, similar to what is now being required for new NIH R01 grants. In addition, prior to defense of the thesis, a Molecular Biology student must **have a minimum of one accepted first author (or first co-author of “equal contribution”) peer-reviewed research manuscript**. An exception to this requirement can be granted under extenuating circumstances with approval of both the Thesis Committee and Program Director.

Approval of the written dissertation by the committee members does not constitute a “Pass” of the defense. The public seminar and oral defense remain important criteria and must be completed to the satisfaction of the committee and mentor. The possible outcomes of the thesis defense include Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail.

Upon completion and committee approval of the written dissertation, the student will need to submit their dissertation to ProQuest. More information can be found on the Graduate School website and on this link, https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider138/denver-anschutz-graduate-school/resources/format-requirements-and-guidelines.pdf?sfvrsn=f3f14ebb_2

Procedure for changing thesis advisors and dismissal from thesis lab

While it is always the goal that a student who chooses a thesis advisor is able to complete the PhD thesis with this advisor, this relationship does not always work out. While the Molecular Biology Program does not have the authority to dictate whether or not a student continues in a particular thesis lab, the Program does suggest certain guidelines in the interest of fairness to both student and mentor. Still, in the end, it is at the discretion of both the student and advisor as to whether a student continues in the chosen thesis lab.

Guidelines:

- 1) If a student is having trouble in the lab, such as in the form of conflicts with the advisor or lack of mentoring, then the student should consult with the GAC, the Program Director and/or the Chair of the thesis committee. This action should be taken as soon as problems arise. A written summary of the meeting should be issued for documentation and added to the student’s file.
- 2) If an advisor is unhappy with the performance, lab citizenship, work ethic or intellectual engagement of a student (or any other problem), then the advisor should meet with the student expressing these concerns. Consultation with the GAC, the Program Director and/or the Chair of the thesis committee is also recommended. A written summary of the meeting should be issued for documentation and added to the student’s file.
- 3) In either of the cases above, the advisor and the student should then work out a plan of remedy. This plan should be in writing, and it is advised that the plan be forwarded to the Molecular Biology Program Director and the Chair of the student’s thesis committee. Regular meetings between the student and MOLB Advisor should be held, and satisfactory or unsatisfactory improvements documented (copied to the Program Director and Chair of the committee).
- 4) Should a conflict reach the point where either the student or advisor decides that the mentor-student relationship should end, the student has several choices. The student can find another mentor within the Program, choose to leave the Program with a Master’s degree (subject to the rules of the Graduate School and approval by the thesis committee), or transfer to another lab in a different graduate program.

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY PROGRAM POLICY FOR VACATION AND LEAVE

Graduate school is a privilege; obtaining a PhD and working in the biomedical research/academic field is a time-honored and challenging profession that requires a high level of commitment and responsibility. Students in the Molecular Biology Program are required to pursue their training on a full-time basis, devoting each day of the normal work week, plus any additional time required of their research projects and academic courses. MOLB students receive a Graduate Student Assistantship (GSA) (1505) position, which is a full-time student position that also provides for tuition and fee remission per policy. To offer tuition remission, students in the program cannot have another position in addition to GSA. In special circumstances, usually involving additional teaching duties or internships, exceptions to this policy may be made that require the permission of both the mentor and the program director. Additionally, for a student to maintain full-time student status, the following guidelines for leave time have been established by the Office of Research Education. The Program does not have a formalized system for accounting for vacation and sick leave; this falls under the honor system and is the responsibility of the student in coordination with either the Office of Research Education (as a first-year student) or the department of the thesis mentor (second year student and above).

LEAVE POLICY

(From the NIH)

1. Vacation and Holidays - Trainees may receive the same vacations and holidays available to individuals in comparable training positions at the grantee or sponsoring institution (refer to the [Office of Research Education](#) website). Trainees shall continue to receive stipends during vacations and holidays. *At academic institutions, the time between semesters or academic quarters (including summer) is considered an active part of the training period, not a vacation.*
2. If student funding is obtained from a source other than the NIH, the other funding institution may provide leave guidelines that differ from those outlined above. In such cases, the guidelines from the relevant funding institution shall apply.
3. Sick Leave and Other Leave - Trainees may continue to receive stipends for up to fifteen calendar days of sick leave per year. Under exceptional circumstances, this period may be extended by the awarding component in response to a written request from the training Program director or the sponsor. Sick leave may be used for the medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth pursuant to the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (42 USC 2000 e (k)).
4. Parental Leave - Trainees may also continue to receive stipends for up to sixty calendar days of parental leave per year for the adoption or the birth of a child when those in comparable training positions at the grantee or sponsoring institution have access to paid leave for this purpose. Either parent is eligible for parental leave. For trainees, the use of parental leave must be approved by the training Program director. A period of terminal leave is not permitted, and payment may not be made from grant funds for leave not taken.
5. Unpaid Leave - Individuals requiring extended periods of time away from their research training experience, which could include more than fifteen calendar days of sick leave, or more than sixty calendar days of parental leave must seek approval from the awarding component for an unpaid leave of absence. Approval for a leave of absence must be requested in advance by the training grant Program director and be countersigned by an authorized institutional official.
6. Leaves of Absence - During a leave of absence, documentation to suspend the period of appointment must be completed by submitting an amended Statement of Appointment Form and a Termination Notice. These forms should be submitted to the awarding component at the beginning of the leave. At the resumption of NRSA support, the reappointment must be documented on another Statement of Appointment Form.

ORE POLICY ON EXTERNAL EMPLOYMENT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Background

Graduate students admitted to ORE Programs receive an annual stipend, health insurance coverage and full tuition. They are considered full time students and, per NIH policy, expected to devote a minimum of 40 hours to their PhD training.

Students may wish to take on additional paid employment for financial reasons or to gain experience in teaching, industry or explore other career opportunities. This may be complementary and beneficial to their training and professional development in University of Colorado graduate programs.

Policy

Graduate students, as key personnel substantively involved in research related activities, are subject to the University of Colorado [conflict of interest and commitment](#) policy:

“With prior written approval by the dean or appropriate campus authority, faculty and staff members shall be permitted to receive additional remuneration from sources outside the university so long as the activities generating the income do not exceed one-sixth of their time and effort.”

In addition, [NIH policies](#) state:

“NIH recognizes that student or postdoctoral trainees may seek part-time employment coincidental to their training program to further offset their expenses. Fellows and trainees may spend on average, an additional 25% of their time (e.g., 10 hours per week) in part time research, teaching, or clinical employment, so long as those activities do not interfere with, or lengthen, the duration of their NRSA training.”

In accordance with the above policies, Graduate students, **in good academic standing**, may, **with appropriate approval**, work approximately **10 hours per week** in external employment.

Such employment must **be approved in advance**, by the Office of Research Education (ORE), the Students Program Director for first year students, and by Program Director and Thesis advisor for those students who have entered a laboratory or who transfer or are directly admitted to a laboratory.

External employment must not conflict or interfere with any required elements of a student’s PhD training or lengthen that training. Examples include but are not limited to: laboratory research, classes, assessments, seminars, journal clubs, lab meetings, retreats and other required program or ORE activities.

Students **must remain in good academic standing** to continue their external employment.

Students receiving extramural support for their PhD from training grants or other sources are subject to the requirements and policies of those funding entities and may not be eligible for external employment.

Failure to disclose external employment, falsely reporting or willfully exceeding approved hours will be grounds for disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the PhD program.

Definitions

External employment- any paid (or compensated in kind) work or work product outside of a student’s PhD training program and the Office of Research Education.

Good academic standing-maintaining a minimum of a B grade in all classes, rotations and thesis work. Passing Preliminary and comprehensive exams. Meeting other Program requirements, as described in Program Handbooks. Demonstrating satisfactory and timely progress toward the PhD, as determined by the Student’s Advisory/Thesis Committee.

Resolution of problems

Students may appeal denial or rescinding of approval for external employment, on the basis that policies were not followed or applied fairly. Appeals will be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Research Education and their decision will be final.

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY PROGRAM BOLIE GRADUATE SCHOLAR and NIH STUDENT SUPPORT AWARDS

Victor W. Bolie and Earleen D. Bolie Graduate Scholarship Fund

(Students in the 4th, 5th and 6th year are eligible to apply for the Bolie Graduate Scholarship award)

Guidelines:

1. Bolie Graduate Scholars will be chosen from students who have completed at least two years in the lab and successfully passed their Comprehensive Examination (as of August) *. For regular graduate students, these would be students who will be beginning their 4th years as of September. For MSTP students, students entering their 5th, 6th, or 7th years (including 2 medical school years) as of September are eligible. Based on the endowment, there should be up to three Bolie Graduate Scholars per year. Students currently supported by the MOLB T32 or other fellowships over \$15,000/year are not eligible. (So, a student currently supported by the MOLB T32 cannot apply for the Bolie Graduate Scholarship.) Bolie awards are restricted to US citizens and lawful permanent residents (who graduated from US colleges and high schools)**, and previous support by a T32 or other award will not negatively impact award consideration.
2. Each June, the program will issue an invitation for applications from those students who qualify (per stated rules) for the Bolie Scholarship. The application will include: a) the student's bio sketch, highlighting achievements of the student in the program, including a paragraph detailing progress in the research project; and b) a letter from the chair of the student's committee (half-page), requested by the student. The current T32 committee will choose up to three students to receive the award, based on the above application, as well as review of the student's performance and participation in the program.
3. Bolie Graduate Scholars will receive \$25,000 towards their stipend and \$2,000 for educational expenses (such as computer, research-relevant software, or travel to conference). The remainder of the stipend and benefits/tuition would come from other sources, i.e. the mentor's grants.
4. The award will be for one year only.
5. Bolie Graduate Scholars will present talks at the Molecular Biology Retreat (same time as allotted for faculty/postdoc speakers).
6. Bolie Graduate Scholars must acknowledge support from the Victor W. Bolie and Earleen D. Bolie Graduate Scholarship Fund in the thesis and in publications.
7. At the discretion of the Program Director and the Steering Committee, the Program can choose to support an exceptional first year students as a Bolie Scholars. This award would be offered during recruitment of prospective students, as an incentive to capture such an outstanding student.

Notes:

*The reason for choosing upper year students is to assure that the best students can be chosen as Bolie Graduate Scholars, without competing against students being considered for the MOLB T32, i.e. students in their 2nd and 3rd years.

***Revised December 2022* in that the conditions of the Bolie Foundation state that "each student sponsored by the fund be a US citizen or a lawful permanent resident that graduated from a U.S. high school and a U.S. undergraduate college.

MOLB T32 NIH Training Grant

The goal of the Grant Selection Committee is to award NIH training grant slots to the most promising Molecular Biology students. Typically, 10 slots will be awarded to students just completing their first or second years and starting their second or third years, respectively, when the award period will begin. For MSTP students, the first year is when they entered the Molecular Biology program.

- 1) In late May, the Grant Selection Committee will request nominations from faculty mentors of training grant eligible Molecular Biology students. The Grant Selection Committee will then meet and review the performance of those training grant-eligible MOLB students nominated by their mentors. Criteria evaluated will include undergraduate GPA, performance in classes during first year of graduate school, preliminary exam scores and performance in their labs (based on grades and both rotation and thesis lab seminars). For first-year students, preliminary exam performance represents a major criterion. Mentor Faculty participation in MOLB is also considered a criteria.
 - a. Per NIH guidelines, (nominated) students must be US residents or non-citizens who have permanent resident status.
- 2) The training grant award is given for one year only. Qualified candidates, having completed their one-year allotment, can re-apply for a second year. Slots for a second year of support for prior training grant awardees will represent approximately half of “new” T32 awards.
- 3) Promising candidates will be chosen for short interviews. Typically, about twice as many interviews will be conducted as there are available training grant slots.
- 4) Each student applicant will be interviewed individually by the entire Grant Selection Committee for about 5 minutes.
- 5) After all candidates have been interviewed, the Committee will meet in private to decide which students should receive training grant support. If any Committee member has a student in their lab being considered for a training grant slot, then that member will not be present for the discussion of their student.
- 6) An e-mail will be sent to all MOLB faculty and students announcing the new training grant awardees.

T32 Trainee Appointment Procedures. A T32 and Bolie Selection Committee (also selects MOLB Bolie Scholars) consists of five members that include Program Director, Associate Director, Director of BSP Umbrella Program, Director of MSTP Program, and a representative of RBI Program. We included BSP and MSTP Directors since MOLB recruits students directly from these programs. This committee meets each year in June to review the performance of training-grant-eligible students. Review criteria include undergraduate records, evaluations of rotations, student research presentations (in their current thesis lab), and grades at CU-AMC. The committee then selects students for 5-minute interviews; typically, twice the number of students is interviewed relative to available training grant slots. The interviews are intended to allow the committee to gauge the students’ understanding of their research and their passion and commitment to science. Following these interviews, the committee chooses students to be funded by the T32 training grant. Committee members recuse themselves from evaluating and scoring their own trainees. In such cases, trainees are scored by the rest of the committee. Awards are given for 1 year, with a possible competitive extension for 1 more year.

To request a 1-year competitive extension, a T32 awardee writes a 2-3-page summary about their accomplishments during the first year of T32 funding including scientific achievements, and a description of their MOLB program participation (e.g. organizing the MOLB “Roundtables”, Retreat, and/or Symposium). The T32 and Bolie Selection Committee reviews the summary and decides whether to grant a one-year extension.

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY PROGRAM AWARD RESOURCES

Bolie Travel Award

Awards will be made up to \$1,200 total per student (during their MOLB academic career) to attend a scientific conference or scientific workshop and will be made on a competitive basis. A short application form is available from the Program Administrator. If possible, applications should be turned in at least 60 days in advance of the meeting; and students applying for Bolie funds are also required to apply for any travel awards offered by the sponsoring agency.

Eligibility for Bolie Travel Award: All full-time Molecular Biology students who are working in a thesis lab are eligible for travel awards. 1st year students, in general, will not be eligible. Preference will be given to students senior enough to have material to present at meetings, either in the form of posters or talks. Attending a workshop will require

justification that the technology cannot be learned on campus and will directly impact thesis work. To enable as many students as possible to take advantage of this opportunity, students will generally be eligible to receive a travel award only once during their tenure in the program.

Student Mini-Sabbatical Award

Each year 1-2 awards will be made up to \$3,000 total per student to travel to a different laboratory to learn a new technique. Students attending training courses are also eligible. Only students that successfully passed their Preliminary Examination are eligible to apply. In April-May, the Program Director will request applications from eligible Molecular Biology students. As part of the application, students will submit a bio sketch and a letter explaining how this mini sabbatical will benefit their training and research. The application should be accompanied by a support letter from their mentor.

Bolie Resiliency Award

This is a \$2000 award given to selected first year MOLB students that demonstrated excellence in research despite facing unusual adversity or disadvantageous socio-economic background. Up to five awards will be given each year.

Eligibility:

- 1) Only first year MOLB students qualify for this award.
- 2) Candidates must meet eligibility criteria as defined by Victor W. and Earleen D. Bolie Graduate Scholarship Fund.
- 3) Candidates are expected to have substantial biomedical research experience during their undergraduate studies.
- 4) Candidates must come from disadvantageous socio-economic background and/or have faced unusual adversity during their undergraduate studies and research experiences.

Selection: Candidates will be nominated by the Chair of MOLB Admissions Committee. Awardees will then be selected by MOLB Director and MOLB Associate Director in July of each year.

Support with computer purchase

MOLB will also provide support for first-year students in purchasing a computer that will be used in their research and education. Specifically, up to \$1,500 will be reimbursed toward a computer purchased in the first year. Purchase needs to be done during Fall semester and student must demonstrate the receipt. This support is subject to availability of funds.

HIRS Travel Fellowship

A major gift to the Graduate School at the Anschutz Medical Campus has allowed the establishment of an endowed award for graduate students in the basic biomedical sciences at the Anschutz Medical Campus. The C. Werner and Kitty Hirs Graduate Student Enrichment Fund Awards may be used for any one of the following three specific purposes:

1. Travel awards to supplement support for PhD students to attend national meetings,
2. Travel awards to facilitate PhD students learning new techniques either through a visit to an out of state laboratory or by signing up for a hands-on technique course, such as the University of Chicago Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) Physiology course, and
3. Merit scholarships to aid in recruiting the “best and the brightest” PhD students into the basic sciences at CU Anschutz.

The travel awards can be made for up to \$500 each. In accordance with Dr. Kitty Hirs’s expressed wishes, the travel award for meeting attendance will be divided into two parts: \$400 to be applied to travel expenses (e.g., registration, lodging, travel) and \$100 directly to the student for personal expenses at the meeting (e.g., making it possible for the student to attend extra-meeting social events in which science is part of the conversation). Up to 20 “meeting” awards will be made each academic year. The travel awards for visiting another laboratory or attending a techniques course are to be applied only to travel expenses (e.g., travel and lodging). Up to 10 “techniques” awards will be made each academic year.

Application link: https://www.ucdenver.edu/docs/librariesprovider138/denver-anschutz-graduate-school/resources/anschutz-medical-campus-travel-award-application.docx?sfvrsn=9c1c22b9_2

School of Medicine, Office of Research Education (Fitzsimons Building)

Directory

Associate Dean of Research Education

Angeles Ribera, PhD (angie.ribera@cuanschutz.edu)

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs

Andrew Bradford, PhD (andy.bradford@cuanschutz.edu)

The Graduate School (Fitzsimons Building, 5th Floor)

<https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/>

Directory

Teresa Bauer-Sogi, Admissions & Student Progress Manager

Teresa.Bauersogi@cuanschutz.edu

Bruce Mandt, PhD, Director, Postdoctoral & Career Development

bruce.mandt@cuanschutz.edu

Graduate School Policies and Procedures

https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider138/denver-anschutz-graduate-school/resources/gs-policies-and-procedures.pdf?sfvrsn=303d71bb_8

PhD Comprehensive Examination Forms

<https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/forms-resources/resources>

Required Forms: 1) Application for Candidacy and 2) Exam Request

Per the MOLB Program, this examination must be completed no later than the end of the student's first semester of their third year. (Individual programs may establish an earlier deadline than what is required by the Graduate School which requires that comprehensive exam be completed by the end of the student's third year.)

PhD Thesis Defense Forms

<https://graduateschool.cuanschutz.edu/forms-resources/resources>

Required Forms before defense: 1) Bio sketch and 2) Exam Request

This required Bio sketch form is not the same as NIH bio sketch

Required form day of or after defense: 1) Thesis Approval

Required step for the written thesis document: uploading to ProQuest (<https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteId=370>) and selection of CU Anschutz campus

Once a student has completed their dissertation and before the degree is conferred, a final examination on the dissertation and related topics is conducted in two parts, an oral presentation of the dissertation research that is open to the public, and a closed examination conducted by the examining committee. Instructions and deadlines for completion of the forms are provided on the graduate school website.

Honor Code

This campus-wide policy statement on student academic honor and conduct at the Anschutz Medical Campus was developed in consultation with faculty and student representatives from each health sciences school, and representatives of the campus-wide Faculty Council and Student Senate. It provides general policies for all students on campus, in accordance with the Regents' resolution of March 17, 1988, while at the same time it directs the schools to develop specific procedures to implement the policy in accordance with their unique programs and student populations. While the process for resolving honor code violations may vary from school to school, the elements listed below will remain uniform. Health professions are based on a high degree of trust by the individuals they serve. Students entering the health professions have a particular obligation, therefore, to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity, and respect for others.

A. Academic Honor and Conduct Code: Education at the Anschutz Medical Campus is conducted under the honor system. All students who have entered health professional programs should have developed the qualities of honesty and integrity, and each student should apply these principles to their academic and subsequent professional career. All students are also expected to have achieved a level of maturity which is reflected by appropriate conduct at all times.

Although it is not possible to list every situation that violates the Anschutz Medical Campus academic honor and conduct code, the following examples will provide a reference point.

1. Academic Honesty – Students should adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Examples of behavior that violates these standards include: plagiarism (including improper use of web information), cheating, illegitimate possession and/or use of examinations, and falsification of official records.
2. Professional Conduct – As future health professionals, students should also adhere to the highest standards of professionalism. Examples of unprofessional conduct include: misrepresentation of effort, credentials or achievement in either the academic or clinical setting; any action which compromises the quality of patient care; violation of patient confidentiality; and other conduct unbecoming a health professional.
3. Alcohol and Drug Use – Alcohol and/or drug abuse compromises the student's ability to learn and to practice as a health provider and, thus, is considered unprofessional conduct. Students who have a problem with alcohol and/or drugs should seek assistance from services available on campus. The sale of drugs or the possession of non-prescribed narcotics or other controlled substances is against the law. In order to minimize the potential for alcohol abuse at campus functions, Students must work with university and/or Program administration to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures regarding functions where alcohol may be served.
4. Respect for the Rights and Property of Others – Students should conduct themselves in a manner that recognizes the rights and property of others. Examples of inappropriate behavior include theft, damage to university or personal property of others, disruption of educational or other activities on campus, illegal use of university facilities, harassment or physical assault, and any conduct which threatens the health or safety of others.

The primary responsibility for reporting violations of the student honor and conduct code rests with the individual student who has violated them. However, fellow students and members of the faculty also share in this responsibility.

B. Relationship of Honor and Conduct Code to Local, State, and Federal Laws. The University adheres to all appropriate local, state, and federal laws, and cooperates with law officials in all matters. Any alleged violation of local, state, or federal laws will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency, and such laws have precedence over the provisions of this policy.

C. Honor and Conduct Committee. Each school will have a standing Student Honor and Conduct Committee and, as appropriate, individual programs may have standing committees. The composition of the committee will include faculty and student representatives, with the exact composition of the committee to be determined by the dean in consultation with the school's faculty and student governance groups. The primary function of this committee will be to examine alleged violations of the honor and conduct code, and to make recommendations to the dean on these matters as appropriate.

CU Anschutz – Campus Resources

Financial Aid <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student-finances/financial-aid>

Location: Education II Building, 3rd Floor, 303-556-2886

Information regarding financial assistance is available at the Financial Aid office. You should plan to fill out all forms early. Short-term emergency loans are available.

CU Anschutz Office of Campus Student Services

<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student>

The Office of Campus Student Services' mission is to enhance student life at the CU Anschutz by providing excellence in specific non-academic and academic student services.

- Student Organizations
- Activities and Recreation
- Student Housing
- Academic Resources
 - Disability, Access and Inclusion Services
- <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/office-of-disability-access-and-inclusion/home-page>
- Student Resources
 - **Counseling**
 - Office Hours: Monday – Friday 303-324-4716
 - After Hours: 720-848-0000: identify yourself as a current CU Anschutz student and ask for the on-call psychiatrist

Career Development Opportunities <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/career-development>

The Graduate School at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus offers a variety of career development workshops, seminars, and training programs. These opportunities are coordinated by the Career Development Office (CDO) and trainings focus on the non-research-based skills that are essential for any successful scientific career: communication, leadership and management, and professionalism. These workshops and seminars are offered many times throughout the year and range from short one-hour lunch sessions to multi-day sessions. More information about the workshops, additional career development resources, and a schedule of events can be found on the CDO website.

Health Sciences Library <http://hslibrary.ucdenver.edu/>

Phone: 303-724-2152

Recreation, Health and Wellness

The Anschutz Health and Wellness Center is an innovative, state-of-the art research, education and patient care facility located on the University of Colorado's Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, Colorado. The Center's [mission](#) is to transform the lives of individuals and communities through science-based wellness strategies. Our research is translated into customized programs and offerings, delivered through our **Wellness Clinic** and **Fitness Center**. We provide programs, in partnership with schools, worksites and community organizations throughout Colorado. Our vision is a world where wellness is the norm. Visit the full site at AnschutzWellness.com

Parking and Transportation

<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/facilities-management/transportation-parking-maps/parking>

CU Anschutz Office of Student Health Promotion

<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/student/health-wellness/student-health-insurance>

The University of Colorado provides varied student needs in the area of health. The **Student Health Insurance (SHI) Plan** is designed to provide students with health care coverage offering a PPO accident and sickness health plan.

Location:

Student Health Insurance Office | University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Mail Stop A035, Education II, North Room #3208
Aurora, CO 80045
Phone: 303-724-7674

Hours

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Title IX Compliance <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/equity>

Phone number: 1-303-315-2567

Contact email: Equity@ucdenver.edu

Emergency Numbers

<https://www.cuanschutz.edu/police>

911 from a campus phone

911 on campus from cellphone – 303-724-4444

General Campus Contacts

Community Resource Officer 303-724-0739

Emergency Management 303-724-4999

Security Badging Office 303-724-0399

Ombuds Office 303-724-2950

Office of Equity 303-315-2567

CARE Team 303-724-8488

shareaconcern@ucdenver.edu

Molecular Biology Rotation Project Proposal

After you have met with your mentor to discuss your project, you will write a brief 1-2 page, double-spaced Introduction followed by a list of Specific Aims. The Introduction should include: 1) a brief background (*e.g.* “Lung cancer accounts for the highest number of cancer deaths in the US...”, etc.) 2) the nature of the scientific problem your project addresses 3) the main hypothesis (or hypotheses) to be tested 4) description of your research project with brief methods (*e.g.* “In order to test this hypothesis, I will determine if levels of protein X are higher in more aggressive breast cancer cell lines by immunoblot analysis...”). 5) How the results of your project might impact the field more broadly. *Your introduction should cite ~5-10 relevant references.*

The Introduction will be followed by 2-3 Specific Aims, each of which consists of 2-3 sentence statements and/or bullet points, of the major goals of the aim and the methods for achieving the aims. The specific aims should be modest in scope, to increase the likelihood of achieving the aims during the rotation.

Examples of two Specific Aim styles:

Specific Aim 1: Methylate PCDH10 transcript RNA using purified METTL3/METTL14 enzyme. I will test the hypothesis that the mRNA of the HOTAIR target PCDH10 can be modified with m6A by the METTL3/14 methyltransferase to help us understand if this modification plays a role in HOTAIR RNA matchmaking.

- a. The METTL3/METTL14 methyltransferase complex will be purified from overexpression in 293 cells using affinity resin via a FLAG tag.
- b. Enzyme activity and extent of methylation of PCDH10 RNA will be determined using the EpiQuik™ m6A RNA Methylation Quantification Kit, which identifies m6A modifications through a colorimetric assay.

Specific Aim 1: To determine the levels of protein X in a panel of breast cancer cell lines that have differing degrees of aggressiveness.

Breast cancer cell lines that have been identified as “aggressive” or “non-aggressive” based on their ability to invade synthetic extracellular matrix will be cultured and protein extracts will be subjected to immunoblot analysis to determine if there is a correlation between cellular levels of protein X and aggressiveness.

Your Project Proposal should also have a cover page with the title of your project and the names and signatures of the student and mentor (use template). The deadline to submit your signed Project Proposal is one week after your rotation begins.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you solidify your project with your mentor so that you can focus on your research and have a specific set of steps that will guide you through your project. The references that you use in the proposal will likely be valuable resources to help guide your work.

Rotation Project Proposal Title

Molecular Biology Rotation # ____

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Rotation Mentor _____

Rotation Mentor Signature _____

Introduction (1 page)

Specific Aims & Methods for Achieving Aims (2-3 Aims)

References (cite in text and provide full references at the bottom of the proposal)

May use additional pages as needed

MOLB Mentoring Plan for Mentoring First Year Students

In their first year, MOLB trainees must successfully complete all their classes, pass their prelim exams, and select their PhD thesis laboratory. This process is inherently complex, and is complicated by the lack of a formal PhD mentor until the start of their second year. As such, MOLB provides a formal mentoring framework for first-year trainees.

Several issues often arise in the first year. Many trainees move from different states and do not start with a strong social support network, and incoming trainees are not familiar with MOLB program rules. To facilitate the integration of incoming students into the MOLB program, each student is assigned both faculty and peer mentors from the Graduate Advisory Committee. Below are the responsibilities and expectations of MOLB peer and faculty mentors.

Peer Mentors

Peer mentors are crucial for ensuring the success of first-year students. Peer mentors can provide student perspective and connect first-years to other students. Participation in peer mentoring is strictly voluntary; however, once committed, peer mentors are expected to actively participate in mentoring.

The expectations from peer mentors are listed below.

1) *June-July*. Zoom-based meeting with all incoming first-years, followed by one-on-one meeting with your mentee(s).

2) *July-August*. Frequent communications (email, zoom) with your mentee(s). The goal is to be available for incoming first-years to ask any questions related to the program, rotation choice, Denver/Colorado, and social aspects of student life.

3) *August*. Set up an in-person meeting as soon as your mentee(s) arrives on Campus. The goal of this meeting is to establish a personal connection and answer any questions. Address each of the following topics:

- a) Picking first rotation.
- b) Discussion of what is expected in the rotation (from a senior student point of view).
- b) Discussing what to expect from first-year coursework (e.g. Core).

4) *September-May*. Bimonthly in-person meetings. The goals of these meetings are to ensure that the student is doing well and to communicate any potential issues to the GAC. After each meeting, the peer mentor should communicate (verbally or in writing) their opinion of mentee progress to the assigned GAC faculty mentor and the GAC Chair. It is very important to check with your mentee about what information they want to keep confidential. Address each of the following topics:

- a) Wellness check: does the student have the support they need?
- b) Picking second and third rotation.
- c) Discussions about potential PhD lab.
- d) Checking how mentee is doing in their classes.
- e) Discussion about expectations in Prelims.

Strong mentor/mentee relationships are crucial for navigating the program past the first year and we expect that mentor/mentee relationships will extend into the second year and beyond, as there are additional stressful experiences, including the comprehensive exam, program presentations, and fellowship preparation.

GAC student representatives also play an additional role in student mentoring. Besides being paired one-on-one with incoming students, the GAC student representatives also participate in once-a-semester GAC meetings. Prior to this meeting, the GAC student representatives reach out to all peer mentors to discuss the first-year mentees and prepare short summaries of each first-year's progress.

First Year GAC Faculty Mentor

The main goal for a GAC faculty mentor is to ensure that the first-year student is progressing well and meeting all expectations. This is key to ensure that they successfully pick rotations, complete all the classes, pass the Preliminary Examination and find a PhD lab. It is a challenging part of most students' graduate education, thus frequent

communication with your mentee is key to their success. Please note that meetings with your first-year mentee should not be used as an opportunity to recruit them to your laboratory. In fact, if this is a likely possibility, matches should not be made between this student-faculty pair. If a mentor assigned to an incoming student subsequently becomes a rotation mentor, the GAC chair should be made aware of this situation immediately and a different mentor will be assigned to the student.

The expectations from GAC first-year faculty mentors are listed below.

1) *August*. Set up an in-person meeting as soon as your mentee arrives on Campus. The goal of this meeting is to establish a personal connection and answer any questions that the first-years may have. The following topics need to be covered:

- a) Picking first rotation and strategy for 2nd and 3rd rotations.
- b) Discussion of what is expected in the rotation (from faculty point of view).
- b) Discussing what to expect from first-year coursework (e.g. Core).

In the middle of 1st rotation, touch base on how that rotation is going, discuss what they are learning about their mentoring needs and then revisit ideas for 2nd and 3rd rotations.

2) *September-May*. Bimonthly communications with the first-year mentee and with the peer-mentor who will be having monthly meetings with mentee. After each meeting peer-mentor will reach out to GAC faculty mentor to communicate their opinion about mentee progress (see above). The faculty mentor should confirm/ensure that these monthly meetings between students actually occur. Toward the end of each rotation schedule an in-person meeting with the mentee to check how they are doing in current rotation and what are their plans for next rotation. The student and faculty mentor should meet immediately before pursuing a third rotation, as this is often the most critical choice.

In addition to being a mentor, the GAC Chair should ensure that the GAIA report (trainee assessment) is completed by the rotation mentor at the end of each rotation and contains substantial feedback. The GAC Chair should also speak with the faculty member corresponding to each completed rotation to check how the mentee did and whether they are considering them as a potential lab member.

Reporting requirements for student and faculty mentors. Each major meeting between a peer/faculty mentor and mentee should be recorded. A simple electronic check-in form will be made available for this purpose. Major meetings include the first personal meeting of the year and the exit interviews from each rotation. You can enter notes for ad hoc meetings, but these should be limited to significant issues that arise during meetings.

Changing mentors. The initial student-mentor pairing is performed by the GAC in consultation with the Recruitment Chair, who is most familiar with the incoming class. However, if there are any communication issues between the student and their faculty or peer mentors, or if a new match is needed for whatever reason, the student can reach out to the GAC Chair, who will offer guidance and find a new match, if necessary.

Expectations for Lab Members and Tips for Academic Success

These are some questions to review honestly with yourself and with your mentor a few times during your rotation and throughout your career. They are reasonable expectations for skills that you should be developing as you progress through your time in the labs. Some are more or less applicable depending on your position, but at least some are relevant to everyone, whether you are a temporary rotation student, working in your thesis lab, or as a postdoc, technician, or PI in academia or industry.

Scientific/ Career Development.

1. Are experiments well planned with proper controls?
2. Are the technical aspects of the experiments done well?
3. Are the experiments well documented (can someone else repeat what was done from your lab notebook or written protocol)?
4. Are experiments repeated an appropriate number of times?
5. Are results evaluated critically?
6. Are subsequent experiments logical extensions of previous experiments?
7. If problems are encountered, are experiments designed to identify the problem?
8. Take opportunities to present your work and get feedback.

Work habits

1. Are you organized, keep a detailed lab notebook and organize and archive your stuff?
2. Be a good lab citizen, clean up after yourself and help clean general use areas when needed. Follow rules regarding things to double check and sign off on if you are the last person to leave the lab.
3. Is work planned efficiently to optimize the amount that can be done?
4. Are experiments planned ahead, so that experiments aren't lost due to lack of reagents?
5. What use is made of waiting periods in experiments? Do your activities promote your success and progress?

Keeping up with the literature and other research.

1. Do you routinely search for and read papers in your research area?
2. Do you search for techniques that might allow you to do new types of experiments?
3. Do you read papers provided for journal club or other recommended papers?
4. Do you regularly attend seminars that are in your research area or in other areas?

Creativity and initiative

1. How much input do you have in the routine design, execution and analysis of your experiments?
2. How much input do you have in the medium-range goals (months) of your experiments?
3. How often do you suggest new approaches or new lines of experiments on your current project?
4. Do you suggest new lines of research?
5. How much personal responsibility do you take for meeting deadlines, devising experiments, and writing papers or grants?
6. If you see a problem in the lab, what is your response (ignore it, complain, suggest a solution, take the initiative to solve the problem)?

Communication skills

1. How effectively can you put together a draft of a paper or a grant?
2. How much help (and in what areas) do you need to complete the project?
3. Can you plan and prepare good slides?
4. How effectively can you assemble a spoken or poster presentation?
5. How effectively can you give a talk?
6. How well can you critique papers or spoken presentations of others?

Interactions with others

1. Do you leave general lab areas, hoods and equipment clean when you've finished?
2. Do you return reagents, equipment etc. to designated places?

3. Do you cooperate with others to share equipment, space, reagents etc.?
4. Do you share information, techniques etc. when asked?
5. Do you volunteer information and/or help others on your own initiative?
6. How do you handle summer students or others who help with your experiments?
7. Give and take constructive criticism well...it is not personal. The successes of each member of the lab reflects well on the whole lab and helps us towards our ultimate goals of understanding biology at the molecular level. Our other major goal since we are at an academic institution is to develop scientific careers, and a large part of that is learning how to take and give constructive criticism.

APPENDIX 4

Guidelines for Thesis Advisory Committees Comprehensive Exam and Thesis Defense Exam

Revised August 2022

- 1) **Composition:** The committee is composed of at least four members, with at least three of the committee coming from MOLB Program faculty; the Chair must be a MOLB faculty member. All committee members must have active appointments in the Graduate School; it is the responsibility of the student to confirm this status for each committee member. If needed, additional committee members can be added during the course of the thesis work to provide expertise. After the comprehensive exam is completed and the student has advanced to the PhD candidacy, the student's mentor may become a member of the committee, and one of the former committee members may be dropped. The mentor may be a voting member, but may not be the Chair.

To ensure independent evaluation of students' progress and examinations, and provision of impartial advice and guidance, no member of the committee should have undue influence over another member of the committee or the student. Undue influence could include, but is not limited to, direct employment (e.g. a postdoc employed by a faculty member), familial, domestic or amorous relationships, financial relationships or significant scientific collaboration (e.g. joint funding). Any potential conflicts must be disclosed by committee members to the student, the committee and program director. Familial, domestic or amorous relationships, perceived undue influence or other potential conflicts of interest, involving a prospective committee member and the Thesis Advisor(s), Committee Chair and/or Student, will prohibit that prospective member from serving on said committee.

- 2) **Responsibility:** The committee will administer the comprehensive examination, guide the student throughout their thesis project, and conduct the thesis defense examination. Students are expected to form a thesis advisory committee by March 1 of their second year. The committee will have its first meeting ("pre-comps meeting") with the student on the afternoon following the spring seminar presentation, or as soon as possible thereafter. The first charge of the committee is to guide and evaluate the student's research progress to this point, and set the guidelines and a tentative date for the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination should be completed by December 31 of the third year. Students must meet with their committee at least annually; more frequent meetings are advisable as the student moves further into their research. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange annual committee meetings, to inform the members and the Molecular Biology office in writing of the date and place of the meetings, at least 2 weeks in advance, and to submit a short written summary of progress to the committee before the meeting.
- 3) **Committee Chair:** For each committee meeting, it is the responsibility of the committee chair to complete the on-line evaluation (<https://predocprogress.ucdenver.edu/>), which is automatically submitted to the program administrator. A copy is also automatically sent to the Student Advisor. This summary should include: 1) the student's progress since the last committee meeting; 2) planned studies for the immediate future; 3) indication of how student's progress relates to the specific aims of the thesis proposal presented in the comprehensive exam; 4) manuscripts published, in press, or in preparation; and 5) number of years in the program as well as anticipated date of completion. Summaries are signed off on by the student and the committee chair, and completed within one week following the committee meeting.
- 4) **Comprehensive Examination:** This exam requires the written submission of a "major" research proposal that describes the actual thesis project planned by the student. Students must obtain written approval of the topic of their proposal from the chair of their advisory committee and submit this to the Molecular Biology office by September 1 of the third year. The proposal should be written in the style and format of an NIH R21 grant format, and contain the following sections: specific aims, background and significance, preliminary data, experimental design and approach, and a supporting bibliography. Students should consult with their thesis advisor and NIH guidelines to format the written portion of the exam. The proposal should be written to be as close as possible to the realistic goals of the thesis project and should not be overly ambitious (e.g. a proposal for an entire laboratory group). **It is the student's responsibility to obtain the packet of forms and instructions online from the Graduate School website and return it with the appropriate signatures one month prior to the exam date. Proposal must also be submitted to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the exam.**

The student defends this proposal orally at the examination. The oral portion of the exam will also test general knowledge through questioning related to the proposal. The student should demonstrate critical and original analyses of their own proposal as well as the research from other labs that form the background for the proposal. The student should be prepared to defend their ideas against challenges from faculty members of the committee. The format of the oral portion of the exam is set by the committee at the beginning of the examination.

There are three options for evaluation of the exam:

Pass: The student must receive affirmative votes from a majority of the members of the examination committee in order to pass.

Fail: If a majority of the committee votes “fail”, the student may not continue in the Program.

Pass with Conditions: The committee may feel that, although a student has essentially passed the examination, additional work is required. This may be in the form of additional coursework, the rewriting of exam materials, etc. The committee should sign the form as passing, with the conditions stipulated on the bottom. Once the student has completed the conditions to the satisfaction of the committee, the chair should sign approval. The form is returned to the Graduate School after the exam and given to the chair for final approval of conditions upon the chair’s request.

Upon successful completion of this exam, the student is advanced to the PhD candidacy.

Comprehensive exam recommendations:

1. **Form your committee prior to your first Mol Bio seminar and encourage them to attend your seminar.** The committee is made up of four faculty, at least three of whom should be members of the Molecular Biology program. Your thesis advisor is not a member of this committee. You should decide on your committee with the help of your advisor.
2. **Meet with your committee immediately after your seminar (or soon after) to discuss your comprehensive format, tentative dates, and expectations.** Remember – each committee will have slightly different ideas of how a comprehensive exam is conducted.
3. **Contact your committee by e-mail and start picking dates when everyone is available – this will be the most challenging part of your exam, so start early!** The exam typically lasts for 2-3 hours. Make sure you schedule your exam and book a room for the appropriate amount of time.
4. **Ascertain if your committee members have current appointments in the graduate school, and be sure they are up-to-date.**
5. **Once you have scheduled the exam, make sure you complete the appropriate graduate school forms. The forms with signatures must be returned to the graduate school office one month prior to the exam.**
6. **Proposal**
 - NIH R21 format (see below)
 - Based on thesis work
 - 1 page of Specific Aims plus 6 pages of Research Strategy (not including references)
 - Preliminary data not essential
 - Understanding of research essential
 - Must be distributed to your committee **2 weeks prior to your exam.**
7. **Exam (typical format)**
 - You will be asked to leave the room while they discuss your progress, grades etc.
 - Give a short presentation (length will be determined by committee)
 - Questions

You will be asked to leave the room while a decision is made

Advice

Work with your faculty mentor while you are writing your proposal
Get input from your committee members
Look at other students' proposals
Form a "mock comps committee" of more senior students, and practice
DON'T procrastinate!

Rough idea for proposal organization (see NIH guidelines)

Specific aims	1 page
Significance	1 page
Approach	4.5-4.75 pages
Rigor and Reproducibility	0.25-0.5 page

Total should be no more than 6 pages excluding the Specific Aims page (i.e. 7 total pages including the Specific Aims page).

NIH GUIDELINES

The Research Strategy/Plan is now organized into three sections: Significance, Innovation, and Approach and should answer the following questions: *What do you intend to do? Why is the work important and is it innovative? What has already been done? How are you going to do the work?*

Specific Aims

The purpose of the specific aims is to describe concisely and realistically the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact the proposed research will exert on the research fields involved. Content should include broad, long-term goals, the specific objectives and hypotheses to be tested, summarize expected outcomes, and describe impact on the research field. This is the most important page of the entire application since it may be the only section the unassigned reviewers read to understand approach, impact, and innovation. **Recommended Length: 1 page.**

RESEARCH PLAN PART 1: Significance

The Significance section should explain the importance of the problem or describe the critical barrier to progress in the field that is being addressed. Explain how the proposed research project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields. Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved. Content should include the state of existing knowledge, including literature citations and highlights of relevant data; rationale of the proposed research; explain gaps that the project is intended to fill; and potential contribution of this research to the scientific field(s) and public health. **Recommended Length: 1 page**

RESEARCH PLAN PART 2: Approach

The purpose of the approach section is to describe how the research will be carried out. This section is crucial to how favorably an application is reviewed. Include PI's preliminary studies, data, and experience relevant to the application and the experimental design; the overview of the experimental design; and a description of methods and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Discuss potential difficulties and limitations, and how these will be overcome or mitigated; expected results, and alternative approaches that will be used if unexpected results are found. Provide a projected sequence or timetable (work plan), and if the project is in early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high risk aspects of the proposed work. Discuss in detail the way in which the results will be collected, analyzed and interpreted, and include a description of any new methodology used and why it represents an improvement over the existing ones.

Recommended Length: 4.5 pages.

Research Plan Part 4: Rigor and Reproducibility

Starting in the Fall 2017, we will require all students to add a section on rigor and reproducibility, similar to what is now being required for new NIH grants. (<http://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm>)

Training in this area will have started in the spring 2017 semester in new MOLB/PHCL7801 course
(see <http://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm>)

Recommended Length: 0.25-0.5 pages. Alternatively, you can discuss rigor and reproducibility throughout the document without having a separate section on it.

(you can see sample R21 applications at the NIH site: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/sample-applications>).

Guidelines for graduate student 4th rotation: Guidelines for Students.

MOLB and other graduate students typically do three lab rotations and consult with rotation advisors to decide on which laboratory to pursue their thesis work. Occasionally, none of the three labs will be suitable for the student, for any of a variety of reasons. In this case, the student may do a 4th rotation over the summer, after the preliminary exam. However, the 4th rotation is unique in that it carries several special circumstances:

- (1) The 4th rotation lab is usually the only choice a student will have for a thesis lab, with rare exceptions¹.
- (2) Graduate school rules stipulate that students who cannot find an acceptable and accepting lab by the beginning of their second year will be dismissed from the program.

¹ Exceptions include: 1. Student has a preferred lab but that lab is waiting on June-August funding decision, and so 4th is alternative if needed. 2. Student has a potential lab but is not sure (or not satisfied) and has strong interest in a 4th lab. 3. Variation of #2, where 4th lab was not available for rotations during the fall-spring period. 4. Other exceptions may apply, but please note that 4th rotations should have strong rationale and require approval of program director and the student advisor (see “Requirements” below).

BEFORE the 4th rotation is established, the student must interview and be interviewed by the prospective fourth rotation advisor, just as they would if they were applying for a job (e.g. a postdoc). It is critical that both the student and the faculty come to a consensus that this is a good lab to pursue PhD thesis work BEFORE starting the rotation. Acceptance of the student for a 4th rotation should be a commitment by the advisor to accept them into the lab, provided that clearly stated expectations are met (see below). If the faculty advisor or student cannot meet these requirements, their lab is not suitable for a 4th rotation.

The student must make sure that the following requirements are met BEFORE undertaking a 4th rotation:

1. The student needs to identify possible 4th rotation labs, make initial inquiries to see if the faculty are interested, and must let the program director and the student advisor know which ones they would like to consider. The program director will then send the faculty their 4th rotation guidelines.
2. The 4th rotation faculty advisor must have the space and interest in training a graduate student for their PhD thesis.
3. The fourth rotation faculty advisor must have secured funds to support the student for their continued thesis work after the rotation period. Usually, the program secures funding from the Office of Research Education to support the student for the 4th rotation.
4. The student must not be competing for a position with any other personnel (e.g. other student, postdoc candidates, or other lab personnel). For example, if the PI wishes to take on two 4th rotation students (from any program), they must be able, interested, and willing to take both for thesis research.
5. The faculty advisor should agree to accept the student into the lab provided that clearly stated expectations are met during the rotation.
6. The student must receive from the faculty advisor a written document by email stating expectations of the student for the 4th rotation.
7. Once the student and faculty have discussed the rotation, the expectations, these requirements, and have come to an agreement, both need to meet with the program director to ensure that all parties are advised of the rotation’s parameters and goals.

8 For special cases in which a 4th rotation is desired but not necessarily essential (see “Exceptions” above¹), prior approval of the program director is required. The student must present in writing the reasons for a 4th rotation, and may need to meet with the program director and the student advisor. Because of variable circumstances for different situations, specific modified requirements and guidelines tailored to those circumstances will be given to the student and 4th rotation faculty.

The following guidelines should be followed by the student:

1. Before beginning serious discussions with any potential 4th rotation advisor, the student should (1) first identify several possible labs of interest, (2) find out if they have money, space, and potential interest, and (3) carefully and fully investigate the science of all potential labs. The student **MUST** have sufficient interest and motivation to pursue their PhD thesis in these labs, before embarking on meeting the pre-rotation requirements listed above. It is strongly advised that the student consider several choices from which they will decide based on more in depth discussions with the faculty and lab personnel. This is very similar to what graduating PhD students do when applying and choosing postdoc labs.
2. Before deciding on the 4th rotation, the student should interview with the faculty advisor to determine if there is sufficient mutual interest in working together.
3. Before deciding on the 4th rotation, the student is strongly advised to meet with other lab personnel, just as they would if they were considering doing a postdoc in the lab. The student is encouraged to talk to former students of the lab as well.

Guidelines for graduate student 4th rotation: Guide for Faculty.

MOLB and other graduate students typically do three lab rotations, and consult with rotation advisors to decide on which laboratory to pursue their thesis work. Occasionally, none of the three labs will be suitable for the student, for any of a variety of reasons. In this case, the student may do a 4th rotation over the summer, after the preliminary exam. However, the 4th rotation is unique in that it carries several special circumstances:

- (1) The 4th rotation lab is usually the only choice a student will have for a thesis lab, with rare exceptions¹.
- (2) Graduate school rules stipulate that students who cannot find an acceptable and accepting lab by the beginning of their second year will be dismissed from the program.
- (3) The Office of Research Education will often fund students for the 4th rotation, but this may depend on circumstances and resources, and requires prior inquiry. It is possible that other funding sources must be found after July 1, typically research or departmental funds of the rotation advisor.

¹ Exceptions include: 1. Student has a preferred lab but that lab is waiting on June-August funding decision, and so 4th is alternative is needed. 2. Student has a potential lab but is not sure (or not satisfied) and has strong interest in a 4th lab. 3. Variation of #2, where 4th lab was not available for rotations during the fall-spring period. 4. Other exceptions may apply, but please note that 4th rotations should have strong rationale and require approval of program director and the student advisor (see “Requirements” below).

Therefore, these special circumstances merit special requirements that must be met and guidelines that should be followed before a 4th rotation is undertaken. These requirements and guidelines are described below. Essentially, the faculty advisor should vet and interview the student, just as they would for a postdoc applicant, BEFORE agreeing to take on the student for the 4th rotation. Acceptance of the student for a 4th rotation should be a commitment by the advisor to accept them into the lab, providing clearly stated expectations are met (see below). If the faculty advisor cannot meet these requirements or does not wish to follow them, they should not take on a 4th rotation student.

The following requirements must be met BEFORE a 4th rotation begins:

1. The fourth rotation faculty advisor must have the space and interest in training a graduate student for their PhD thesis.
2. The fourth rotation faculty advisor must have secured funds to support the student for their continued thesis work after the rotation period. Usually, the program secures funding from the Office of Research Education to support the student for the 4th rotation.
3. The student must not be competing for a position with any other personnel (e.g. other student, postdoc candidates, or other lab personnel). For example, if the PI wishes to take on two 4th rotation students (from any program), they must be able, interested, and willing to take both for thesis research.
4. The faculty advisor should agree to accept the student into the lab provided that clearly stated expectations (see #5) are met during the rotation.
5. The student must receive from the faculty advisor a written document by email stating expectations of the student for the 4th rotation. Faculty and student should discuss these expectations. Failure of the student to clearly meet these expectations can justify declining the student a position, but this will likely lead to dismissal from the program.
6. Once the student and faculty have discussed the rotation, the expectations, and come to agreement, the expectations should be emailed to the program director and the student advisor and the student and faculty should meet with them to ensure that all parties are advised of the rotation’s parameters and goals.
7. For special cases in which a 4th rotation is desired but not necessarily essential (see “Exceptions” above¹), prior approval of the program director is required. The student must present in writing the reasons for a 4th rotation, and may need to meet with the program director and the student advisor. Because of variable circumstances for different situations, specific modified requirements and guidelines tailored to those circumstances will be given to the student and 4th rotation faculty.

The following guidelines are strongly recommended for faculty BEFORE agreeing to the 4th rotation:

1. The faculty advisor is advised to review the student's records (grad school application and grad school performance records; available from the program administrator). The advisor is also strongly encouraged to communicate with the program director and student advisor, previous rotation advisors, course instructors and other references provided by the student, both to evaluate the suitability of the student for the lab and to identify any potential issues that might need to be addressed during the rotation.
2. The faculty advisor should interview the student, just as they would interview a postdoc candidate, to determine if there is sufficient mutual interest in working together. In addition, it would be wise to have the student meet all other lab personnel, again just as a postdoc or other job candidate would.
3. The faculty and student should meet regularly to assess progress and any issues with the rotation as they occur.

APPENDIX 7

2024-2025 MOLB Committees and Chairs

MOLB Program Director

Rytis Prekeris

MOLB Program Associate Director

Michael McMurray

MOLB T32 PIs

Rytis Prekeris

Michael McMurray

Graduate Advisory Committee

Suja Jagannatha, Chair

Michael McMurray

Bruce Appel

Katherine Fantauzzo

Olivia Rissland

Andrew Neumann

Natasia Paukovich

MOLB 7800 Course Director

Olivia Rissland

Admissions & Recruitment Committee

Matthew Burchill, Chair

Rytis Prekeris, Julia Dunn, Ning Zhao

Destiny DeNicola, Abbigayl Burtis, Annika

Gustafson, Rachel Sachs, Raymundo Lerma, Megan

Pockalny

Curriculum Committee

Aaron Johnson, Chair

Faculty Membership Committee

Jamie Nichols, Chair

Santos Franco, Tom Evans, Tatiana Kutateladze

Brandon Buck, Luuli Tran

(T32 and Bolie Awards)

Rytis Prekeris

Michael McMurray

Aaron Johnson

Matthew Taliaferro

Cecilia Caino

Prelim Committee 2025

Josh Black, Chair

Retreat Committee 2024

Lydia Heasley, Chair

Jay Hesselberth, co-Chair

4th year MOLB students

Seminar Committee

Brian Russo, Chair

Charles Sagerstrom,

Bailey McCurdy, Kate Matlin, Oscar Muñoz

Symposium Committee

Lydia Heasley, Chair

3rd year MOLB students

2024-2025 MOLB Seminar Host Duties

MOLB Seminar Series – Procedures and Responsibilities

Outside speakers are an important component of our training program. They provide unique opportunities to learn about new ideas and areas of research, stimulate discussions of our own projects, and provide networking opportunities for students. Each academic year, MOLB Seminar Series will host a set of outside speakers that are supported by either MOLB, Bolie or RBI.

This document describes the process for nominating, inviting and hosting speakers, and delineates the responsibilities of hosts and MOLB Program Administrator.

PROCEDURES

1. Nominating speakers

MOLB seminar speakers are selected by two mechanisms:

i) Bolie speakers

Each year all three Bolie Scholars invite Bolie Speaker. This speaker is supported by Bolie Endowment to MOLB. Each fall, Bolie scholars will decide on the speaker and will invite him/her to visit Anschutz Medical campus and give a Seminar in the spring or summer of the following year. Bolie Scholars will then be responsible for hosting Bolie Speaker.

ii) Other Invited Speakers

Each year MOLB will bring 12-15 outside speakers nominated by the MOLB community; either students, postdocs or faculty. The nominations will be asked for by MOLB Seminar Committee, typically in late Winter early Spring. Students, postdocs and faculty are encouraged to submit nominations for the MOLB seminar series.

The process of selecting speakers from all nominees will be determined by MOLB Seminar Committee. Each invited speaker will be hosted by faculty/student (or postdoc) pair. If speaker was nominated by faculty, they will need to find student or postdoc co-host. If speaker was nominated by student or post-doc, they will need to find faculty co-host. Once co-hosts have been determined, they will inform Program Administrator (PA) about who co-hosts are.

2. Inviting the speaker

The Hosts communicate with MOLB Seminar Committee chair to confirm available dates for outside speakers.

The Student Host contacts the speaker with the initial invitation to speak as part of the MOLB Seminar Series and cc's the Faculty Host and Program Administrator (PA). See sample invitation email in Appendix 1. For scheduling flexibility, please request that the speaker indicate 3 choices for preferred dates. Student/faculty/PA will confirm and schedule a date for the speaker to present. The Student Host then writes speaker to confirm the date.

3. Arranging the visit

The PA will send out an email, cc'ing student and faculty hosts, 6-7 weeks prior to the scheduled talk for guest speaker to make needed arrangements (air/hotel), request CV, talk title and preferred needs for presentation/technology. Also at this time, a link to the MOLB faculty web pages is sent for the guest speaker to consider faculty to meet with while on campus.

The Faculty Host will arrange for the speaker to have one-on-one or small group meetings with CU AMC faculty during the visit. If the speaker has communicated campus faculty with whom they would like to meet, those meetings should be the top priority. For the remaining meetings, the Faculty Host can either directly contact faculty who may be interested in meeting with the speaker or can email MOLB program faculty to identify additional faculty who may be interested in meeting with the speaker. At least some of these one-to-one meetings should be with students or postdocs!

Student Host will identify 4-6 students (or postdocs) to have lunch with speaker. MOLB PA will order the food based on information provided by Student Host.

Next, the Faculty Host will create the visit schedule based on polling potential faculty of their availability to meet with the guest speaker. Most visit schedules start at 9 am and will go through 5-6 pm, depending on the number of interested faculty that want to meet with the speaker and also the speaker's flight itinerary. See sample schedule in Appendix 2.

The Faculty Host is responsible for finalizing the schedule and sending to all participating parties including speaker.

The Faculty Host is also responsible for booking the restaurant for the dinner and inviting dinner attendees (typically 4 in addition to speaker). Half of dinner attendees should be students/postdocs and should include the Student Host.

4. During the visit

The speaker will get breakfast on their own and the Faculty Host or Student Host will pick up the speaker at the hotel in the morning. (Take note that on-campus parking for either the faculty or student host cannot be reimbursed, so please plan accordingly.)

For lunch, the Student Host can either take the speaker and attendees to a nearby restaurant (e.g. T Street Kitchen) or order take-out and hold the luncheon in a conference room on campus. The PA can help reserve a conference room as needed. The Student Host can either arrange with the PA in advance to pay for lunch using the PA's university purchasing card or can pay with their own credit card and submit receipts for reimbursement. Lunch costs cannot exceed \$20 per person- including tax and tip.

The Faculty Host will organize a moderately priced dinner with the speaker. Per ORE rules, the total cost (food, drinks, tip and tax) must be less than \$36/person and a maximum of \$252 for the total meal. ***Alcohol must be on a separate tab and cannot be reimbursed from the program. Make sure to have itemized receipt for all food.***

Faculty Host attending dinner will be responsible for alcohol tab (can also be split between Faculty attending the dinner if agreed). Faculty Host will also pay for the food and will get reimbursement from MOLB PA.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Host

Seminar invitation: Student Host communicates with MOLB Seminar Committee Chair and PA to confirm available dates for speakers selected by the seminar committee. Student Host contacts speaker with initial request to speak as part of the MOLB Seminar Series and cc's the Faculty Host and Program Administrator. Student writes speaker to confirm date.

Advertise: Post seminar notice in elevators and bulletin board in RC1 North and South and in RC2.

Organize student luncheon: Invite students (and postdocs) to join for lunch with the speaker. Organize food order or restaurant reservation as needed. PA can place the food order for delivery, but student host should gather the food order and send to the PA (at least 3 business days in advance for the visit) along with the location/time of delivery so that all information is collected for placing the online order.

Faculty Host

Arrange visit schedule: Identify potential faculty to meet with speaker and develop schedule for meetings. The faculty host will be responsible for finalizing the schedule including filling any gaps in the schedule and communicating with the student host for pick-up and breakfast arrangements. Once complete or at least 2-3 days in advance, PA will send schedule to speaker, faculty host and all faculty/students on the schedule.

Arrange dinner: Faculty host will organize a moderately priced dinner with the speaker and faculty. The total cost (food, drinks, tip and tax) must be less than \$36/person and \$252 total meal (limits may vary based on sponsoring department). Alcohol must be on a separate tab and cannot be reimbursed from the program. Host Faculty will be responsible for the alcohol tab and food tab (food tab will be reimbursed later by MOLB PA).

Program Administrator (PA)

Identifying open dates for outside speakers: Work with Seminar Committee to identify open seminar dates relative to other speakers and other program activities. Post the seminar schedule on the MOLB website.

Assist guest speaker with travel arrangements: Send out an email to guest speaker to make needed arrangements (air/hotel), request CV, talk title and preferred needs for presentation/technology. Also at this time, a link to the MOLB faculty web pages is sent for the guest faculty to consider faculty to meet with while on campus. Speaker suggestions should be returned to Faculty Host.

Seminar announcement: Create the seminar announcement and send to Dean's Office so it can be sent to all faculty on the campus. Send to Student Host for posting inside campus buildings. Email to all MOLB community the week prior and on the morning of the seminar.

Appendix 10.A: Sample Speaker invitation

Dear Dr. XYZ,

On behalf of the graduate students from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, I would like to invite you to speak in our 2022-2023 Molecular Biology Seminar Series. I think that your research on XYZ will be of great interest to our program and will also appeal to the community of scientists here. As a program we are focused on a variety of molecular and cellular questions related to your research. Dr. XYZ would be your faculty host and I would be your student host.

The Molecular Biology Graduate program (MOLB) at the University of Colorado School of Medicine is an interdepartmental program (for more information please see: <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/graduate-programs/molecular-biology>). The program seminar series, like the program itself, is diverse with topics ranging from single molecule structure to cancer and development. We feel that a seminar and visit from you would appeal to many faculty and students in the program. Therefore, as an invited lecturer, we ask that you meet with interested faculty throughout the day, enjoy a student lunch after your seminar, as well as a dinner with faculty and students.

Please consider coming to our campus in the 2022-2023 academic year. The first available date is XYZ and the seminars occur every Thursday at noon (below is a list of available dates).

Please let me know if you are interested and if so, pick at least 3 of the below dates that would be best for you. So that we can spread the dates of our seminar speakers, we ask that you please pick dates throughout the academic year. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Your name

XYZ Lab

PhD Candidate | MOLB Program

OPEN DATES (please select three dates):

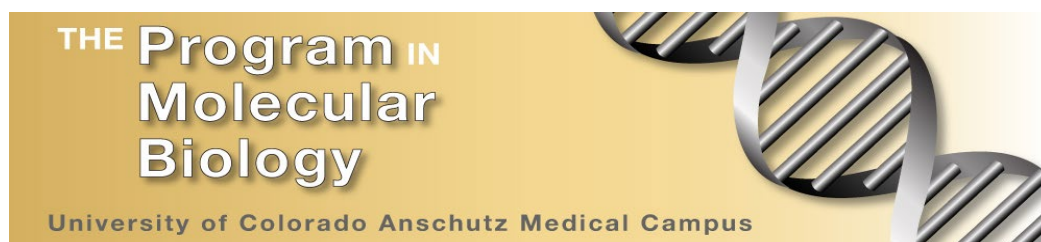
2021-2022 MOLB Seminar Schedule

FALL 2021

Open dates here

WINTER / SPRING 2022

Open dates here



Marc Edwards, PhD -Amherst College

Wednesday, September 22, 2024

Faculty host: xyz. cell: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Student host: xyz

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
8:00 - 8:40	Pick up at Hotel Breakfast with Student Host	Meet in Hotel Lobby
8:45 - 9:25	James DeGregori, PhD Professor Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics	RC1 South 9115
9:30 - 10:10	Scott Cramer, PhD Professor Department of Pharmacology	RC1 South 6117
10:15 - 10:55	Chandra Tucker, PhD Professor Department of Pharmacology	RC1 South 6123
11:00 - 11:40	Kristin Dahl Graduate student – Macklin lab Molecular Biology Program	RC1 South 12115
11:45 - 12:00	Seminar Prep Time The OIT Help Desk Phone Number is: (303) 724-4357 (4-HELP on Campus)	
12:00 - 1:00	CSD Seminar “A mutually inhibitory Ras- PI(3,4)P2 feedback loop regulates migration in <i>Dictyostelium</i> ”	Hensel Phelps East Student Host will introduce
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch with CSD Students: TBN	
2:15 - 2:55	Kristin Artinger, PhD Professor Department of Craniofacial Biology	RC1 South 11112
3:00 - 3:40	Chad Pearson, PhD Associate Professor Department of Cell and Developmental Biology	RC1 South 12116
3:45 - 4:15	Break	RC1 South

		12115
4:20 - 5:00	Rytis Prekeris, PhD Professor Department of Cell and Developmental Biology	RC1 South 12112
5:00 - 5:30	Jeff Moore, PhD Associate Professor Department of Cell and Developmental Biology	RC1 South 12100

7:15	Dinner with Faculty Host and invited guests. The plimoth 2335 East 28th Ave, Denver, CO, United States, 80205	
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Template for Thesis Committee Meeting Progress Report

Written progress reports can be useful tools for structuring your committee meetings. It is recommended that you send your committee members a brief progress report a few weeks before your committee meeting. The goals of the progress report are to update your committee on your progress and accomplishments, identify any needs or concerns, and identify goals for the future. Below is a suggested format for your progress report.

Student Name:

Year started graduate school:

Year of comps:

Meeting date:

Last meeting date:

Committee members:

Thesis mentor:

Title of project:

Summary of progress since last meeting:

Thesis project:

Supporting projects/collaborations/pending publications:

Manuscripts:

Meetings, abstracts and form of presentation (poster/talk):

Fellowships/ Grants:

Other experience, accomplishments:

Potential timeline for the upcoming year and graduation: