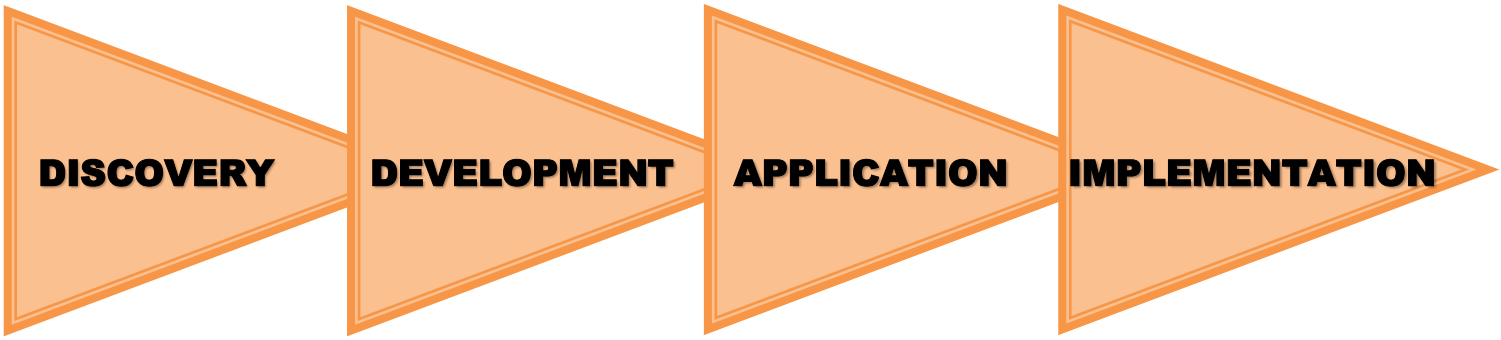
The University of Texas System

PhD Program in Translational Science



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Joint Degree Institutions:

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UT San Antonio)

- **The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio/UT Health San Antonio**
- **The University of Texas at San Antonio**

The University of Texas at Austin

Collaborating Institution: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in San Antonio

as of 08.21.2026

The policies of the Translational Science PhD Program are regularly reviewed and updated; therefore, any printed copy may not be the most current. Current policies are provided in the TS PhD Student Handbook that is electronically available at the TS PhD website:
http://iims.uthscsa.edu/ed_trans_sci_phd.html

Translational Science PhD Program
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC 6220
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900
http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/

Translational Science PhD Program
The Graduate School
The University of Texas at San Antonio[1]
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, TX 78249
http://graduateschool.utsa.edu/

Translational Science PhD Program
College of Pharmacy
The University of Texas at Austin
2409 University Ave. A1900, PHR 4.220
Austin, TX 78712-1113
http://www.utexas.edu/pharmacy

Pharmacotherapy Education & Research Center
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC 6220
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900
https://uthscsa.edu/medicine/about/centers-institutes/perc

UTHealth School of Public Health
P.O. Box 20186
Houston, TX 77275
https://sph.uth.edu/campuses/houston

UTHealth School of Public Health in San Antonio
7411 John Smith Drive, Suite 1100
San Antonio, TX 78229
https://sph.uth.edu/campuses/san-antonio

UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, UT San Antonio, and UT Austin are accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097) to award certificates and baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and professional degrees. The UTHealth School of Public Health is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (800 Eye Street, NW, Suite 202, Washington, DC 20001-3710) to award certificates, masters, and doctoral degrees.

The Translational Science PhD Program is supported in part by a grant provided by
The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health (UL1 TR002645)

[1] As of September 1, 2025, UT Health San Antonio and UTSA merged to form UT San Antonio.

TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE PHD
STUDENT HANDBOOK
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES

Definition. Translational Science (TS) is a scientific discipline that investigates methods to move discovery more efficiently and effectively into application. TS investigators must respond, interact, facilitate change, and conduct research within and among varied organizational behaviors, structures, and cultures. TS conducts rigorous studies that close the knowledge gaps between different levels of the research process – the basic science laboratory, clinical research discoveries, application of these research findings toward disease prevention and management, and strategies to improve human health.

Mission. The Translational Science PhD (TS PhD) program is a unique interdisciplinary joint doctoral degree program involving four Texas institutions:

Joint Degree Institutions:

- The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio/UT Health San Antonio
- The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)
- The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin)

Collaborating Institution:

- The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in San Antonio (UTSPH)

The TS PhD program is a research-intensive doctoral program in the field of translational science. Methods and mechanisms of studying the processes of translational science have emerged over the past decade. These four institutions have collaborated and pooled their academic and scientific resources to offer an education and training program that will provide developmental opportunities for students who will become the next generation of scientists in this scientific field.

Goal. The goal of the Translational Science PhD Program is to provide an in-depth, rigorous, and individualized multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research education and training program in translational science that will prepare research scientists to integrate information from multiple domains and conduct independent and team-oriented research to improve human health.

Objectives. The overall aim of the TS PhD program is to train future research scientists to have the capacity to integrate information from multiple domains of basic, clinical, and population sciences and conduct research to improve human and global health.

The objectives of the TS PhD Program are to:

- Build on the scientific expertise provided at each institution to offer students a collaborative, team-oriented research environment that will promote their development into the future leaders of team-oriented, translational scientific research professionals.
- Provide fundamental curricular activities and valuable research and training opportunities in translational science research that will train students to conduct research utilizing concepts that are scientifically sound, ethical, and contribute to the health and healthcare of various populations.
- Teach students the advanced knowledge and mastery of skills required to develop a novel, scientifically sound translational science research proposal, conduct the research, and present and defend the research in a dissertation format.
- Support the intellectual environments of the participating institutions for the optimal training of future translational science research investigators.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The TS PhD program is an advanced scientific research doctoral program. Admission into the TS PhD program is based on the applicant's total record of achievements. Application materials are evaluated by the Admissions Committee of the multi-institutional TS PhD Program Committee on Graduate Studies (TS COGS). Applicants to the TS PhD program must demonstrate (additional details are listed below):

- One or more of the following academic requirements – degrees must be from an accredited college or university in the United States or proof of a degree from a foreign/international institution that is equivalent to the specified U.S. degree:
  - Completion of an advanced Professional Degree (*e.g.*, MD, DO, DDS, MSN, PharmD) from a U.S. university or a U.S. equivalent international degree
  - Completion of a Master's or Doctoral Degree in a health-related, science, public health or social science discipline from a U.S. university or a U.S. equivalent international degree
  - Enrollment as a MD/PhD student with successful completion of the two-year pre-clinical curriculum
  - Enrollment in any of the programs listed above with intent to graduate prior to the semester for which application is being made
- Prior research or related experience
- MCAT or other equivalent degree examination scores. GRE scores are not required, however, if submitted they will be considered in the application review and must be taken within 5 years of applying
- TOEFL, Duolingo, or IELTS scores (for applicants from a country where English is not the native language)
- Documentation of potential for success in the degree program and as a translational science professional

APPLICATION MATERIALS

All required documentation described below must be submitted for an applicant to be considered by the TS PhD Admissions Committee. All documents become the property of the applicant institution(s) and are not returned to the applicants.

The following admission requirements will be applied to all applicants:

- **Advanced Degree:** Applicants must demonstrate at least one of the following: a) completion of an advanced **Professional Degree** (*e.g.*, MD, DO, DDS, MSN, PharmD); b) completion of **a Master's or Doctoral Degree** in a health-related, science, public health, or social science discipline; c) enrollment in a doctoral or master's degree program with intent to graduate prior to the semester for which application is being made; or d) enrollment as a MD/PhD student with successful completion of the two-year pre-clinical curriculum. Degrees must be from an accredited college or university in the United States or proof of a degree from a foreign institution that is equivalent to the specified U.S. degree.
- **Documentation of Academic Record:** For the purpose of evaluating the application, copies of all transcripts are acceptable for inclusion with the application. **If selected for admission, official transcripts will be required from all colleges and universities attended.** Official transcripts must be sent from the college/university in a sealed envelope directly to the Registrar's Office at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio or the Home institution. Transcripts from

foreign colleges/universities must be officially translated into English, if needed, and must also be evaluated, including GPA and equivalent degree, by Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE) or World Education Services, Inc. (WES), which are members of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES - http://www.naces.org/). The evaluated transcript should be sent from the credentialing agency in a sealed envelope directly to the Registrar's Office at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio or the Home institution. The applicant should include a copy of the translated and/or evaluated transcripts as part of the application. Application decisions may be delayed if the transcript evaluation(s) are not available.

- **Demonstration of Ability to Participate in an Advanced Academic Program:** Official documentation of a satisfactory score for the combined verbal and quantitative portions of the **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)**, or an equivalent, is not required. However, should an applicant submit the GRE score, it will be considered along with the other admission criteria, but not used as the sole criterion when making admission decisions. Scores on GRE tests taken more than five years prior to the date of application are not acceptable.

- **Demonstration of Proficiency in English – Foreign Nationals Only:** Official documentation of a satisfactory score on either the **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Duolingo, and/or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)** is required for applicants from a country where English is not the native language. A minimum TOEFL score of 84 (Internet-based test) for tests taken before January 21, 2026 and 4.5 for all tests taken after, a minimum Duolingo score of 115, or a minimum score of 7.0 on the IELTS, is required. Scores on tests taken more than two years prior to the date of application are not acceptable. International applicants may be exempt from the TOEFL, Duolingo, or IELTS requirement if one or more of the following requirements are met:

  - The applicant is an ECFMG certified physician.
  - The applicant's post-secondary education was conducted in a country where English is the native language. Such exemption from the TOEFL, Duolingo, or IELTS must meet university admissions criteria, which may be found in the UT Health San Antonio University Catalog, University Admissions Policy at http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/universityadmissionspolicy/.

  Consideration for the proficiency in English exemption outside of these guidelines will be made on a case-by-case basis.

- **Personal Statement:** Applicants must submit a personal statement (1-3 pages) that describes the applicant's past training and experience, future career goals and objectives, scientific research interest, and how the TS PhD program will prepare them to achieve the stated research interest and career goals. The Personal Statement should include, but is not limited to:
  - A statement of the applicant's background and purpose for applying to the TS PhD program,
  - Applicant's interest in and commitment to a translational science career
  - Applicant's potential to develop into a successful scientist, as evidenced by research training/experience, prior publications, etc.
  - Research interest and its applicability to the TS PhD program
  - Identification of a potential Supervising Professor
  - Career goals and how the TS PhD program will contribute to their attainment

  The personal statement should be submitted/uploaded with the online application.

- **Recommendation Forms and Letters of Recommendation:** Applicants must provide a recommendation form and **a letter of recommendation** from at least three (3) faculty or other individuals who are familiar with and can provide information about the applicant's academic,

research, and/or professional abilities and performance. Personal references are not recommended. In addition, letters of recommendation should provide an assessment of the applicant's potential to succeed in a doctoral program and develop into an independent research investigator. The letters should be on letterhead and submitted/uploaded with the recommendation form in the online application.

- **Curriculum Vitae**. A current CV should be submitted with the online application.
- **Copy of U.S. Health Professional License/Certificate**: If applicable, a copy should be submitted with the online application.
- **Authorization for Security Background and Sanction Check:** A security background and sanction check is required before a recommendation for student admission can be forwarded to the Graduate Dean's Office. This form will be provided by the TS PhD Program Office. The form should be completed by the student, signed, and submitted to the TS PhD Program Office for handling.
- **Immunizations:** If admitted to the TS PhD program, all State of Texas immunization requirements must be met prior to registration. A list of required immunizations may be found at the UT Health San Antonio Student Health Center website, the UT Austin website, and/or the UTSA website.

  Proof of immunization will be required. Because students in the TS PhD program will attend class and possibly conduct research at four UT institutions, all immunization requirements of all institutions must be met, even if an immunization is not required at a student's Home institution. As a result, students in the TS PhD program are required to have the hepatitis B immunization, which is a requirement at UT Health San Antonio. If you are admitted into the TS PhD program, you WILL BE REQUIRED to show proof of completion (or near completion) of the Hepatitis B immunization series or show serologic confirmation of immunity to Hepatitis B virus prior to enrollment (Texas Administration Code Title 25, Part 1 Section 97.63). The Hepatitis B immunization series is administered over a period of six months. Applicants are advised to begin the immunization series as soon as possible after applying for admission.
- **Insurance:** All students in the TS PhD program are required to maintain **valid medical insurance** while enrolled – either through an employer, personal purchase, or school-sponsored purchase. Students will be required to show proof of insurance or purchase medical insurance each semester.

UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STAFF AS STUDENTS IN THE TS PHD PROGRAM

Residents or fellows in an approved residency or fellowship program may apply to the TS PhD program as full-time or part-time students, as determined by the residency program. Any faculty member (tenured or non-tenured) may pursue an advanced degree in an institution of The University of Texas System other than the university that employs the faculty member. Non-tenured university faculty may pursue an advanced degree at their university of employment with the written recommendation of his/her department chair and approval of the appropriate Dean and the President. Faculty or staff interested in applying to the TS PhD program are advised to review the guidelines provided in their employment institution's *Handbook of Operating Policies (HOP)* and work with their College Dean, Department Chair, and/or Supervisor to determine availability and approval of release time or adjustment in salary (see quantity-of work rule in the HOP) for the completion of the educational and research activities required by the TS PhD program. Any approved release time should be in accordance with university policy. In all cases, HOP guidelines and Graduate School/Catalog requirements must be met.

APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION

Admission into the TS PhD program requires a formal application. All students entering the TS PhD program must meet all TS PhD Program admission requirements and deadlines and will be subject to the same review process as other applicants.

The Translational Science PhD program utilizes a single online application source through the UT Health San Antonio.

- **Applications are accepted between September 1 and November 1 of each year for the incoming class for the subsequent fall semester.[2] Announcements about the application due date are posted on the TS PhD website at: (http://iims.uthscsa.edu/ed_trans_sci_phd.html).**

Applicants are responsible for the timely submission of the application and all supporting materials to the TS PhD program.

A link to the Online Application for the TS PhD program is available on the TS PhD website (http://iims.uthscsa.edu/ed_trans_sci_phd.html).

Required application documentation includes (see Admission Requirements for additional details):

- Online application
- College/university transcripts (unofficial documents are acceptable for application review)
- Recommendation Forms and Letters of Recommendation (3)
- Personal Statement
- Curriculum Vitae

In addition, for **Foreign Nationals**:

- Transcript translation and evaluation documentation from approved source
- TOEFL, Duolingo, or IELTS scores

In addition, for **Licensed Health Care Professionals**:

- Medical license/certificate

Official test scores and transcripts should be sent to:

Office of the Registrar
UT Health Science Center at San Antonio
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC 7702
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900
Institution Code: 6908

[2] Summer entry will be allowed for students accepted who have an institution with traditional semesters (fall, spring, summer) as their Home institution and who have course requirements that are pre-requisite to their teaching assistant or other assignments for the fall semester. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Requests for an exemption to any of the general admission requirements that are not addressed in the online application should be sent to the TS PhD Program Director by email or at:

Program Director
TS PhD Program
UT Health Science Center at San Antonio
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC 6220
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900

International Students: Students from outside the U.S. who possess the qualifications or equivalents outlined in Admission Requirements are eligible to apply to the TS PhD Program. Any international student accepted into the program will generally be required to have an F-1 student visa and, as a stipulation of the F-1 student visa, must be a full-time student in the program. Students with a J-1 visa may also apply for admission to the TS PhD program. J-1 visa students are subject to different immigration regulations, some of which reside with the U.S. Department of State. As a result, admission of a J-1 visa student will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the student's Home institution.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND INTERVIEW

Once complete, all application documents and required admission materials will be made available to the Admissions Committee of the TS COGS, which may be the full TS COGS. The Admissions Committee will review each application individually and will consider the online application and all submitted documents. Top scoring applicants will be invited for interview with one or more of the Admissions Committee/TS COGS members and/or the Program Director, which may be conducted in-person, by phone, or online.

HOME INSTITUTION DESIGNATION

Each student in the TS PhD Program must declare a Home institution. The Home institution will be the institution of record for admission, dissertation research, and graduation, and it will be the primary institution for fees, financial aid, student health services, and other student services.

Based on the information provided in the application and at interview, a Home institution that best meets the needs and interests of the applicant will be determined by the TS COGS Admissions Committee or TS COGS. Agreement must be reached between the applicant and the committee or the TS PhD Program Director prior to forwarding a recommendation for admission to the selected Home institution.

APPLICANT SELECTION

Following review and interview, the Admissions Committee will present each application to the full TS COGS and make a recommendation to accept or decline the application. After review and discussion, the decision to accept or decline will be made by the full TS COGS with a formal recorded vote, and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Graduate Dean of the selected Home institution, utilizing policy and procedure established by the Home institution. Recommendation for admission to the TS PhD program will be made for the most highly qualified applicants. The TS PhD program, in compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and the UT Health San Antonio Handbook of Operating Policies, Policy 4.2.1, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status in any of its policies, practices or procedures.

Approved Applicants. Upon the recommendation of the TS Admissions Committee and/or the TS COGS, and approval by the Graduate School of the Home institution, accepted applicants will be formally notified by the Graduate Dean of the Home institution and will be matriculated into the TS PhD Program through the approved Home institution. All application materials for matriculated students will be forwarded to the Home institution to be part of the student's record.

Non-Approved Applicants. The TS COGS, under signature of the Program Director, will notify applicants who are not accepted into the TS PhD Program. Application materials will be maintained by the TS PhD Program and will be disposed of according to state retention schedules.

CREDIT TRANSFERS / ACCEPTANCE OF EARNED CREDITS

Students entering the TS PhD program may have taken relevant graduate level coursework from the same or another institution that meets core or elective requirements for the TS PhD. Students who have previously taken courses and/or changed majors/degree programs at one of the participating institutions and are accepted into the TS PhD program may request to have those courses applied to the TS PhD Program without limit. For course transfers from outside institutions, however, the number of transfer courses or semester credit hours may be limited by the Home institution's Graduate School or accrediting body and must not exceed the majority of the credit hours required for degree completion (see below for additional detail). Credit transfers will not be approved if the courses were completed more than five years before first semester enrollment in the TS PhD program or do not meet the standards described for credit transfers. All requests for transferred semester credit hours will be reviewed by the TS COGS and/or Admissions Committee for applicability to the TS PhD program. Following approval by the TS COGS, and by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) of the student's Home institution, if required, the procedures of the student's Home institution will be followed.

The total number of semester credit hours awarded for credit transfer may vary depending upon the student's previous program of study; however, the total transfer credits cannot exceed 49%[3] of the total credits required for the TS PhD degree. At least 51% of the total credits in a student's Plan of Study must be earned through regular semester credit hour (SCH) instruction at the institutions participating in the joint TS PhD degree program (UT Health San Antonio, UT San Antonio, UT Austin, or UTHealth School of Public Health), which may include prior credit hours earned in another PhD program at a participating institution that did not result in a degree. Additionally, graduates must meet SACS Standard 3.6.3 on graduate programs, which states: "3.6.3 At least one-third of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree." *(See Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements").* The student's Home institution must verify that the graduate completes at least one-third of semester-credit-hours toward the degree at the Home institution.

Credit transfers and/or acceptance of earned credits[4] may include:

- Transfer Credits from an Outside University[5]: Students are expected to complete most or all coursework at one of the participating institutions. A total of six semester-credit-hours of doctoral coursework may be transferred into the TS PhD from an "outside" graduate school. Requests to transfer more than six SCH will be evaluated by the TS COGS on a case-by-case basis. Approved transfer credit hours from an outside institution, as approved by the TS COGS and not to exceed 49%

[3] This equates to 35 semester-credit-hours (SCH) for the required 72 SCH to complete the TS PhD program.
[4] In all cases, considerations for transfer of coursework will be made on an individual basis.
[5] An Outside University is defined as a university other than the four participating universities for the TS PhD program.

of total credit hours, will count toward the total number of semester-credit-hours required for the TS PhD program.

- Applicants who are Changing Doctoral Degree Programs, Changing Majors, or have Completed Graduate/Doctoral Coursework Outside a Degree Program Within the Institutions Participating in the Joint TS PhD Program[6]: Applicants who are currently enrolled in another doctoral degree program at one of the participating universities, or who have taken graduate level coursework outside of a degree program at one of the participating universities (as a non-degree-seeking student or otherwise) that is equivalent to coursework required in the TS PhD program, may request to have those graduate-level courses accepted as earned credit for the TS PhD program. Approved courses/hours will count toward the total number of courses/semester-credit-hours required for the TS PhD program.
- Course Exemption: Students who have taken a course in a completed graduate degree program that is equivalent to a core course in the TS PhD program may request course exemption. An exemption will keep the student from repeating coursework from a prior program, but it will not exempt the student from taking the total number of semester-credit-hours required by the TS PhD program. Credit hours from course exemptions can be replaced with additional research/dissertation or didactic courses. In some cases, the TS COGS may recommend or require the student to take an advanced course in the domain of the exempted course.

Primary consideration for transfer or acceptance of earned credits will be that the course(s) in question fully meet(s) the learning objectives/outcomes and competencies of the equivalent course for the TS PhD program. The TS COGS is responsible for reviewing the course requests to ensure that the course(s) meet the standards of the TS PhD program in terms of course level, course content, quality, comparability, and relevance to the TS PhD degree.

Process to Request Course Transfer or Exemption: To qualify for transfer credits, course exemption, course substitution, or acceptance of earned credit, an admitted student must submit official college transcripts (if not already on file) for the requested credits and request an evaluation of the courses. Credit must have been earned from a regionally accredited college level institution with an earned grade of "B" or its equivalent. Applicants may also be asked to produce course information (such as a catalog description or syllabus) for courses for which transfer credit is being requested. The applicant's transcripts will be carefully reviewed by the TS COGS, TS Admissions Committee, and/or the course director of the course being challenged. Credit transfers will not be approved if the prior courses were completed more than five years before enrollment in the TS PhD program, if the courses are not directly relevant to the TS PhD program, or if the student earned a low grade (C, D, or F). If the TS COGS votes to approve credit transfers or course waivers, the student will be exempted from having to enroll in TS PhD courses that duplicate prior training.

APPLICATION TO THE UTHEALTH SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Registration for courses offered by the UTHealth School of Public Health will require the student to apply and be accepted as a non-degree-seeking (NDS) student. This application will require transcripts and proof of immunization, among other requirements of the UTHealth School of Public Health. A letter of recommendation will be provided by the TS PhD Program Director.

[6] The UTHealth School of Public Health is one of the Institutions participating in the joint TS PhD program. Courses taken at the UTSPH fall into this category for the purposes of acceptance of earned credit.

NON-DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS (NDS)

NDS students may enroll in TS PhD course work and receive Graduate course credit if this option is available at the university offering the course. NDS students are independent of the TS PhD program. Application as a NDS student may be submitted to the Graduate School of any of the universities participating in the TS PhD program, and acceptance and enrollment will follow the procedures established by each Graduate School.

Qualifying course credits earned as a NDS student at one of the participating institutions can be applied without limit toward the TS PhD degree following formal application, review, and acceptance into the TS PhD program. Qualifying course credits earned as a NDS student from an Outside University will follow the guidelines for Transfer Credits from an Outside University (above). A PhD in Translational Science cannot be obtained solely through NDS student status.

REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION

Concurrent Registration: Each semester, **s**tudents may register and take courses concurrently at more than one of the universities participating in the joint TS PhD degree program. Approval of the student's advisor or supervising professor for course registration is assumed.

Role of the Advisor: It is important that the student's faculty advisor have up-to-date documentation about the student's academic progress, such as a current Course Tracking Form, each semester. It is recommended that advisors document discussions with students, including discussions about TS PhD progress and coursework. Once a Supervising Professor is identified, student guidance, supervision, and monitoring will be transferred to the Supervising Professor.

UTSA Registration (for non-UTSA Students): A student planning to enroll in UTSA classes should gain approval from the faculty advisor or supervising professor and then send an email to the UTSA contact, requesting course registration.

UTHealth School of Public Health Registration: Registration for courses offered by the UTHealth School of Public Health will require the student to apply and be accepted as a non-degree-seeking (NDS) student. This application will require transcripts and proof of immunization, among other requirements of the UTHealth School of Public Health. A letter of recommendation will be provided by the TS PhD Program Director. Course registration at UTSPH should be discussed with the TS PhD Program Director or advisor/supervising professor prior to registration.

International students are limited to enrollment in no more than two participating universities, including the Home institution, at the same time, and the concurrent enrollment must be equivalent to full-time enrollment as defined by the student's Home institution. Full-time enrollment for international students is calculated by semester, and not by academic year. Additionally, full-time status at the TS PhD institutions is considered nine semester credit hours in the fall and spring semesters. International students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour at the Home institution each semester. International students are also limited to one distance or online class (up to 3 semester-credit-hours) per semester. Concurrent enrollment for international students must be pre-approved by the Designated School Official (DSO) of both institutions before student registration and the census date of both institutions. The student is responsible for informing and providing documentation of the concurrent enrollment to both institutions. Any subsequent changes to the approved concurrent enrollment status must be approved, in advance, by the DSO of both institutions who gave the initial approval. Maintenance of full-time enrollment status will directly impact a student's eligibility for employment, scholarship, or other financial awards.

Very Important: Rules governing international students may change at any time during the academic year. It is the responsibility of the student to consult with the Office of International Services at the Home institution for any questions related to enrollment and maintenance of the student's visa status.

Academic Calendars: The academic calendars for each institution differ, and students are expected to review the academic calendars each semester to ensure that registration is completed by the deadline established by each institution and/or prior to the beginning of the first day of classes. The location of classes will be determined by the student's course selections. Students registering concurrently in more

than one of the participating institutions should verify compatibility of class schedules before registration.

- UT Health San Antonio: The UT Health San Antonio Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences operates under a "super semester" system, with two six-month semesters. July-December is the fall semester and January-June is the spring semester. There is no summer semester at UT Health San Antonio; however, students may enroll in summer courses at one of the other three participating institutions.
- UTSA, UT Austin, and UTSPH: These universities operate under traditional fall, spring, and summer semesters.

Academic Year: The academic year for the TS PhD program includes the fall, spring, and summer semesters. For UTSA and UT Austin students, this is approximately mid-August to mid-August. For UT Health San Antonio students, the academic year is the fall and spring super semesters (July to June), plus a trailing summer semester if summer courses are taken at another institution. **Full-time students are required to complete the full-time SCH requirement of the student's Home institution , in total from all universities, each academic year.** At some TS PhD institutions, 21 semester credit hours per academic year is considered full-time; however, at UT Health San Antonio full-time enrollment is 24 semester credit hours per academic year. **Part-time students are required to complete a sufficient number of semester-credit-hours each academic year, in total from all universities, to meet the part-time student requirement of the student's Home institution. At UT Health San Antonio part-time students are required to complete at least 12 SCH each academic year.**

Good Standing: A student must be in "good standing" at all degree-granting institutions. Good standing may include: GPA of 3.0 or better, having no unpaid tuition or other institutional debts, having no institutional holds, or any other restriction that would not allow registration. With the exception of specified requirements for all students (see Other Program Policies and Requirements), good standing is defined by each university. The TS PhD program is a joint degree program. As a result, if a student is identified as not being in good standing at one university, based on the criteria listed above or as defined in the University and/or Graduate Catalog of the university, that status will apply at all the degree-granting institutions participating in the joint TS PhD program.

Registration When No Class Is Being Taken: Student status will be maintained each semester at each joint-degree institution. This will be accomplished on each campus according to the procedures of the individual Registrar's Offices, such as the use of zero-credit-hour (placeholder) registration if no classes are being taken at an institution during a semester. The procedures applied will not activate any coursework-specific tuition and fees but the institution may have the option to assess certain extraneous fees, such as parking, ID badge, recreation, etc. attributable to that institution's management or maintenance of certain services provided for all enrolled students. Every effort will be made to keep fees that duplicate services available through the Home institution to a minimum.

Use of Resources: A student must register at any university participating in this degree program if the student plans to use that university's resources (such as, attending classes, taking examinations, conducting research, using laboratories, etc.). Students must enroll in dissertation courses at their Home institution in all semesters during the dissertation research phase of their degree plan and must meet the dissertation enrollment requirements of their Home institution for graduation.

PROGRAM-RELATED CHANGES

COURSE-RELATED CHANGES / INTERRUPTIONS IN MATRICULATION

To ensure there is no loss of status, any student who is receiving financial aid, has a visa status other than permanent resident or citizen, or is receiving military educational benefits should contact and receive clearance from the Home institution's Financial Aid Office, the Veteran Services Office, and/or the Office of International Students ***before*** considering a request for course-related changes.

ADDS, DROPS, AND WITHDRAWAL

Adds, Drops, and Withdrawal: Students may add and drop courses up to the census date, which is usually the 12th class day each semester. Student withdrawal from a course after the drop deadline will follow the guidelines and documentation/approval requirements of the university where the course is offered. Before dropping a course, a student should review the registration policy on adding/dropping courses in the Catalog where the course is being taken. Involvement of the advisor or supervising professor is recommended.

A student who drops or withdraws from a course must still maintain requirements for full-time or part-time student status, as required by the student's Home institution. There is a six-course drop limit established by the Texas Senate (SB 1231). This legislation is applicable to all Texas public colleges and universities. Students are encouraged to check with their Graduate School for guidance.

NON-ENROLLMENT AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students who need to cease enrollment for one or more semesters may apply for a Leave of Absence from the Home institution. Procedures, authorization, and approval of a Leave of Absence will follow the established policy of the student's Home institution; however, the TS COGS should be notified of the request for Leave of Absence and action taken. The time limit for reaching candidacy or completing the degree will be extended by the number of terms the students is on approved Leave of Absence. Students who do not enroll for classes for two or more consecutive semesters without a formal leave of absence, or who do not return from a formal leave of absence, may be considered for dismissal and will be reviewed by the TS COGS. A student who is dismissed from the TS PhD program under this circumstance will be required to re-apply to the TS PhD program if he/she wishes to complete the program. This application and completed coursework will receive the same review by the TS Admissions Committee as for any new applicant.

CHANGE OF HOME INSTITUTION

Change of a student's Home institution designation will be approved only for exceptional or necessary circumstances. This option will not be approved if a student's immigration status, military educational benefits, or financial aid would be jeopardized. A request to change Home institution should be submitted, in writing, to the TS COGS through the Program Director and should include:

- Cover memo that describes the basis for the request to change the Home institution
- *TS PhD Request to Change Home Institution* Form, signed by the Graduate Deans of both institutions

An international student may not change the Home institution if the change impacts the student's immigration status; however, a change of Home institution will be allowed if no immigration status impact is anticipated and if the transfer is necessary to maintain the student's status in the program. The request to change Home institution should follow the procedures outlined above; however, additional time should be allowed to complete all procedures required to maintain compliance with F-1 visa transfer procedures.

The transfer process must be accomplished ***prior to*** the actual move of the student from the current Home institution to the new Home institution. Such transfers will require the approval of the current Home institution's Designated School Official (DSO), confirmation and acceptance of the transfer from the pending Home institution, and full compliance with F-1 visa transfer procedures. An international student will not be transferred from one institution to another until that student has been admitted and registered, before the census date of the initial Home institution. Last minute transfer requests will not be processed. Any international student who in considering a change of Home institution should contact the International Services office at the Home institution prior to initiating any paperwork.

TUITION and FEES

TUITION RATES

Rates for in-state and out-of-state student tuition and fees are established by each institution. Please refer to the TS PhD website for links to current rates for Graduate School tuition and fees at the TS PhD universities.

RESIDENCY

Each TS PhD student must establish domicile residency status for the purpose of assessing rates for tuition and fees (in-state or out-of-state). This status will be determined by the Home institution. Once residency has been established, the residency designation will be the same for the enrollment in any of the universities that are part of the TS PhD program.

PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

TS PhD students will enroll each semester at each university offering the course(s) selected by the student, in advisement of the student's advisor or Supervising Professor, and in accordance with the student's individual Plan of Study. Payment of tuition and fees will be made to each university based on the number of semester credit hours selected. Some non-coursework specific fees paid to the Home institution may be waived by the other universities, but other non-coursework-specific fees (ID badge, for example) may be charged each semester to maintain the student's status and access to university facilities. Assessment of such fees is dependent on individual university policies and/or agreement for the TS PhD program. Tuition and fees are subject to adjustment. Students receiving any form of financial aid that is not automatically or fully distributed by the Home institution to cover the payment of all tuition and fees at the other universities are responsible for the payment of those additional tuition and fees.

TS PhD students will follow the policies and procedures in regard to payment schedule date, refund dates, late fees, non-payment designation, etc. for each university in which the student is registered.

DEGREE and COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Successful completion of the TS PhD program requires satisfactory completion of:

- Core and elective coursework
- A qualifying examination for admission to candidacy
- An approved research project
- Doctoral dissertation based on the approved research project
- Final oral examination (defense of dissertation)

INDIVIDUAL PLAN OF STUDY

Prior to the start of the first semester, it is recommended that each student admitted into the TS PhD program meet with a TS PhD Academic/Graduate Advisor to discuss research and career goals and establish an individual Plan of Study to meet those goals. Once a Supervising Professor is identified, student guidance, supervision, and monitoring will be transferred to the Supervising Professor. In the first year, TS PhD students will complete a Milestones Agreement, delineating an expected timeline for achievement of academic milestones. The individual Plan of Study may be modified as the student's goals mature, subject to review and approval by the Academic/Graduate Advisor and/or Supervising Professor, as long as all course requirements are met or exceeded. Additionally, the TS PhD Program offers individual advising sessions twice a year with the Program Director and Program Coordinator. Students are highly encouraged to attend, and they must submit a notice in writing if they choose to decline advising.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & DATA SCIENCE TRACK

A minimum of 72 hours of graduate coursework is required for the Translational Science doctoral degree candidate. Students must maintain a cumulative, university-specific, and combined TS PhD program 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) for all courses for which letter grades are given for program continuation and completion.

The TS PhD program also offers a Data Science track defined as 12 semester credit hours, which are counted towards the 72 hours of graduate coursework required to complete the program.

The Plans of Study and specific courses to be taken by students will vary, depending on individual student interest, student background/discipline, and program goals.

All translational science doctoral students will be required to take a minimum of:

1. **24 hours of Core Curriculum:** Core courses will provide essential knowledge, skills, and training in the competencies necessary to conduct translational science research. Where courses are offered with similar content within multiple UT components, students may choose the course that meets their individualized needs.
2. **Electives (18 hours):**
   - **a.** 2 hours of Directed Electives: A Directed Elective, Topics in Translational Science, is required for at least two of the total elective hours and may be used to fulfill either the track or free elective requirement. Students must register for Topics in TS in two semesters to meet the Directed Elective requirement, and they may register up to three additional times for elective credit.

b. **<u>16 hours of Prescribed Electives</u>:** Prescribed electives will provide additional depth and breadth specific to the unique educational needs of each student to successfully conduct their dissertation research and progress in their career development. If more than one course meets the requirements, as with the core courses, students will select the course that most effectively meets their educational needs.

3. **<u>30 hours of research/dissertation</u>: The TS PhD is a research intensive program of study. For this reason, students are encouraged to become involved in research and may begin taking supervised Research credit hours in the first semester of enrollment, with approval from an Advisor, Supervising Professor, or the TS PhD Program Director.** Enrollment in Dissertation hours will begin after the student has selected a Supervising Professor and Dissertation Committee, developed a research proposal, passed the Qualifying Exam, and is admitted to candidacy (upon recommendation by the Dissertation Committee and TS PhD Program Director, and approval by the Graduate Dean). A minimum of 30 hours combined of research and dissertation hours are required for completion of the TS PhD degree, along with other requirements.

COURSE SELECTION

It is recommended that selection of core, prescribed electives, and free electives is determined in collaboration with the Academic/Graduate Advisor and/or Supervising Professor and based on an individual Plan of Study for the student.

New Course Petitions: Core and elective courses have been selected and approved for the TS PhD program from each of the participating University of Texas component institutions; however, course offerings at each university will change from time to time, courses may be dropped from university catalogs, and/or new courses will be evaluated regularly for inclusion in the TS PhD degree program. While copies of the current Curriculum will be distributed on a regular basis, a student may request a copy of the most up-to-date Curriculum at any time.

ACADEMIC CALENDARS

Students will comply with the calendar(s) of the institutions in which they are enrolled for the purposes of registration and course schedules. Additional information about the academic calendar structures for the universities participating in the TS PhD program may be found under Registration (above). You may also refer to the TS PhD website and/or the Graduate School website of the individual universities for specific information about current semester academic calendars.

GRADING, GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA), AND ACADEMIC STANDING

Existing grading systems will be utilized by each institution. Students will be given letter grades (A, B, C, D, or F), Pass/Fail, Credit/No Credit, +/-, or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, as per the policy of the institution's Graduate School and/or the program or department that offers the course.

- Students must maintain a cumulative, university-specific, and combined TS PhD program 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) for all courses for which letter grades are given.
- University/Graduate School policy at each institution must be followed for the courses taken at that institution.
- Consequences for failure in any course will be assessed according to the policy of the institution in which the course was taken. It is the student's responsibility to know the rules governing failure in a graduate course at the institution(s) where the student is registered.
  - If University/Graduate School policy allows, students who are graded as failing or having unsatisfactory performance in a core course may retake the course or take an equivalent course within the educational domain.
  - If University/Graduate School policy allows, students with failing or unsatisfactory performance in an elective course may retake the course or take a different course of at least the same semester credit hours, as long as the curriculum guidelines are met for the student's individual Plan of Study.

If the student meets the criteria for dismissal based on failure to maintain the required GPA and/or failure of one or more courses, taking into consideration the rules of the individual University/Graduate Schools, the student will be dismissed from the TS PhD program. The TS PhD program is a joint degree program, and academic standing at one university (joint degree or collaborating) applies at all the institutions participating in the joint TS PhD program.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students should consult with individual course instructors about attendance requirements.

EDUCATIONAL DOMAINS and CURRICULUM SEQUENCE

DOMAINS

Seven educational domains form the foundation for the TS PhD educational objectives. Within each domain are specific competencies that each candidate will have to fulfill. The seven domains for every graduate of the TS PhD program include:

1. **Translational Science:** Students will articulate what constitutes T1 and T2 translational science and the inter-relationships between the two broad tracks.
2. **Responsible Conduct:** Students will be knowledgeable about and be able to apply research ethics and work effectively with regulatory groups within their organization(s).
3. **Research Design and Analysis:** Students will formulate research questions and appropriately design experiments and studies to test hypotheses. They will develop specific analytic strategies based on the study design and assure that their studies are adequately powered to test the hypotheses.
4. **Team Science and Leadership:** Students will work effectively in and be able to lead interdisciplinary research teams to (a) identify health related problems and (b) design and conduct research to address the problems.**5.**
5. **Scientific Communication:** Since communication is a key domain of translational science, students will demonstrate oral and written competency in their ability to communicate research clearly to other translational scientists *via* journal articles and scientific presentations. They will be able to effectively write abstracts and manuscripts, give oral presentations, and communicate the relevance of their scientific expertise. Beyond the core requirements, students will have access to training in grant writing and be encouraged to develop grant applications for career development (*e.g.*, NIH F- or K-grant series) or independent funding.
6. **Business of Translational Science:** Students will become functionally informed about intellectual property licensing and the processes of developing products, drugs, or devices for human use. They will also learn to function within different legal, regulatory, and economic/financial environments.
7. **Evidence Based Implementation and Policy:** Students will be able to independently read and interpret the scientific literature in their content area. They will be able to systematically review a body of scientific literature to apply to policy implementation. They will be able to make data based decisions and inform policy and guideline development.

PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

Proficiency in professional and scholarly writing is an essential skill for students in the Translational Science PhD program. The goal for each student should be to acquire and master overall writing skills that will serve the student throughout his/her academic and scientific career.

Students who need to improve their writing skills should seek assistance early in order to adequately participate in coursework and to prepare for the Qualifying Exam, particularly the Written Exam on Course Content.

CURRICULUM SEQUENCE

While there is no prescribed sequence of courses for the TS PhD program, some courses are offered only once per year and some courses require prerequisites, so students and their academic and graduate advisors or Supervising Professors must develop the individual Plan of Study accordingly to maintain an established schedule to graduation. The TS PhD requires a minimum of 72 hours.

SAMPLE THREE-YEAR PLAN OF STUDY (FULL-TIME STUDENT, 3-SEMESTERS/ACADEMIC YEAR*)
FOR COMPLETION OF TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE PhD
(BASED ON EDUCATIONAL DOMAINS)

Year 1, Fall **		**Year 1, Spring ****		**Year1, Summer**	
	SCH		SCH		SCH
Translational Science (Core)	1	Research Design-Methods2 (Core)	2	Electives	6
Responsible Conduct (Core)	2	Research Design-Biostatistics2 (Core)	2		
Research Design-Methods1 (Core)	2	Leadership & Team Science (Core)	3		
Research Design-Biostatistics1 (Core)	2	Elective	2		
Scientific Communication (Core)	2				
TOTAL SCH/SEMESTER	9		9		6
Year 2, Fall **		**Year 2, Spring ****		**Year 2, Summer**	
Business of Translational Science (Core)	3	Research Design & Analysis (Core)	3	Electives	3
Evidence-Based Policy & Implementation (Core)	2	Electives	3	Research or Dissertation	3
Electives	4	Research or Dissertation	3		
TOTAL SCH/SEMESTER	9		9		6
Year 3, Fall		**Year 3, Spring**		**Year 3, Summer**	
Dissertation	9	Dissertation	9	Dissertation	6
TOTAL SCH/SEMESTER	9		9		6

PRE-REQUISITE: Master's, Doctoral, or Professional Degree (anticipated minimum of 2 to 4 years beyond undergraduate education)

SCH, semester credit hour

*UT Health San Antonio's Graduate School operates under super-semesters (two 6-month semesters from July-December and January-June); however, most UT Health San Antonio students will take summer courses at other TS PhD institutions. The academic year for UT Health San Antonio students is July-June, plus a "trailing" summer semester. The academic year for UTSA and UT Austin students is the traditional fall-spring-summer semesters. Total concurrent enrollment in the academic year must be equivalent to full-time or part-time enrollment as defined by the student's Home institution. At some TS PhD institutions, full-time is equivalent to 21 SCH and part-time is equivalent to 6 SCH; however, at UT Health San Antonio full-time enrollment is 24 SCH per academic year and part-time enrollment is 12 SCH.

**Core courses in Years 1 and 2 may be taken as available

MILESTONES (FULL-TIME STUDENT)

To maintain progression toward completion of the TS PhD program in three years, as a full-time student, the following general expectations and milestones should be met:

Year 1:
- With the academic advisor or supervising professor, select coursework

- Enroll in and successfully complete selected core and elective courses, and research hours
- Identify area of research interest
- Identify a Supervising Professor
- Create a Compact and Milestones Agreement with an advisor or supervising professor (to be reviewed annually)

Year 2:

- With the academic advisor or supervising professor, select coursework
- Enroll in and successfully complete selected core and elective courses, and research hours
- Form a Dissertation Committee
- Successfully complete the qualifying examination
- File for admission to candidacy
- Obtain IRB or IACUC approval for research, if needed
- Begin/continue dissertation research
- Complete scheduled Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluations; review the Compact and Milestones Agreement

Year 3:

- With the academic advisor or supervising professor, select coursework; enroll in and successfully complete selected didactic courses and research/dissertation hours
- Complete dissertation research, write and revise the dissertation
- Complete scheduled Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluations; review the Compact and Milestones Agreement
- Apply for graduation during registration for semester of oral examination
- Schedule, announce, and present the final oral examination (defense of dissertation)

Subsequent Years:

- With the academic advisor or supervising professor, select coursework; enroll in and successfully complete selected didactic courses and research/dissertation hours
- Completion of unfinished tasks from previous years – complete research; write/revise the dissertation; prepare/present the final oral examination; apply for graduation
- Complete scheduled Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluations; review the Compact and Milestones Agreement

Milestones Agreement: To establish the expectations for degree progression, and to monitor degree progression on a regular basis, the student and the advisor or supervising professor will review and sign the Milestones Agreement for the TS PhD. This form is available for both full-time and part-time students.

Compact between Graduate Student and Supervising Professor: The Compact establishes a set of guidelines intended to promote and support the development of a positive mentoring relationship between the student and the supervising professor. It is recommended that within four weeks of selecting a supervising professor, and no later than the end of the next fall semester, the student should discuss the topics outlined on the Compact with the mentor and agreed-upon commitments should be listed. The Milestones Agreement Form will be attached to the Compact.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY and DISSERTATION

COMPREHENSIVE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The qualifying exam will be administered before the start of dissertation credit hours, and admission to candidacy will be contingent on its successful completion. The qualifying examination should be completed near the end or following the completion of core coursework (elective coursework may still remain). **It is recommended that the student, at the time of the written portion of the qualifying exam, should have completed the bulk (at least 75%) of core coursework, including at least one course in each domain.** Students must have a cumulative, university-specific, and combined TS PhD program 3.0 ("B") grade point average (GPA) for all classes for which letter grades are given to take the Qualifying Exam.

The qualifying exam will include both written and oral components. The exam will be comprehensive and will include questions and/or assignments covering:

1. Knowledge/Information gained through the translational science coursework; and
2. The basic knowledge required for the chosen area of research.

The purpose of the qualifying exam is to identify students who can apply knowledge gained in coursework to solve problems they may not have seen before; therefore, students should be familiar with both their coursework and the current literature.

The format of the exam and composition of the Dissertation Committee is determined by the TS Committee on Graduate Studies (TS COGS). Additional criteria may be set by an institution regarding committee structure and approval mechanisms. **Students should verify the requirements of the TS PhD program and the Home institution's Graduate School when establishing their Dissertation Committee.**

Supervising Professor: If not already established at the time of admission into the TS PhD program, students are advised to select a Supervising Professor for the dissertation research as soon as possible. At a minimum, the student must select a Supervising Professor prior to the initiation of the Qualifying Exam. The Supervising Professor must have a primary faculty appointment at one of the degree-granting institutions. Should a faculty have an adjoint or adjunct faculty appointment, approval of the applicant Supervising Professor will be at the discretion of the Graduate School for the student's Home institution. The Supervising Professor will chair all steps of the Qualifying Exam.

Dissertation Committee: The selection of the Dissertation Committee is required for the Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of the Dissertation Research components of the Qualifying Exam. See below under "Dissertation Proposal" for additional details about the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee must be approved by the TS COGS and possibly a Graduate Committee of the student's Home institution, so it is recommended that the selection of the committee members be accomplished in sufficient time to allow for the required approval(s).

Scheduling the Qualifying Exam: Every effort will be made to accommodate the individualized nature of the TS PhD program, and scheduling of the qualifying exam will be individualized to promote student progress. The timing of the QE will be determined jointly by the candidate and the Supervising Professor, in collaboration with the Dissertation Committee and the instructors/graders for the Written Exam on Course Content. If needed and agreed upon, portions of the QE may be tasked to be completed between semesters; however, the faculty members grading the QE are not expected to do this outside established semesters. Since faculty participants in the QE will come from different institutions, attention must be paid to different academic schedules.

Components of the Qualifying Exam: The two components of the Qualifying Exam may be completed in any order – the Written Exam on Course Content and the Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of the Dissertation Research. The Supervising Professor will utilize the results of all portions of the qualifying exam as the basis for evaluating the student's performance and will report its judgment of performance to the TS COGS and the Home institution, following existing policy and procedure. Students must receive an overall grade of "Pass" on each component to be admitted into candidacy.

The qualifying exam is composed of two parts: (1) the Written Exam on Course Content and (2) the Dissertation Proposal (written and oral).

1. **Written Exam on Course Content**

- **Administering the Written Exam on Course Content:** The Written Exam on Course Content will test the student's background in translational science based on core didactic coursework. Because the TS PhD student may select from multiple courses for most domains, every effort will be made to include questions specific to the course(s) taken by the student. Specific criteria related to the Written Exam on Course Content include:
  - The exam will be a take-home exam, and a three-week time period will be allowed for completion.
  - The exam will include one question per domain in the TS PhD curriculum (seven questions total). The instructor for the course taken by the student to fulfill the course requirement for each domain will write the question. If the instructor is no longer available, a suitable option, such as using an alternate faculty member who is familiar with the course content or selecting a substitute course for the domain, will be determined. The Supervising Professor will review all questions and clarify with the question writer(s), if needed, prior to administering this portion of the qualifying exam.
  - The response to each question will be limited to 1,000 words. Literature citations are not part of the word count. Students who wish to add exhibits or other addenda must get prior approval from the instructor/question writer.
  - The responses will be typed and submitted electronically as a PDF file.
  - Students will not be released from lab or class responsibilities while they are completing this portion of the qualifying exam. Students will be responsible for scheduling their workloads appropriately.
  - The Written Exam on Course Content will be scheduled at a time mutually agreed upon by the student, the Supervising Professor, and the participating instructors/question writers and graders. Sufficient time will be required to solicit and review the questions, so scheduling should begin as early as possible. If needed, and if all participants are in agreement, portions of the Qualifying Exam may be tasked to be completed between semesters.
- **Using Outside Resources for Grammar and Spelling for the Qualifying Exam**
  - Proficiency in professional and scholarly writing is an essential skill for students in the Translational Science PhD program. The Qualifying Exam's Written Exam on Course Content requires the demonstration of a combination of skills – research, knowledge application, analysis, composition and writing, spelling, and appropriate citation of resources.
  - For students whose English and grammar skills are not proficient, the use of tools (like 'spell check' or 'grammar check' in word processing software, such as MS WORD) to improve the grammar, syntax, and spelling in the Written Exam on Course Content portion of the qualifying examination is acceptable. Use of other online software tools is also acceptable, as long as the student's writing is put through a software program and not edited by a human. In all cases, these tools offer assistance, but recommendations may or may not be

appropriate. The student must have sufficient skill to make appropriate determinations. **If online assistance/software/resources are used, the student should document what type of assistance was used.** It is not acceptable for a TS PhD student to ask another person to edit his/her responses in the Written Exam on Course Content. This would include spouses, other family members, fellow students, editors (persons performing this service for free or for hire), other Health Science Center employees, or the student's supervising professor. As part of the Written Exam on Course Content for the Qualifying Exam, the student's grammar, syntax, and spelling – in general, the student's ability to convey responses with an acceptable level of writing proficiency – will be assessed by the Graders. This assessment will not be factored into the grade for the QE question. If, during this assessment of the written portions of the Qualifying Exam, the student's grammar, syntax, and/or spelling are found to be unsatisfactory, the student will be advised to seek assistance or remediation.

- **Participants in the Written Exam on Course Content: Participants will include:**
  - The Supervising Professor
  - The instructor(s) from one core course in each of the seven TS domains. If an instructor is not available, a faculty member from one of the participating universities with expertise in the area of instruction or from a substitute course will be selected by the Supervising Professor, the TS PhD Program Director (or designee), and/or the TS COGS.
  - Secondary graders, selected from the TS COGS and/or from one of the participating institutions, with the approval of the TS PhD Program Director and/or TS COGS.
- **Grading the Written Exam on Course Content:**
  - **Graders:** Each exam question will be graded by two people – the course instructor who wrote the question (or substitute as indicated above) and a second person from the TS COGS or faculty from one of the participating institutions who is knowledgeable about the question/domain/topic. The second grader will be selected by the TS PhD Program Director and/or TS COGS.
  - Graders have the right to use online plagiarism resources during the assessment of student responses.
  - **Grading Scale:** The Course Content questions will be graded using the following criteria:
    - **Exceptional (4.0):** Indicates that the answers fully and completely address the questions with no major and very few minor flaws or shortcomings.
    - **Very Good (3.5):** The answers fully and completely address the questions with no major and some minor flaws or shortcomings.
    - **Good (3.0):** The answers fully and completely address the questions but contain no more than one substantive flaw or shortcoming or several minor flaws.
    - **Satisfactory (2.5):** The answers contain some substantive flaws and shortcomings; however, on balance the answers address the questions and are more correct than incorrect and more complete than incomplete.
    - **Marginal (2.0):** The answers contain numerous substantive flaws and shortcomings; however, on balance the answers address the questions and are more correct than incorrect and more complete than incomplete.
    - **Unsatisfactory (1.0):** The answers are nominally complete, but do not suitably address the questions. For example:
      - Answers to questions are substantively different from the questions asked.
      - The answers address the questions but contain numerous flaws and shortcomings.

- **Fail (0.0):** The answers are substantively incomplete (e.g., unanswered, or only one out of three parts are answered) or are nonsensical.

- **Grade Assignment:** After each grader has assigned a tentative grade to the question, the graders will meet and discuss their assessments. If the assessment of the two graders is similar and/or if they can agree on the assessment, the graders will arrive at a consensus grade for the exam and report that consensus grade to the Supervising Professor. If the graders' assessments are dissimilar and/or they cannot agree on the assessment, the graders will request the Supervising Professor to appoint a third reviewer, who will independently grade the question. Following that, the graders will arrive at a consensus grade for the question and report that consensus grade to the Supervising Professor.

- **Overall Grade:** The graded questions will be reviewed by the Supervising Professor, who will discuss any questions or comments with the graders prior to tabulating the overall grade for the Written Exam on Course Content. A numeric score will be assessed to each question based on the following scale:

Exceptional	**4.0**
Very Good	**3.5**
Good	**3.0**
Satisfactory	**2.5**
Marginal	**2.0**
Unsatisfactory	**1.0**
Fail	**0.0**

A student will pass the Written Exam on Course Content with a minimum total score of 21 or higher if no question receives a grade of "Fail". Any grade of "Fail" will require a question re-take, regardless of the overall score. Additionally, any grade less than "Satisfactory" may require a question re-take or other form of remediation, at the discretion of the graders the supervising professor, and/or the program director to ensure the student can demonstrate satisfactory mastery of the subject matter. The rubric for scoring any question re-take will be the same. See "follow-up" for additional criteria.

2. **Dissertation Proposal:** The Dissertation Proposal will consist of the Written Dissertation Proposal and the Oral Exam on the Dissertation Proposal. The Dissertation Committee, chaired by the Supervising Professor, will be responsible for evaluating and grading these components.

- **Dissertation Committee:** If the Written Exam on Course Content is completed first, the student will have 60 days to form the Dissertation Committee and complete the written and oral Dissertation Proposal portions of the Qualifying Exam. It is recommended that the student begins the process of organizing the Dissertation Committee well in advance. Completion of the written and oral Dissertation Proposal portions of the QE prior to taking the Written Exam on Course Content will require the assembly of the Dissertation Committee prior to the oral and written exams and, upon completion, the student will have 60 days to complete the Written Exam on Course Content.

- **Dissertation Committee Members:** Prior to the submission of the Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal, the student, with the help of the Supervising Professor, will establish a Dissertation Committee. **The Dissertation Committee will have at least four members but may have additional members if required by the Graduate School of the student's Home institution.** All program-required Dissertation Committee members must be approved as Graduate Faculty by the TS COGS for the TS PhD program, with the exception of the member from an outside institution. Additionally, if the student's Home institution requires

additional representation, Graduate Faculty membership will be dependent on the requirements of the Home institution. Dissertation committee membership will include (at a minimum):

- The Supervising Professor (may be from any of the four UT institutions included in this joint program and must have a faculty appointment at the student's Home institution)
- Graduate Faculty from the TS PhD program from the student's home department and/or institution
- Graduate Faculty from the TS PhD program from a second UT component institution participating in the joint degree program – in case of joint or cross appointments, the faculty member's primary appointment must be at the institution that is not the student's Home institution
- A member from an outside institution who is an expert in the student's dissertation field and does not have a faculty appointment, either full-time or part-time, at any of the four institutions participating in the joint degree program; an academic appointment for this committee member is not a requirement.

These are minimum requirements – the student and Supervising Professor must ensure that the Dissertation Committee requirements for both the TS PhD Program and the student's Home institution are met.

The proposed composition of the Dissertation Committee must be evaluated and approved by the TS COGS, and it is the responsibility of the student and Supervising Professor to present the proposed composition of the Dissertation Committee to the TS COGS for approval. Additional site-specific criteria may be set by the Graduate School of an individual institution, such as approval by a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) and/or Graduate Dean at the Home institution, in addition to approval by the TS COGS.

Dissertation Committee Member Participation: Dissertation Committee members may participate electronically/online and may be off-campus when participating in the Dissertation Committee activities and meetings.

<u>Written Dissertation Proposal</u>:

- **Administration of the Written Dissertation Proposal:** The student will prepare a written research proposal that will be the basis for the dissertation research. The written Dissertation Proposal will be submitted to the Dissertation Committee at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the Dissertation Committee, but at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the Oral Exam.
- **Written Dissertation Proposal Format:** The following format is recommended for the Research Proposal:
  - Face Page
  - Abstract
  - Literature Review (up to five pages)
  - Research Plan (up to six pages, including Specific Aims page)
    - Specific Aims (one page)
    - Research Strategy/Approach/Methodology
    - Significance
    - Innovation
    - Approach (including Hypotheses, Rationale, Preliminary Studies, Approach, Methods, and Analyses, Responsible Conduct of Research/Ethics Considerations
  - Relevance of Proposed Research to Translational Science

- Cited Literature (not included in page limitation) – Citations for the research proposal should follow the guidelines of the student's Home institution or the Home division of the student's Supervising Professor, as appropriate.

The format listed above is recommended. The student should ensure that any format or content requirements of the Supervising Professor, Department, and/or Graduate School of the Home institution are met. Regardless, the written proposal and oral defense must include a section on the relevance of the proposed research to Translational Science.

- **Grading the Written Dissertation Proposal:** The Research Proposal will be graded by all members of the Dissertation Committee using the Written Dissertation Proposal form. The written proposal will be assessed for quality and completeness of the: 1) literature review; 2) research question(s); 3) research design; 4) methodology and analyses; 5) responsible conduct of research; 6) potential limitations or limitations; 7) significance; and 8) innovation. Students are encouraged to review the assessment form to ensure that all criteria are addressed in the written dissertation proposal.

  Input from all Dissertation Committee members will be considered and a final assessment will be awarded for each review criterion. Using the assessments for each review criterion, an overall assessment of "Pass", "Fail", or "Provisional Pass" will be awarded. **A consensus assessment of "Does Not Meet Expectations" on a single criterion will result in a Provisional Pass; however, other considerations, at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee, may also result in a Provisional Pass.** A Provisional Pass will require the Dissertation Committee to specify the reason for the Provisional Pass and the requirements for remediation. The final consensus assessment will be reported to the TS COGS Chair. If revisions to the written research proposal are required, these revisions may or may not necessitate changes to or a repeat of the oral exam on the dissertation research proposal.

Oral Exam on Dissertation Research Proposal:

- **Administration of the Oral Exam:** The oral exam will consist of a presentation of the Dissertation Proposal (a preliminary explanation of the proposed research project which will be defended at the completion of the dissertation) and should include background, methods, and proposed analyses. The relevance of the proposed research to Translational Science must also be addressed. QE Assessment Forms are available online. It is recommended that students review the assessment forms to ensure that all criteria are met. The Dissertation Committee, through questioning, will engage the candidate in a discussion of the proposed research to delineate the strengths and weaknesses of the approach. The oral exam will follow the submission of the written Dissertation Proposal and will be scheduled at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the Dissertation Committee.

- **Oral Exam Attendance:** The student and Supervising Professor, in communication with the members of the Dissertation Committee and the TS PhD Program Director, will determine the date and time for the oral defense of the research proposal.

  All committee members are expected to attend the oral defense, either in person or via teleconference or other online/electronic/virtual mechanism. It is preferred that the Supervising Professor be in physical attendance with the student. If some committee members participate virtually, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the electronic system is adequate for the intended purpose. Some institutions may provide an allowance for the non-attendance of one non-supervisory committee member. The guidelines, procedures, and paperwork of the student's Home institution should be reviewed and followed.

- **Grading the Oral Exam:** The Oral Exam will be graded by all members of the Dissertation Committee using the Oral Defense of Dissertation Proposal form. The oral exam will be assessed using the following criteria: 1) content knowledge; 2) presentation skills; 3) professional composure; 4) creativity; 5) independent thinking; and 6) relevance to translational science. Students are encouraged to review the assessment form to ensure that all criteria are addressed in the oral defense of the dissertation proposal.

  Input from all Dissertation Committee members will be considered and a final assessment will be awarded for each review criterion. Using the assessments for each review criterion, an overall assessment of "Pass", "Fail", or "Provisional Pass" will be awarded. **An assessment of "Does Not Meet Expectations" on a single criterion will result in a Provisional Pass; however, other considerations, at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee, may also result in a Provisional Pass.** A Provisional Pass will require the Dissertation Committee to specify the reason for the Provisional Pass and the requirements for remediation. The final consensus assessment will be reported to the TS COGS Chair.

3. **Follow-up for Students Who Do Not Pass or Who Receive a Provisional Pass:** A student meeting any of the following criteria may require remediation or other action:

   - A student who does not meet the criteria for a passing grade on any component of the QE
   - A student who receives a grade of "Fail" on any question of the Written Exam on Course Content
   - A student who receives a rating of "Does Not Meet Expectations" on any criterion of the written dissertation proposal or oral defense of the dissertation proposal
   - A student who receives a Provisional Pass on any component of the QE

   If remediation or action is required, the student will be subject to additional testing or other remediation on that component/question. The Supervising Professor and Dissertation Committee will review the student's performance and make recommendation(s) as appropriate:

   - Written Exam on Course Content: The student may be required to pursue specific remediation in the areas requiring further study, including taking further coursework, followed by a re-take of exam question(s). The student may be allowed to retake the course content exam question(s) or portions(s) of the exam. Such testing may include, but is not limited to, additional readings, a written paper, an oral exam, or a retaking of an exam component or question. The nature and content of the additional testing will be determined by the faculty member who authored the exam question and the second grader, in consultation with the Supervising Professor and Program Director.
   - Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Exam on Dissertation Research: The student will be required to respond to the request for revision or other remediation, as specified by the Dissertation Committee on the assessment form.

   A re-take of any exam component or question will be graded according to the procedures outlined above. The final grade on the comprehensive exam will be assigned after the additional testing.

   Students who fail to successfully complete all components of the comprehensive qualifying exam on the second attempt will be dismissed from the TS PhD program. Any student wishing to transfer to a Master's program will be responsible for identifying an appropriate program and making application.

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Each doctoral candidate must complete an approved body of research and submit a dissertation as one of the requirements for graduation. The dissertation must be an original scholarly contribution based on the independent research conducted by the candidate, under the supervision and guidance of the Supervising Professor. A Dissertation Committee will provide additional advisement and assessment. The format of the dissertation will be in compliance with the rules of the student's Home institution.

As part of the Qualifying Exam, the student must submit and orally defend the research proposal to the Dissertation Committee. Enrollment in Dissertation hours will begin after the student has selected a Supervising Professor and Dissertation Committee, developed a research proposal, passed the Qualifying Exam, and is admitted to candidacy upon recommendation by the Dissertation Committee and TS PhD Program Director, and approval by the Graduate Dean. Approval by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) of the student's Home institution may also be required. **Students are advised to review the guidelines of their Home institution.**

The student must satisfy the research and dissertation course requirements, with respect to the number of semester credit hours (minimum of 30), number of semesters, and/or continuous enrollment requirements of the Home institution and as required by the student's research schedule and individual Plan of Study. Following admission to candidacy, enrollment for the dissertation course will be required during any semester where a student receives supervision by the Dissertation Committee, utilizes assistance from a faculty member, or otherwise uses the resources of any of the UT institutions to further the progress of the dissertation.

Changing the Doctoral Research Project: Significant changes in the planned dissertation research project (*e.g*., addition or deletion of a Specific Aim, substantial modifications in experimental design or scope of research studies to be undertaken) must be reviewed and approved by the Supervising Professor and Dissertation Committee prior to consideration by the TS COGS and the Home institution's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), if required, and the Graduate Dean's Office. The written request to change the research project must be submitted to the TS COGS through the TS PhD Program Director. The format of the written request should follow Home institution or departmental requirements.

DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE

Written Dissertation:

- **Format:** The format of the written dissertation will follow the requirements of the Graduate School of the student's Home institution. Citations for the research proposal should follow the guidelines of the student's Home institution or the Home division of the student's Supervising Professor, as appropriate.
- **Assessment:** The Written Dissertation will be assessed by all members of the Dissertation Committee using the Written Dissertation assessment form. Dissertation assessment forms are available online. It is recommended that students review the assessment forms to ensure that all criteria are met. Input from all Dissertation Committee members will be considered and a final assessment will be awarded for each review criteria. Using the assessments of the review criteria, an overall assessment of "Pass", "Fail", or "Provisional Pass" will be awarded. An assessment of "Does Not Meet Expectations" on a single criterion will result in a Provisional Pass; however, other considerations, at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee, may also result in a Provisional Pass. A Provisional Pass will require the Dissertation Committee to specify the reason for the Provisional Pass and the requirements for remediation or revision. The final consensus assessment will be

reported to the TS COGS Chair. Any requested revisions must be incorporated into the oral defense of the dissertation.

Final Oral Examination (Defense of Dissertation):

Completion of the dissertation will require a satisfactory final oral examination, as evaluated and approved by the Dissertation Committee. The final oral examination will cover aspects of the dissertation, information derived from the general field of the dissertation research, and other parts of the student's individual Plan of Study as determined by the Dissertation Committee. The relevance of the dissertation research to the field of Translational Science will also be evaluated.

- **Format:** The dissertation defense will be advertised per the guidelines of the student's Home institution and open to the public. Any format requirements of the student's Home institution will be followed. In the open session, the student will conduct a seminar/presentation that is expected to be 45-50 minutes duration, followed by a short question and answer session. This will be followed by a closed session, consisting of only the student and the Dissertation Committee for additional questions and comments.
- **Dissertation Defense Attendance:** The student and Supervising Professor, in communication with the members of the Dissertation Committee and the TS PhD Program Director, will determine the date and time for the oral defense of the Dissertation Research.

  All committee members are expected to attend the oral defense, either in person or via teleconference or other online/electronic/virtual mechanism. It is preferred that the Supervising Professor be in physical attendance with the student. If some committee members participate virtually, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the electronic system is adequate for the intended purpose. Some institutions may provide an allowance for the non-attendance of one non-supervisory committee member. The guidelines, procedures, and paperwork of the student's Home institution should be reviewed and followed.
- **Exceptions to Protect Intellectual Property:** A closed oral defense of the dissertation may be requested by the student and/or Supervising Professor to protect the disclosure of intellectual property. A request for a closed oral defense of the dissertation must be made according to the guidelines of the student's Home institution. Similarly, publication of the dissertation may be delayed to protect intellectual property, per the guidelines of the student's Home institution.
- **Assessment:** The Defense of Dissertation will be assessed by all members of the Dissertation Committee using the Oral Defense of Dissertation assessment form. Input from all Dissertation Committee members will be considered and a final assessment will be awarded for each review criteria. Using the assessments of the review criteria, an overall assessment of "Pass", "Fail", or "Provisional Pass" will be awarded. An assessment of "Does Not Meet Expectations" on a single criterion will result in a Provisional Pass; however, other considerations, at the discretion of the Dissertation Committee, may also result in a Provisional Pass. A Provisional Pass will require the Dissertation Committee to specify the reason for the Provisional Pass and the requirements for remediation or revision. If required, these revisions/remediations must be successfully completed prior to the issue of a final consensus assessment. The final consensus assessment will be reported to the TS COGS Chair.

GRADUATION

Satisfactory completion of the doctoral degree will be evaluated based on whether the student has:

- Completed all work assigned by the Dissertation Committee;
- Passed all examinations, including the final oral examination;
- Completed a dissertation that meets the criteria outlined above for independent investigation and contribution to the scientific discipline; and
- Completed any other requirements of the TS PhD program and the student's Home institution/Graduate School.

Following a thorough review of the completion of these requirements, the Dissertation Committee will sign the approval sheets and provide an official recommendation to the TS COGS regarding the award of the doctoral degree. If the dissertation is considered meritorious by a majority vote of the TS COGS, the TS COGS will accept the Dissertation Committee's approval and then inform the Graduate School of the student's Home institution. Final acceptance of the doctoral dissertation is accomplished by majority vote of the Graduate council or committee of the student's Home institution. The Graduate Schools of the other participating universities will be notified.

Students must adhere to the guidelines in the Graduate Catalog and/or website of the Home institution in all phases of writing the dissertation, the dissertation defense, and documentation submission related to the dissertation and graduation.

Credits Required for Graduation: At least 51% of the total credits in a student's Plan of Study must be earned through regular semester credit hour (SCH) instruction at the institutions participating in the joint TS PhD degree program (UT Health San Antonio, UT San Antonio, UT Austin, or UTHealth School of Public Health), which may include prior credit hours earned in another PhD program at a participating institution that did not result in a degree. Additionally, graduates must meet SACS Standard 3.6.3 on graduate programs, which states: "3.6.3 At least one-third of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree." *(See Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements").* The student's Home institution must verify that the graduate completes at least one-third of semester-credit-hours toward the degree at the Home institution.

Documentation Requirements:

The student must submit the dissertation to ProQuest (http://www.proquest.com) and/or to another site required by the Home institution. **The guidelines of the student's Home institution should be followed** for copy(ies) going to that institution. **A PDF electronic copy should also be provided to the TS PhD Program Office.**

All prospective graduates should carefully review and complete the paperwork/online submission and other requirements of the Home institution's Graduate School, starting the semester prior to the planned dissertation defense and graduation.

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR and DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR

The TS PhD program provides an academic structure for PhD candidates to be successful, but the importance of identifying the right supervising professor for each PhD student is critical.

The Supervising Professor will oversee all aspects of the student research project and must be a member of the TS Graduate Faculty and have a faculty appointment at the student's Home institution. Selection of a Supervising Professor is largely dependent on the research interests of the student and the expertise of the Supervising Professor to mentor the student through the research and dissertation process in the chosen field of study. While it is expected that most students will choose a Supervising Professor from their Home institution, a student may work with a faculty member from one of the other participating institutions, including the UTHealth School of Public Health. While the UTHealth School of Public Health cannot award the joint degree, a faculty member from this institution may participate as a Supervising Professor if all requirements are met and if that faculty qualifies for TS Graduate Faculty status, including a faculty appointment at the student's Home institution. The goal is to have the faculty member with the most appropriate content expertise serve as the Supervising Professor for the candidate's dissertation research.

In all cases, the experience of the proposed Supervising Professor will be closely reviewed by the TS COGS. If a TS PhD student identifies a Supervising Professor who is not a member of the TS Graduate Faculty, the TS COGS will separately assess the qualifications of that individual for recommendation to the TS Graduate Faculty. Requests for consideration of appointment to the TS Graduate Faculty may be considered concomitantly with the evaluation of an individual to serve as a student's Supervising Professor. The applicant Supervising Professor must submit:

- The TS Supervising Professor form that includes:
  - A brief overview of the planned research project (to be reviewed/approved by the Supervising Committee once it is established)
  - Description of the student's role/activities in the research project
  - Statement of commitment to the student's education and training in the TS PhD program
  - If the student is a foreign national attending the TS PhD program on a student visa, agreement to provide a bi-annual statement regarding continued support for enrollment in the TS PhD program
- A NIH-style biosketch, or equivalent documentation (such as a CV), as evidence of research experience and funding
- A NIH-style trainee table, or equivalent documentation (such as a CV), as evidence of experience in supervising student dissertation (and other) research

The applicant Supervising Professor must have a primary faculty appointment at one of the degree-granting institutions. Should a faculty have an adjoint or adjunct faculty appointment, approval of the applicant Supervising Professor will be at the discretion of the Graduate School for the student's Home Institution. Additionally, if the TS COGS does not consider the proposed Supervising Professor to have sufficient experience, the student and the proposed Supervising Professor will be advised of this decision and the student will be required to select another Supervising Professor.

Changing the Supervising Professor: Change of the Supervising Professor requires review and approval by the TS COGS and the Home institution's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), if required. This request

should be submitted, in writing, to the TS COGS through the TS PhD Program Director and should include:

- Cover memo or email describing the basis for the request to change Supervising Professor
- The Request to Amend Research or Committee Form that includes:
    - A brief overview of the research and the student's progress to date
    - Commitment to the student's education and training toward completion of the TS PhD
    - If the student is a foreign national attending the TS PhD program on a student visa, agreement to provide a bi-annual statement regarding continued support for enrollment in the TS PhD program
- A NIH-style biosketch, or equivalent documentation (such as a CV), of the proposed Supervising Professor as evidence of research experience and funding
- An NIH-style trainee table, or equivalent documentation (such as a CV), of the proposed Supervising Professor as evidence of experience in supervising student dissertation (and other) research

Following TS COGS approval, the request will be forwarded to the Graduate Dean to review and approve the request. Students must follow all guidelines put forth by the Graduate School of the Home institution.

COMPOSITION OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Prior to the submission of the Written Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal, the student, with the help of his/her Supervising Professor, will establish a Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee will have **at least** four members but may have additional members if required by the Graduate School of the student's Home institution. All program-required Dissertation Committee members (listed below) must be approved as Graduate Faculty by the TS COGS for the TS PhD program, with the exception of the member from an outside institution. Additionally, if the student's Home institution requires additional representation, Graduate Faculty membership will be dependent on the requirements of the Home institution. Dissertation committee membership will include (at a minimum):

- The Supervising Professor (may be from any of the four participating UT institutions in this joint program and must have a faculty appointment at the student's Home institution)
- Graduate Faculty from the TS PhD program from the student's home department and/or institution
- Graduate Faculty from the TS PhD program from a second UT component institution participating in the joint degree program – in case of joint or cross appointments, the faculty member's primary appointment must be at the institution that is not the student's Home institution
- A member from an outside institution who is an expert in the student's dissertation field and does not have a faculty appointment, either full-time or part-time, at any of the four institutions participating in the joint degree program; an academic appointment for this committee member is not a requirement

These are minimum requirements – the student and Supervising Professor must ensure that the Dissertation Committee requirements for both the TS PhD Program and the student's Home institution are met.

The proposed composition of the Dissertation Committee must be evaluated and approved by the TS COGS, and it is the responsibility of the student and Supervising Professor to present the proposed

composition of the Dissertation Committee to the TS COGS for approval. Additional site-specific criteria may be set by the Graduate School of an individual institution, such as approval by a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) and/or Graduate Dean at the Home institution, in addition to approval by the TS COGS.

Dissertation Committee Member Participation: Dissertation Committee members may participate online, in-person, or hybrid when participating in the Dissertation Committee activities and meetings; however, the Supervising Professor is encouraged to be in the room with the student when chairing Dissertation Committee meetings.

Changing a Dissertation Committee: Change in membership of an approved Dissertation Committee requires review and approval by the TS COGS. This request should be submitted, in writing, to the TS COGS through the Program Director and should include:

- Cover memo or email that describes the basis for the request to change the Dissertation Committee
- Request to Amend Research or Committee Form

Additional site-specific criteria may be set by the Graduate School of an individual institution, such as approval by a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) and/or approval by the Graduate Dean at the Home institution, in addition to approval by the TS COGS.

PROGRESSION TO PhD CANDIDACY AND GRADUATION

Student progress will be monitored regularly to ensure that each student stays on track to receive the PhD degree in a timely manner. All courses used toward the completion of the TS PhD degree must be completed within six years of graduation for full-time students; and for part-time students, this is extended to eight years and/or considered on a case-by-case basis. Students who are in the active military may receive an extension of up to three years to complete their degree, and other waivers may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students are expected to complete the PhD within three years of completion of the qualifying exam. Extension requests will be reviewed and approved by TS COGS. After admission to candidacy, monitoring will be put in place to ensure relevance of coursework and progress toward the dissertation.

COMPACT AND MILESTONES AGREEMENT

In the first year, first (fall) semester, TS PhD students will complete a Milestones Agreement, delineating an expected timeline for achievement of academic milestones, and a Compact between Graduate Student and Supervising Professor, delineating an agreement regarding laboratory, training, professional development, and other topics related to the student's role in the laboratory and research activities. Milestones Agreements are available for both full- and part-time students. These agreements will be reviewed and updated annually during each subsequent fall semester.

TS COGS ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESSION TO QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The Program Director will contact the Advisor or Supervising Professor of a student who has not completed the qualifying examination after two years (full-time students) or 3.5 years (part-time students) in the program to assess the student's progress and develop a plan for completing the qualifying exam. The Supervising Professor will document this meeting and provide a copy to the Program Director. The academic/graduate advisor or Supervising Professor will meet with the student at least one time each semester after this meeting to assess the student's progress and provide remediation when needed to assist the student's progress toward the qualifying exam. These meetings will be reported to the TS COGS.

COURSE RELEVANCE

Full-time students who have not graduated after five years in the TS PhD program will have the content of their coursework reviewed by the TS COGS for relevance to the student's individual Plan of Study and research. If coursework is determined to be obsolete or irrelevant to the student's research, additional coursework may be required to fulfill the course requirements.

99-HOUR AND 130-HOUR RULE/EXCESS CREDIT HOURS POLICY

Students in the TS PhD program who have more than 130 attempted (including earned) semester credit hours may be affected by 99-hour or 130-hour rule established by the Texas Education Code, which allows charging out-of-state tuition for graduate students who have more than 99 or 130 semester credit hours in any graduate program at a Texas institution. The number of hours is dependent on the degree program and university. Students should check with the Graduate School and Graduate Catalog of their Home institution to determine which rule applies. TS PhD students who think they will exceed 99, or subsequently 130, graduate credit hours prior to graduation should consult with the Graduate School of

their Home institution to determine if they are eligible for programmatic or individual exemption from the rule.

GRADUATION

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is awarded upon satisfactory completion of a minimum of 72 semester credit hours, submission of a dissertation, and satisfactory completion of a final oral examination (defense of dissertation). Students will apply and be approved for their degree and graduation by their Home institution. The degree awarded is a joint degree with the other partner institutions, and it is awarded on the official graduation date indicated to The University of Texas System and published by the Home institution. Students will attend the graduation ceremony of the Home institution. Graduation fees will be assessed by the Home institution.

SEMI-ANNUAL STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT AND EVALUATION

REQUIREMENT FOR SEMI-ANNUAL STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT AND EVALUATION

All TS PhD students will be evaluated by the Supervising Professor (and Dissertation Committee, if applicable) two times each year the student is in the TS PhD program. The Semi-Annual Progress Report will be submitted in a prescribed format and include a written report of progress on the student's research work, activities related to the research, self-assessment, and proposed direction of future work.

The Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluation will be submitted in a prescribed format and include a written report of progress on the student's research work, activities related to the research, self-assessment, and proposed direction of future work. The Supervising Professor and/or Dissertation Committee will evaluate the research progress made by the student and, if satisfactory, endorse both the progress and the direction of future work to be undertaken.

For students who have **not** entered Candidacy, the semi-annual student progress report and evaluation will require 1) the completion of the report by the student and supervising professor; 2) a student/supervising professor meeting; 3) student and supervising/professor signatures; and 4) submission of the completed and signed report and updated CV to the TS PhD Program Coordinator.

For students who have entered Candidacy, the semi-annual student progress report and evaluation will require 1) the completion of the report by the student and supervising professor; 2) a student/supervising professor meeting; 3) a student/dissertation committee meeting; 4) student and dissertation committee signatures; and 5) submission of the completed and signed report and updated CV to the TS PhD Program Coordinator.

If progress is unsatisfactory, the Supervising Professor and/or Dissertation Committee will discuss the reasons for this decision with the student, and the Supervising Professor and student will develop a plan for remediation, which will be discussed at the time of the next evaluation meeting.

Failure to submit the Semi-Annual Evaluation form signed by the Supervising Professor, and those who receive a performance rating of "Expectation Not Achieved" will receive a course grade of Unsatisfactory in Topics in Translational Science, research, and dissertation courses.

DUE DATES

The Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluation must be completed and submitted to the TS PhD Program Coordinator by February 1 and July 1 of each year.

PROCEDURE

Format: The Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluation will include:

- Completion of the *TS PhD Semi-Annual Student Evaluation* Form, which will be a written report of progress on the student's research work, activities related to the research, self-assessment, and proposed direction of future work.
- A updated copy of the student's CV.
- A formal meeting of the student's Dissertation Committee

Scheduling the Meeting: The Supervising Professor will serve as the meeting Chair and, with the student, is expected to establish the time and place of the meeting. Meetings may be conducted either in-person or with electronic media (conference call, online, video conference).

Student Presentation: The student shall be present during this formal meeting and is expected to provide a brief overview of his/her research and training activities, any problems encountered since the previous meeting, as well as plans for completion of the TS PhD. The Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluation will also include consideration of student participation in and satisfactory completion of course work, research, seminars and other program activities.

Evaluation: The Dissertation Committee will evaluate the research progress made by the student and, if satisfactory, endorse both the progress and the direction of future work to be undertaken. The Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluation will then be submitted to the TS COGS, either directly or through a sub-committee established for the purpose of student advisement. If progress is unsatisfactory, the Dissertation Committee will discuss the reasons for this decision with the student, and the Supervising Professor and student will develop a plan for remediation. In the case of unsatisfactory progress, the student will present an updated progress report to the Dissertation Committee at an interval determined by the Dissertation Committee (but no greater than six months).

Request for Extension: Requests for extension of the deadline for submission of all documents associated with the Semi-Annual Student Progress Report and Evaluation (outlined above) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

FELLOWSHIP REQUIREMENT

The UT Health San Antonio Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences implemented the following policy, effective Fall 2020:

Writing competitive scientific grant proposals is an important competency for PhD graduate students. As a requisite milestone to help fulfill this competency, all doctoral students must submit their dissertation proposals as an individual fellowship to an external funding agency such as the National Institutes of Health (i.e., F30 or F31) or NSF (GRFP). Ideally, initial submission would be by the end of the third year in the program, although exceptions can be made in the timing to ensure applications have a maximal chance of being funded. While all doctoral students are expected to submit a proposal, there may be exceptions for non-domestic students whose area of research does not align with any known funding source. In those cases, students still must prepare the application for submission and programs will provide a process to ensure the students receive feedback so they are benefitting from an appropriate submission/review experience.

All eligible TS PhD students are highly encouraged to submit a fellowship application. Those who believe they are ineligible, or who have an alternative application in mind, should notify the TS PhD Program Director and TS PhD Program Coordinator by the end of their first year in the program.

ETHICS, PROFESSIONALISM, AND CONDUCT

The TS PhD program expects all students to exhibit the highest standards of conduct, honesty, and professionalism. Academic misconduct includes activities that undermine the academic integrity of the institution. The university(ies) may discipline a student for academic misconduct as outlined in the *Catalogs* and *Handbooks of Operating Procedures* for each of the universities participating in the joint PhD degree program. Academic misconduct may involve human, hard-copy, or electronic resources, including the assistance of generative AI without consent of the course instructor. Policies of academic misconduct apply to all course-, department-, school-, and university-related activities including conferences and off-campus performances, as well as research work (including lab experiments, data collection and analyses). All cases of academic misconduct must be reported to the Dean of the Graduate School of the student's Home institution, and the seriousness of the violation may be taken into account in assessing a penalty. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- ***Cheating.*** Any attempt to use or provide unauthorized assistance, materials, information, or access in any form including generative AI and in any academic exercise or environment is considered cheating and is expressly forbidden.
- ***Fabrication.*** A student must not falsify or invent any information or data including, but not limited to, records or reports, laboratory results, data analyses, and citation to the sources of information.
- ***Facilitating Academic Dishonesty.*** A student must not intentionally or knowingly help another student commit an act of academic misconduct, nor allow another student to use his/her work or resources to commit an act of misconduct.
- ***Plagiarism.*** Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious form of academic dishonesty, regardless of whether it was done intentionally or by accident. Ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, opinions, theories, formulas, graphics, or research results of another person without acknowledgement is expressly forbidden. Credit must be given to the originality of others whenever:
    - Quoting the works of others
    - Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories
    - Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, results, or theories of others
    - Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material
    - Offering materials assembled or collected by others

Each university participating in the TS PhD program maintains policies regarding academic conduct and discipline for students, which may also implicate faculty and staff. If one site is implicated, the policies and practices of the university where the infraction was committed will be followed. If two or more sites are implicated, the most stringent policy, practice, or procedure and/or the policy, practice, or procedure of the Home institution, as determined by the TS COGS and/or the Graduate Dean(s), shall apply. The references listed below are a partial list of possible guides on this topic:

- **Policies that govern all forms of academic dishonesty for the universities participating in the TS PhD program:**
    - **Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, Rule 50101** (http://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules/50101-student-conduct-and-discipline)

- **UT Health at San Antonio**
  - Catalog: Scholastic Dishonesty Policy (http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/generalinformation/generalacademicpolicies/academicdishonesty/)
- **UT Austin**
  - Graduate Catalog: Chapter 11 – Student Discipline and Conduct (https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/)
  - Graduate Catalog: Discipline (http://catalog.utexas.edu/archive/2012-13/general-information/student-services/discipline/)
- **UT San Antonio**
  - Graduate Catalog: General Academic Regulations – Click on Academic Honesty (https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/generalacademicregulations/)
  - Information Bulletin: Student Code of Conduct – see Sec. 203. Scholastic Dishonesty (http://catalog.utsa.edu/informationbulletin/appendices/studentcodeofconduct/)
- **UTHealth School of Public Health**
  - Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Conduct and Discipline (https://www.uth.edu/hoop/policy.htm?id=1448220)
  - Handbook of Operating Procedures: Appendix A – Unacceptable Student Conduct (https://www.uth.edu/hoop/186-appendix-a.htm)

OTHER PROGRAM POLICIES and REQUIREMENTS

STUDENT ORIENTATION

A TS PhD program orientation will be provided for all incoming TS PhD students at UT Health San Antonio prior to the first day of the incoming semester. The date, time, and location of this orientation will be provided by email to incoming students. Students are also expected to participate in the orientation program specific to the Graduate School of the student's Home institution, if offered.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Because this is a joint degree program, it will be essential that the participating universities are able to share and access relevant and academically pertinent data; therefore, each Home institution designates all other institutions participating in the TS PhD program as having a legitimate educational interest in the relevant educational records of the students who participate in the TS PhD program. All participating institutions will maintain confidentiality of the educational records in accordance with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Accordingly, the sharing of relevant educational records ***will not*** require a student release nor violate a student's FERPA rights.

DATA SHARING

The multi-institutional structure of the TS PhD Program results in the need to share the distributed student data among the participating universities for institutional and programmatic reporting for all relevant institutional, system, regional, state, and federal reporting, to include grant application preparation. Examples of shared student data may include, but are not limited to, student demographics, student progress, course registration, student funding, financial aid, and student outcomes (e.g., publications, presentations, patents, grant awards, academic or professional honors and awards, employment, etc.).

STUDENT IDS

Students will obtain a Student ID from each degree-granting institution at the time of enrollment in the first semester of the program. Thereafter, each institution will activate Student IDs according to individual institutional policy. The student ID card/badge must be carried by all registered students and must be presented to campus police upon request. The card/badge also allows access to certain campus facilities. A fee may be assessed for the processing and creation of the student ID/badge on each campus. Due to the importance of this card/badge and the fact that students in this TS PhD program may have to carry several cards/badges, all students are encouraged to personally check the authenticity of all cards/badges with the appropriate institution authority on a regular basis.

PARKING

Students are expected to know and follow the parking rules and regulations of the universities where they are attending class, including campus speed limits, parking zones, police citation and warnings, parking fines, appeal procedures, and schedule and payment of parking fees.

Students will be eligible for parking permits at each institution in which they are enrolled. Parking fees will be paid to the institution that issues the permit. Students attending classes at multiple institutions should consult with the TS PhD administrative office to determine if reciprocity of parking permits or a

reduced fee is available. For example, a reciprocal parking agreement between UT Health San Antonio and UTSA allows students with a permit at one institution to park at another in specified areas:

UT Health San Antonio Permit	**UTSA Permit**
Zone III and Zone IV	Employee A or Employee B
Zones II, III, and IV	Executive, Reserved, Dolorosa, or any Employee Garage Permit
Zone V (Lot 17)	Commuter
Visitor or paid parking in Garages D, E, & H and in Lots 3, 7, 8C, 16A, and 16B	Visitors and Patient Parking

FINANCIAL AID

All financial aid will be coordinated through the student's Home institution. Application of financial aid for the purpose of tuition and fees will be disbursed by the student's Home institution. Students receiving any form of financial aid that is not automatically or fully distributed by the Home institution to the other institutions for payment of tuition and fees at the other universities are personally responsible for the payment of those tuition and fees.

Students who receive financial aid should advise the Financial Aid office at their Home institution when they enroll concurrently at more than one institution in any semester. If so, a Consortium Agreement is required, and the guidelines of the Home institution's Financial Aid office should be followed to initiate, maintain, and complete the Consortium Agreement process. Initiating and submitting the Consortium Agreement to the Financial Aid office is usually the responsibility of the student. Students are also responsible for adhering to any minimum enrollment requirements at the Home institution to receive financial aid, regardless of whether a Consortium Agreement is needed or not. Additionally, students receiving financial aid are responsible for notifying the Financial Aid Office of the Home institution and the TS PhD Program to report dropped courses and other changes in coursework occurred throughout the semester.

Due to the multiple-institution enrollment of students in the TS PhD program, it is possible that students will have to defend their full-time student status for the purpose of financial aid. Three issues may contribute to this:

1. Transcripts are at multiple institutions.
2. UT Health San Antonio uses a super semester academic year (two 6-month semesters, with no summer semester).
3. Some institutions do not give grades for Research until the research is complete (grades may show as Incomplete or RP-Research in Progress).

For students who have UT Health San Antonio as the Home institution, the academic year is July-June (July to December is fall semester and January to June is spring semester), plus a summer semester at another institution as a "trailing" semester (after the spring semester), if applicable. For students who

have UTSA or UT Austin as the Home institution, the academic year is the traditional Fall-Spring-Summer semesters.

If a financial aid "snap shot" is taken at the student's Home institution during a semester and if a student is taking courses at other universities and/or is planning to take summer courses, the student may get a notice that the minimum requirements for financial aid are not being met. Students are advised to pay close attention to any correspondence about financial aid and not to panic if they get this type of notice. It will be important to contact the university's financial aid office and the TS PhD program office immediately. Each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

International students are ***not*** eligible to receive federal financial aid.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Because students in the TS PhD program will register, attend class, and possibly conduct research at four UT institutions, all immunization requirements of all institutions must be met. All students entering and continuing in the TS PhD program must fulfill the immunization requirements of the State of Texas and UT Health San Antonio, in addition to any additional requirements of the student's Home institution. Immunization records must be established at each institution to prevent a hold at the time of registration. A list of required immunizations may be found at the UT Health San Antonio Student Health Center website, the UT Austin website, and/or the UTSA website.

STUDENT HEALTH AND HEALTH INSURANCE

TS PhD students will utilize the student health services of the student's Home institution. All students entering and continuing in the TS PhD program must provide proof of medical insurance each semester, regardless of the requirements of the student's Home institution. Students who do not have access to private or corporate health insurance must elect institution-sponsored student health insurance.

TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Laptop Computer: The TS PhD program encourages that students have a laptop computer or other electronic device(s) with the capacity to connect to the Internet *via* a wireless connection. Some courses may also require software specific to completion of the learning objectives of the course.

Some universities require that wireless laptops or devices be authenticated before accessing the wireless computer networks on that campus. Please refer to websites or contact the telecommunications/networking departments at each university to determine their requirements ***prior*** to the start of classes.

Student Email: TS PhD students will have an email account on each campus. Some institutions designate the email address, and others allow the student to make a choice. **Students are encouraged to provide the TS PhD administrative office with a list of their official email addresses on each campus. Each student will be responsible for checking all student-related email addresses on a regular basis.**

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Each university has its own fitness facility and recreational activities for students. In general, TS PhD students will have access to the facility and activities of their Home institution.

STUDENT HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Each university provides student health and student counseling services, but there are differences in how each university provides these services. It is recommended that students use their Home institution's health and counseling services unless there is an emergency while on the campus of one of the other institutions.

All UT System institutions provide institution-sponsored student health insurance for students who do not have private health insurance coverage. Proof of health insurance coverage, or purchase of student health insurance, is required for all TS PhD students.

LIBRARY SERVICES

TS PhD students may use the library services of any university where they are enrolled.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ON TS COGS

The TS COGS will have a student representative, who will be elected by the TS student body. Participation by the student representative will be limited to program issues/discussions and will not include discussion of individual students or other FERPA-protected topics.

FORMS

All TS PhD Forms are located at: Student Resources - Office of Research Education and Mentoring (OREM) (uthscsa.edu).

For some activities, the forms of your Home institution will also be required.

Always check with the TS PhD Project Coordinator to ensure you are using the most recently approved form.

APPLICATION

- TS PhD Application (online; link available at: http://iims.uthscsa.edu/ed_trans_sci_phd.html)
- Application Checklist (for use by TS COGS only)
- Admission Recommendation from TS COGS (administrative use only)

ADMISSION

- Home Institution Declaration
- FERPA Release
- Release Form for Audio-Video Recording
- Request to Change Home Institution
- Student Social Media Information

PROGRESS

- Course Tracker
- Compact Between Graduate Student and Supervising Professor (Each Fall Semester)
- Milestones Agreement Form – Full-time Student (Each Fall Semester)
- Milestones Agreement Form – Part-time Student (Each Fall Semester)
- Semi-Annual Student Evaluation
- TS PhD Candidacy Checklist & Timeline – UT Health San Antonio Home Institution
- TS PhD Candidacy Checklist & Timeline – UT Austin Home Institution
- TS PhD Candidacy Checklist & Timeline – UTSA Home Institution

RESEARCH AND COMMITTEES

- Supervising Professor Form
- Qualifying Exam Assessment Form –Course Content Questions
- Qualifying Exam Assessment Forms – Written and Oral Research Proposal
- Qualifying Exam Approval Form – Written and Oral Research Proposal
- Dissertation Assessment Forms – Written and Oral
- Dissertation Approval Form
- Request to Amend Research or Dissertation Committee

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