

## **APPLICATION TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM**

1. Apply to the Graduate School online using the link:

<http://graduate.auburn.edu/prospective-students/application-instructions/>

Documents required for a complete application are:

Application

Official Transcripts from every institution ever attended

GRE Scores

Three (3) letters of Recommendation

Letter of Intent (Statement of Research)

Curriculum Vitae

For International Students, a TOEFL score is required.

Once your application packet is complete, it will be forwarded to the Graduate Committee for review. The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, upon a departmental decision, makes a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School, who sends a letter notifying the applicant of the decision.

2. Apply for an assistantship, if applicable, through the department involved.

3. Become familiar with the requirements for the degree program as published in the AU Bulletin.

4. Consult with the departmental graduate program officer and/or assigned adviser and become familiar with the departmental procedures.

5. Meet with an advisor (or GPO), plan a schedule of study for the first semester.

6. Establish an advisory committee through the major professor and department head or chair.

Official appointment of the advisory committee occurs when the Plan of Study is approved by the Graduate School. Guidelines for submission of Plan of Study can be found here:

<http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/degreeworks-plan-of-study/>

7. Complete course work, including language requirements, if any, as detailed in the Plan of Study.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS**

The procedures which must be followed to consummate MS or PhD degree programs are listed in the AU Bulletin. Progress can be monitored most effectively by frequent meetings between student and advisory committee. At least two meetings per year should be held to ensure that the advisory committee is well informed as to a student's progress, although a student can request a meeting of his/her advisory committee as he/she deems necessary. Additionally, the advisory committee may require a student to prepare a report or take an examination whenever the committee considers it necessary to evaluate a student's progress.

If a graduate student is deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress toward his/her degree by a simple majority of his/her committee, then they may be dropped from the Graduate School.

The student's advisory committee must prepare a statement of grievances and in a meeting with the student discuss these grievances and suggest steps necessary for remediation. The statement of grievances must have the unanimous support of all members of a student's advisory committee.

The student will be warned that corrective measures must be taken within a specified time period or action will be initiated that could result in the student being dropped from the Graduate School.

## **ADVISOR AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The advisor should be able and willing to provide leadership, direction and encouragement to the student. Advisory committee members should be selected for their specific contributions to the student's area of research and ideally will complement the knowledge and expertise of the major advisor. It is in the best interest of the student to maintain contact with his/her advisory committee throughout the program of study. The student and committee should work together to avoid confusion regarding criteria upon which completion of each phase of the graduate program is based and when the student is ready to move forward onto the next phase. After the student has enrolled, an advisory committee should be selected by the student and major professor (and department chair/graduate program officer). The advisory committee is responsible for developing the student's Plan of Study and conducting the MS and PhD examinations. The Plan of Study should be prepared by the student and the advisory committee and filed with the Graduate School as soon as feasible. It should not be delayed beyond the second semester of work. The Graduate School recognizes that changes may be warranted, and a form is available for amendments as required by student needs, research interests and course availability.

### ***ADVISORY COMMITTEE GUIDELINES:***

**MS students:** A student works under the direction of an advisory committee composed of three members (identified by the student and major professor and then formally recommended by the appropriate department head or chair (here, the BMS GPO the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies). Two must be members of the Graduate Faculty (Graduate Faculty information including application material can be found at: <https://web.auburn.edu/gfast/Verify.aspx>). The formal appointment of the advisory committee occurs when the Plan of Study is approved by the Graduate School. The Plan of Study should not be delayed beyond the second semester of thesis work.

**PhD students:** After the student has enrolled in the doctoral program, an advisory committee should be selected by the student, major professor and department head or chair (here, the BMS GPO - the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies). The advisory committee is responsible for developing the student's Plan of Study and conducting the doctoral general and final examinations. It should consist of at least three members of the Graduate faculty. At least two, including the major professor, must be members of the Graduate Faculty at Level Two. (Graduate Faculty information including application material can be found at: <https://web.auburn.edu/gfast/Verify.aspx>). The formal appointment of the advisory committee occurs when the Plan of Study is approved by the Graduate School. The Plan of Study should not be delayed beyond the second semester of doctoral work.

### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR MS**

A minimum of 30 semester hours determined by the student's advisory committee is required, to include at least six semester hours of core course work and at least 21 semester hours in the major area of concentration. All credit hours applied toward the minimum degree requirement must be earned in 6000, 7000, and 8000-level courses, which are courses for only graduate students. Up to two semester hours of graded seminar courses may be counted toward meeting minimum degree requirements.

The core course work for students in Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology or Pathobiology must include courses in two of the four categories: biochemistry, statistics, biophysics and molecular biology. All core courses must be at the 7000-level. Core requirements for students in Clinical Sciences also may be satisfied by courses VBMS 7070, 7090, 7210, 7280, 7470, 7500,

7530, and 7640 (and ANSC 7600 - limited to Residents in Theriogenology).

### ***THESIS OPTION:***

Students must register for a minimum of four semester hours of Research and Thesis (VBMS 7990). Up to six hours of VBMS 7990 may be counted toward meeting minimum degree requirements. Students may register for one or more hours of VBMS 7990 per semester. Up to six semester hours of Research Problems (VBMS 7970), which must be distinct from the student's thesis research topic, may be counted toward meeting minimum degree requirements.

### ***NON-THESIS OPTION:***

The availability of a non-thesis option is dependent upon the discretion of the advisor, committee and department. If approved, students must register for 3 semester hours (minimum and maximum credit) of Non-thesis Research (VBMS 7980; this is your research project). Up to three semester hours of Research Problems (VBMS 7970) may be counted toward minimum degree requirements. Students must pass a Comprehensive/Final Exam at the end of their MS program under the non-thesis option. This exam is the same final examination format as for Thesis Option students.

Note: Under the non-thesis option, VBMS 7990 cannot be counted toward graduation.

## **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PhD**

A minimum of sixty semester hours is required to complete the doctoral program, with the content to be determined/approved by the student's advisory committee. Of these, thirty or more must be graded (e.g., A, B or C) graduate level course work (6000-level and above) beyond the baccalaureate degree and at least 18 of the thirty hours must be completed as a graduate student at Auburn University.

The other thirty semester hours of course work may include the courses numbered 7970 and 8990. A maximum of four semester hours of 7990 (Research and Thesis) from a completed Master's program may also be counted.

All BMS Ph.D. students must take a minimum of twelve semester hours of core course work consisting of courses in at least two of the following four categories: biochemistry, statistics, biophysics and molecular biology. Of the twelve semester hours, no more than nine can be taken in any one category. All core courses must be at the 7000-level. It is the student's responsibility to consult with their mentor, their committee, and ORGS to determine whether a particular course satisfies this core course requirement. This is usually accomplished when the student's Plan of Study is approved by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. All doctoral students must complete a minimum of 10 hours of VBMS 8990. Enrollment in 8990 may take place at any time the student and the advisory committee deem appropriate. During any one semester, the number of hours of 8990 in which the student enrolls should reflect the amount of time being spent on the dissertation and the degree to which university resources are being utilized. Students may enroll, during any one semester, for as few as one hour or as many as 16 hours of 8990. The requisite 10 hours of 8990 should be included in the Plan of Study.

## **DUAL DEGREE DVM/MS OR DVM/PHD PROGRAM (DDP)**

The dual degree program allows students to pursue DVM and graduate degrees simultaneously in a time-and content-integrated manner. Graduates, particularly DVM/PhD graduates, will have strong backgrounds both in veterinary medicine and research so as to be well prepared for successful careers in academia, industry and/or specialty clinics.

Note that students must be admitted into the College of Veterinary Medicine program via application to the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and to the graduate

program via application to the Auburn University Graduate School (GS). Students already admitted to the Graduate School may apply for admission to the DVM program in order to gain entry to the combined degree program. Such students must meet three criteria to be allowed to pursue this course of study:

1. The applicant must express, in writing, their commitment to continue their graduate program as part of a DVM/MS or DVM/PhD program. A personal statement should be provided that is less than 500 words, describing the applicant's reasons to pursue the DVM and graduate curriculum simultaneously and stating long-term career goals.
2. The applicant must meet with the Associate Dean for Research and/or the BMS Graduate Program Committee and demonstrate that they are capable of and dedicated to pursuing a combined program.
3. Three letters of recommendation are required from individuals who can comment on the applicant's potential as a researcher. One letter shall come from the student's major advisor indicating that the applicant was granted specific permission for application by their major advisor.

### ***GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN DDP ARE:***

1. Must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better in both the DVM and graduate curricula.
2. In the DVM/PhD DDP, one may elect to interrupt the DVM curriculum for one or two years between the first and second years to pursue graduate education and research goals. This requires approval by the CVM Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
3. The chair or co-chair of the graduate program must be a CVM faculty member and at least two other members of the student's graduate advisory committee must be CVM graduate faculty members.
4. From the DVM curriculum 6 (MS DDP) or 9 (PhD DDP) credit hours may be applied towards GS requirements of 30 total semester hours (MS) or 30 semester hours of graded course work (PhD). Courses for dual credit may be selected from relevant electives or core courses (VMED 9110, 9111, 9120, 9130, 9131, 9520, or 9260 that are dual-listed as a 6000 level course equivalent). The DDP student will have special assignments in dual credit courses (e.g. term paper) supplementary to the workload of veterinary classmates.
5. The DDP student must fulfill all requirements and minimum performance standards of the DVM curriculum, of the graduate programs in the Biomedical Sciences, and of the academic department/research unit providing financial support.
6. Progress will be reviewed at least annually by the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program Committee/CVM Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and by the CVM Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Continuation will require overall endorsement by the reviewers and the student's graduate advisory committee.
7. All DDP presume a year-round effort by the students with vacation breaks similar to graduate students.

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR THESIS OR DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

Thesis-option MS students and all PhD students will be required to prepare a research proposal for their thesis/dissertation research, to include as a minimum the following: literature review, objectives, experimental design, materials and methods, budget. The proposal should be prepared soon after a topic has been identified and before the research is initiated; it will be critiqued and approved by the major professor and advisory committee. Aside from serving to define the project, this assignment will provide early exposure to fundamentals of grant writing. All BMS Ph.D. students must fulfill a requirement of having written at least one grant proposal sometime during enrollment in the BMS program and of having the grant proposal subjected to

peer review. The mechanism for satisfying this requirement is determined by the student's advisor and advisory committee. A Grant Proposal Requirement Form documenting the procedure and format used for meeting the requirement and date fulfilled, should be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for inclusion in the student's file. This form will serve to verify compliance in the process of clearance for graduation. Forms can be found on the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Students webpage under Resources.

## **ANNUAL STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT**

An annual student progress report is due June 1st of each year. To remain in good standing in our graduate program, a completed and signed Annual Progress Report is due for all graduate students. Forms can be obtained on the ORGS website. Completed forms with original signatures should be turned in to the ORGS (106 Greene Hall).

The progress report should be filled out by the student's mentor (or graduate program officer if a mentor has not as yet been identified). It should be discussed with the student privately or with the student's committee. If there are any additional issues, they may be added to the document (it is not a fixed length). The form shall be signed by the student, mentor and members of the committee (if a committee is in place). Each year, the Annual Progress Report will be used to document compliance in the process of clearance for graduation.

## **SEMINAR ATTENDANCE/PRESENTATIONS/JOURNAL CLUB**

Scientific presentations and critical examination of current literature are an integral part of academic life. In order to develop proficiency in these skills, a student will be expected to participate regularly in one or more journal clubs or specialty conferences consistent with his/her area of interest.

Graduate students in the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program will be required to attend 6 identified college-wide seminars per academic year (at least 12 will be identified and scheduled through the academic year) to remain in good standing. The seminars will be comprised of MS and PhD defense presentations, Joy Goodwin, Phi Zeta and Diabetes Day events. Seminars will be credited starting from August 1 of each year to July 31 of the following year.

Oral presentations and critical examination of current literature are an integral part of academic life. All BMS MS and PhD students must average at least two scholarly presentations per year during their graduate training. This requirement can be satisfied in many ways, such as presentations in departmental seminars, final thesis defense, and formal oral presentations at local, regional and national scientific meetings. The mechanisms for satisfying this requirement are determined by the student's advisor and advisory committee as approved by ORGS.

Students have the option of: 1) averaging two oral presentations per year as noted above, or 2) averaging one oral presentation and then one poster presentation at local, regional or national scientific meetings.

## **ETHICS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION**

Graduate students, just as any other member of society, will find themselves facing ethical decisions whose outcome could significantly affect their careers. It is obvious that theft of laboratory equipment, falsification of data, and plagiarism are unacceptable behaviors. However, other choices might not be so straightforward. Graduate students are expected to conform not only to the Auburn University Code of Student Conduct (see Tiger Cub) but also to the unwritten code of proper scientific conduct. Ethical considerations should always supersede expediency-based decisions. Students should expect the same degree of ethical conduct from faculty members.

The usual type of ethical decision that a graduate student may confront is in the presentation of data and interpretation of results. In fact, in some instances the student may not recognize that there is an ethical component to such a decision. There are many ways in which data can be interpreted and/or made to look better than the totality of the experimental results. Thus, how to present data often involves ethical decisions. When such a question arises, the obvious source of guidance is the major professor. Faculty members are expected to utilize and teach sound ethical practices to their graduate students, in part, through regular discussions and intellectual challenges. If a major professor does not illustrate, through his or her actions, what is expected of a student, but instead is the source of ethical conflict, the student should contact other members of his/her advisory committee and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. Alternatively, personnel in the Graduate School are usually able to give appropriate and confidential guidance to students.

Faculty members sometimes neglect discussion of ethical questions with their graduate students, assuming that good ethical judgment has already been acquired. In some instances it might seem that an entire career rests with the success or failure of an experiment, or with the student's ability to satisfy a demanding major professor. Under pressures of graduate training and competitive scientific research, the student may be confronted with conflicting values and the most ethical choice may not always be clear. Although society has high expectations regarding the ethical behavior of scientists, most scientists set even higher standards for themselves and their colleagues. Determining truth in science is difficult enough without having to contend with intentional misrepresentations of fact.

### ***USE OF ANIMALS***

All research involving the use of animals must be approved by the Auburn University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) in keeping with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act, the Health Research Extension Act, and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. Before animals can be used at Auburn University for research, teaching, demonstration, display, breeding, production, or maintenance, the IACUC must review and approve the protocol for the proposed activity. The protocol must be described on the AU Animal Subjects Review Form. A protocol review number (PRN) is assigned to all approved protocols. A current PRN is required in order to acquire animals, to use facilities for housing of animals, and to use the animals. Written information about requirements for the use of animals is available from the AU Office of Animal Resources and the Director of Laboratory Animal Health at the AU College of Veterinary Medicine. The Director of Animal Resources and the Director of Laboratory Animal Health facilitate orientation/training for all faculty, graduate students and staff as needed, to ensure compliance with regulations and principles for the use and care of vertebrate animals used in research and teaching while facilitating high standards of good laboratory practice.

### **TEACHER TRAINING**

Most students who obtain advanced degrees will be involved subsequently in teaching as part of their regular activity. The College will strive to provide opportunities for students to gain teaching experience in either the professional or graduate program.

### **GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL**

Graduate students are encouraged to attend scientific meetings that support their graduate studies. As a general guideline, students are expected to present a paper or poster in order to obtain financial support for travel. Funding for travel to most meetings is limited and extramural

grant funds should be used when available. Some national societies provide travel grants for students to attend their annual meetings. In these instances, students are encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities and apply to the societies for travel grants prior to attending the meeting. Contact the Graduate School (334) 844-4700 for more information.

<http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/awards-and-grants/graduate-research-and-travel-fellowships/>

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION SENATOR**

Students in BMS are entitled to elect a representative to serve a one-year term as a senator in the Graduate Student Council (GSC). Being a GSC senator gives one an opportunity to cooperate with other GSC senators to influence topics of interest to all graduate students (e.g., Graduate School and University policy, graduate student welfare). The GSC meets several times each semester.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FORUM**

The Graduate Student Research Forum provides students and faculty an opportunity to become familiar with research being conducted at Auburn. Students are selected to give platform or poster presentations of their work; a competition exists for various prizes. BMS has been well presented by speakers at several forums in the past, and a continuing participation in this activity is encouraged.

## **GRADUATION INFORMATION**

- Check the Academic Calendar for important dates/deadlines.
- Create your Plan of Study (no later than one term before graduation)
- Apply for Graduation (Fill out Grad Application under AU Access on My Academics)

## **OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY**

For the Steps to Receive Accommodations, please visit this link:

<https://accessibility.auburn.edu/cm/prospective>

or contact the Office of Accessibility at the following address:

Office of Accessibility

1228 Haley Center

Auburn University, AL 36849

(334) 844-2096

[accessibility@auburn.edu](mailto:accessibility@auburn.edu)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** Contact the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (334) 844-3700 or [CVMORGS@auburn.edu](mailto:CVMORGS@auburn.edu).

Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies – Dr. Frank F. Bartol [bartol@auburn.edu](mailto:bartol@auburn.edu)

ORGS Graduate Student Liaison – Amelia Pendleton [hangame@auburn.edu](mailto:hangame@auburn.edu)

## Graduate School Checklist (Doctoral)

### -Newly Admitted (before the beginning of the first term)

- Respond to offer of admission
- Clear any medical holds <http://medproctor.com/> (334) 844-4416
- Obtain student ID card AU Student Center Room 1330, 255 Heisman Drive (334) 844-4507
- Attend [Orientation](#)

### -Getting Started (your first term on campus)

- Register for classes
- Check academic calendar for deadlines
- Contact Amelia Pendleton [hangame@auburn.edu](mailto:hangame@auburn.edu) 106 Greene Hall (334) 844-3700
- Being selecting your [advisory committee](#)

### -Making Progress (after your first term)

- Register each term
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Submit your approved [plan of study](#)
- Complete required course work
- Complete comprehensive exams

### -Nearing Completion (one term before you graduate)

- Register
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Submit plan of study (required)
- Submit graduation application from AU Access, My Academics, Grad Application

### -Graduating (the term you plan to graduate)

- Register (one hour minimum)
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Clear all incomplete grades and/or holds
- Submit signed First Submission Approval Form to the Graduate School
- Submit PDF of your dissertation to [doctoral@auburn.edu](mailto:doctoral@auburn.edu) for Format Check (check)
- When notified by the Graduate School, complete your Application for Final Oral Exam using the link that will be e-mailed to you
- Complete your final oral exam. Once completed, submit the Report on Final Oral Examination (Defense) to the Graduate School
- Submit signed Electronic Thesis/Dissertation Final Approval Form to the Graduate School
- Submit Dissertation on AUETD
- Submit Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)
- Join the Auburn University Alumni Association

## Graduate School Checklist (Master's)

### -Newly Admitted (before the beginning of the first term)

- Respond to offer of admission
- Clear any medical holds <http://medproctor.com/> (334) 844-4416
- Obtain student ID card AU Student Center Room 1330, 255 Heisman Drive (334) 844-4507
- Attend [Orientation](#)

### -Getting Started (your first term on campus)

- Register for classes
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Contact Amelia Pendleton [hangame@auburn.edu](mailto:hangame@auburn.edu) 106 Greene Hall (334) 844-3700
- Identify your major professor
- Being selecting your [advisory committee](#)

### -Making Progress (after your first term)

- Register each term
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Submit your approved [plan of study](#)
- Complete required course work
- Complete comprehensive exams

### -Nearing Completion (one term before you graduate)

- Register
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Submit plan of study (required)
- Submit graduation application from [AU Access](#), My Academics, Grad Application

### -Graduating (the term you plan to graduate)

- Register (one hour minimum)
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Clear all incomplete grades and/or holds
- Submit PDF of your thesis to [thesis@auburn.edu](mailto:thesis@auburn.edu) for Format Check
- Schedule final oral exam. Once completed, submit the signed Thesis Master's Final Examination Form to the Graduate School
- Submit Signed ETD Final Approval Form
- Submit ETD
- Join the Auburn University Alumni Association

## Graduate School Checklist (Master's Non-Thesis)

### -Newly Admitted (before the beginning of the first term)

- Respond to offer of admission
- Clear any medical holds <http://medproctor.com/> (334) 844-4416
- Obtain student ID card AU Student Center Room 1330, 255 Heisman Drive (334) 844-4507
- Attend [Orientation](#)

### -Getting Started (your first term on campus)

- Register for classes
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Contact Amelia Pendleton [hangame@auburn.edu](mailto:hangame@auburn.edu) 106 Greene Hall (334) 844-3700
- Identify your major professor
- Being selecting your [advisory committee](#)

### -Making Progress (after your first term)

- Register each term
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Submit your approved [plan of study](#)
- Complete required course work
- Complete comprehensive exams

### -Nearing Completion (one term before you graduate)

- Register
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Submit plan of study (required)
- Submit graduation application from [AU Access](#), My Academics, Grad Application

### -Graduating (the term you plan to graduate)

- Register (one hour minimum)
- Check [academic calendar](#) for deadlines
- Clear all incomplete grades and/or holds
- Schedule final oral exam.
- Join the Auburn University Alumni Association