UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

College of Veterinary Medicine

The Comparative Biomedical Sciences Program

Doctor of Philosophy Student Handbook

Updated August 2025

Office of Graduate Affairs
vetgrad@uga.edu

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Comparative Biomedical Sciences PhD program! This handbook is designed to complement other resources available to graduate students and their mentors, supporting graduate education within the College of Veterinary Medicine. While it may not address every question or concern, it aims to provide a foundation for navigating the policies and procedures of both the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and the University of Georgia (UGA) Graduate School.

Our program's objectives for doctoral students are:

- To receive experimental and scholarly training in the scientific method, with the goal of becoming independent scientists.

- To take courses that broaden their knowledge base and expose them to various topics, enhancing their research training.

- To develop a research project that fosters an understanding of the scientific method and contributes valuable knowledge or resources to a specific biomedical field.

- To document and interpret findings in an original dissertation for submission to the Graduate School and to publish research in peer-reviewed journals.

- To effectively communicate their findings both in writing and orally to peers and the broader scientific community.

College of Veterinary Medicine Departments and Units

The College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) at the University of Georgia, founded in 1946, is dedicated to training future veterinarians, providing services to animal owners and veterinarians, and conducting investigations to improve the health of animals as well as people. Graduate education represents a fundamental component of the research mission of the College.

<u>College of Veterinary Medicine Central Administration</u>
- Dr. Lisa Nolan, Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine
- Dr. Sharron Quisenberry, Associate Dean for Research, Faculty, and Graduate Affairs
- Dr. Shannon Hostetter, Assistant Dean for Graduate Affairs
- Dr. Andrew Parks, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (DVM Program)

<u>Office of Graduate Affairs (OGA) CVM 2523 (accessed via Reading Room on floor 2)</u>
- Dr. Shannon Hostetter, Director of CBS Program CVM 2525
- Ms. Lisa Norris, M.Ed., CBS Program Coordinator CVM 2521

Administrative Departments
- Academic Affairs & Admissions
- Alumni Relations
- Business (Fiscal) Office
- Continuing Education
- Dean's Office
- Development Office
- Information Technology Services
- Public Relations Office
- Office for Research, Faculty, & Graduate Affairs

Academic Departments
- Infectious Diseases
- Large Animal Medicine
- Pathology
- Physiology & Pharmacology
- Population Health
- Small Animal Medicine & Surgery
- Biomedical Sciences

Additional Units
- Animal Resources
- Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories (Athens and Tifton)
- Poultry Diagnostic and Research Center
- Educational Resources
- Flow Cytometry Core Facility
- Infectious Diseases Laboratory
- Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS)
- Veterinary Teaching Hospital
- Center for Vaccines and Immunology
- Isakson Center for Neurological Disease Research
- Center for Precision One Health
- Animal Health Research Center

The Graduate School

The Graduate School administers all graduate programs at UGA. For detailed information about the Graduate School, visit their website - https://grad.uga.edu/.

In addition to Graduate School policies and procedures, the Comparative Biomedical Sciences Doctor of Philosophy degree program in the College of Veterinary Medicine has established its own set of guidelines. Read through this handbook carefully regarding deadlines, policies, and procedures of both the UGA Graduate School and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

General Information

Office of Graduate Affairs
The Office of Graduate Affairs (OGA) serves as the central office and resource to students enrolled in the PhD-CBS. It is located in office suite 2523 on the the second floor of the College of Veterinary (classic campus). Many questions can be answered by office staff.

UGA Email & MyID [back to top]
All students enrolled in classes at the University of Georgia **must** establish a UGA MyID and password to access services and register for classes. Establishing a UGA MyID automatically creates a UGA email account. This account is the email address to which official University, Graduate School, and CVM e-mail communications are sent. Information about establishing a UGA MyID and email address can be found here. Once a MyID has been established, access email here. The UGA email address will be added to several graduate student listserves. The Graduate Director, Program Coordinator, and others will **communicate with students through their UGA email address**. Please either check or disable your email junk folder, as mass e-mails from our office, the CVM, or the University may be directed to that folder.

Change of Name [back to top]
The name on the permanent academic record is the name given on the application for admission and should be the complete legal name. Students who have a change of name must communicate this change to the OGA **AND** to the Office of the Registrar. The name will be changed by the Registrar upon request to reflect legal name changes. Visit the Office of the Registrar's website for name change information here.

Change of Address [back to top]
Students who change addresses or phone numbers must communicate this change to the Office of Graduate Affairs **AND** through ATHENA to the Office of the Registrar. To change an address in ATHENA: enter ATHENA, go to "Personal Information," and then "Update Addresses." Make changes and click on "Update Data." Students who fail to communicate this change of address may miss important mail from the Graduate School, including their diploma. Changes in current or permanent address can be made in the ATHENA system until the student's graduation semester. If the ATHENA system will not accept an address change, the student must notify the Office of the Registrar to make the change.

eLearning Commons (eLC) [back to top]
eLearning Commons (eLC) is an online e-learning system (platform) used by most instructors for their courses at UGA. You will find an eLC course for each of the academic courses you are enrolled in each semester. Additionally, eLC is used as a repository for resources and information for programs, groups, and organizations at UGA. As a student in the CBS program, the following eLC courses will also provide useful information for you: 1) "**Comparative Biomedical Sciences Current Student Resources**." This eLC course provides information specific to the Comparative Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program. *It contains the student handbook, form examples, OGA forms, contact information, calendars, and other documents needed throughout the program*.
2) "**CVM Graduate Student, Resident, and Intern Resources**." This eLC course provides resources to all graduate students and house officers in the CVM, including additional information on DEI programming and events, Professional Development Resources, etc.

UGA OneCard Information [back to top]

The UGA OneCard is the official University of Georgia identification card for students, faculty, staff, and official campus visitors. The UGA OneCard provides access to many facilities, events, and services throughout campus. ***Students must be registered for the current semester in order to purchase and use the UGA OneCard.***

Students must have their MyID, email address, be registered for classes, and have their fees assessed for the current semester prior to having their UGA OneCard made. To obtain a UGA OneCard, visit the UGA OneCard Office website for additional information.

After 24 hours, ***CVM students must contact the CVM Business Office (Suite 239) to have your card put into the system so you can access the College of Veterinary Medicine outside of normal business hours.*** Students will receive a card that day, but it will take about 24 hours before the card can be used. If a student needs access to other places, including specific labs, the teaching hospital, etc. an email from a supervisor of that particular area needs to be sent to the business office before access can be granted.

Although students will use their social security number for some University-related records, the UGA OneCard will have an identification number that will remain the same the entire time at UGA. The first six digits are alike on all UGA ID cards (627541). This is the UGA identifier. The next nine digits are the ID number. It will begin with 810 or 811 followed by six unique numbers assigned to the student. The last digit is the issue number. This number will change each time the student replaces the card (ie. "1", if you had to replace your card once). For access to services that require a keypad entry, students MUST either place their card on the pad, slide their card, or enter the 10 digit ID number (beginning with 810 or 811 and include the current issue number at the end).

The UGA OneCard is non-transferrable and can only be used by the student to whom it is issued. Misuse of the UGA OneCard may result in disciplinary action by the Office of Student Conduct.

University Health Center [back to top]

The University Health Center is a state-of-the-art, outpatient healthcare facility that provides many medical services to students, including counseling, vaccinations, and optometry. Visit their website here.

Parking Services and Other Transportation [back to top]

Parking at UGA is divided into permit-required areas and short-term pay lots. If a student plans to drive an automobile, motorcycle, or scooter to campus, a UGA parking permit is required. Permits are distributed based on a priority system that considers factors such as classification (student, faculty, staff, etc.). A parking permit must be always displayed on campus for the assigned lot. Information and instructions are available on the Parking Services website. If you do not want to park on campus, many people use bikes, and the Athens Transit system makes stops on campus. Bus routes and times can be accessed here.

Housing [back to top]

The University of Georgia's Department of University Housing has on-campus Graduate & Family Housing for single individuals, as well as individuals with families. Information about housing can be found on their website.

Off-campus housing resources include, but are not limited to, Apartment Finder here.

UGA Libraries [back to top]
The UGA Campus in Athens houses three main libraries, smaller facilities around campus, and research facilities around the state. Resources that cannot be found at the library closest to you can be scanned or shipped to you at no charge. For more information on UGA Libraries and smaller facilities, visit their website here.

Health Insurance [back to top]
A student health insurance policy is available for all UGA students; however, the following groups of UGA students are **REQUIRED** to have health insurance:

- o Graduate International Students holding "F" or "J" visa status.
- o Graduate Students enrolled in programs that require proof of health insurance.
- o Graduate Students receiving Qualified Graduate Assistantships.
- o Graduate Students receiving Qualified Fellowships.
- o Graduate Students receiving Qualified Training Grants.

Domestic students who have private health insurance can opt out of UGA Health Insurance; this process must be done every semester. Click here to learn more about student health insurance on the Human Resources website.

Athletic Event Tickets [back to top]
Football is HUGE here at UGA. We recommend that you attend a game just to experience tailgating and the atmosphere at Sanford Stadium! In addition, there are many other sports to watch and enjoy throughout the year. If you are interested in purchasing student tickets to any athletic event, please refer to the website: https://georgiadogs.com/sports/2017/6/16/student-tickets.aspx.

Funding Sources

Applicants who have access to independent stipend funding throughout their stay in graduate school from federal, state, industry, or private foundations should make it clear in their personal statement when applying to the PhD in CBS. Assistantships include a stipend, as well as a tuition waiver for graduate registration. Additional information regarding funding can be found on the Graduate School website here. University policy on assistantships can be found here. Students in the College may receive funding from a variety of sources including:

- **Research Assistantships from Faculty Contracts and Grants** [back to top]
  Students who have been offered research assistantships by a member of the College's graduate faculty are subjected to the regular Graduate School assistantship guidelines described on the web site. Students must obtain written notification from their prospective major professor indicating their funding commitment to the applicant.

- **Teaching Assistantships**
  There are a limited number of these positions available in the CVM and they are usually reserved for students within the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology (VPHY). Additionally, some CBS students are able to secure teaching or laboratory assistantships through other colleges offering more undergraduate educational programs (Franklin, etc.), although the availability of these assistantships is variable

from year to year. If you are interested in one of these positions, please reach out to the CBS Program Coordinator (vetgrad@uga.edu) for more information.

Additional information regarding graduate assistantships may be found on the Graduate School website. ***Regardless of the funding source, students who have any of the above-mentioned assistantships will receive stipends as well as a tuition waiver from UGA.*** To be eligible for the tuition waiver, the assistantship must be between 1/3 (13 hours per work) time and ½ time (20 hours per week). *Students who will not require assistantship funding for the duration of their graduate training must make it clear in their application.* Self-funded students and their mentors must fill out an additional "Financial Waiver and Mentoring Agreement Document" in order to make funding and mentoring expectations clear. Funding for assistantships is limited, and often, qualified applicants cannot be admitted into the program for lack of funding. Outside funding sources for graduate students include, but are not limited to, federal, state, or private foundations. These students are not entitled to receive a tuition waiver from the University. External funding sources will not guarantee the admission of a student into the program.

Out-of-state students **not** supported by an assistantship may apply through the graduate coordinator to the **for a Graduate School Regents' Research Out-of-State Tuition (ROOST) award**, but please note that these are competitive and not guaranteed. Nominees who are currently enrolled and receiving a ROOST waiver **must have and retain a minimum 3.00 GPA to maintain the waiver and a 3.5 GPA to be nominated in subsequent years**. Please see the Graduate School website and the CVM Office of Graduate Affairs for additional information. In-state students do not qualify for a tuition waiver unless they have at least a 1/3 assistantship.

The University has a large number of loan funds to assist students, which are administered by the Office of Financial Aid located in the Academic Building. Please check the stipulations regarding their use. Any student desiring information regarding financial aid should explore these possibilities with the Office of Student Financial Aid, by visiting their website.

UGA's Acceptance of Credit by Transfer Policy

If graduate credit earned at an accredited institution constitutes a logical part of the student's program, transfer of credit may be allowed when recommended by the student's major professor, advisory committee, graduate director, and when approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Such transfer of credit cannot exceed nine (9) semester hours and must fall within the time limit of the degree. No grade below B may be transferred. The courses to be transferred may not have been used to fulfill the requirements of a degree program at another institution. Transfer credit may not be used to satisfy the residency requirement. If the residency requirement has not been satisfied and the transfer course is taken during the Fall or Spring semester, a "break" in residency will occur unless the student is also registered at UGA. Transferred courses may not be included in the 16 hours of 8000- and 9000- level credit on the program of study. Transfer grades are not used in calculating cumulative averages. All requests for transfer credit, with accompanying official transcripts, must be in the Graduate School at least 30 days prior to the time the student plans to graduate. Courses taken prior to the student's admission to their degree program at The University of Georgia are eligible for transfer.

Degree Program Information

This section will outline a student's time in the program. It will cover required Graduate School or college forms, selecting a major professor, selecting an advisory committee, deadlines, and other important information.

Selecting a Major Professor [back to top]
A student may have a Major Professor, also known as an advisor/mentor, before enrolling at UGA. If this is the case, it must be indicated in the statement of purpose, and the faculty member must also communicate this in writing to the Office of Graduate Affairs. The Major Professor will provide guidance for the student's training, facilities, financial resources for their research project, and possibly an assistantship. Thus, the mentor plays a pivotal role in the success of the student's training. Prospective students are encouraged to research the different graduate faculty within the College and contact those who best fit their training interests. Peer-reviewed publications are an ideal way to gauge a scientist's performance and history. Students may review faculty biographies/resumes online at our UGA College of Veterinary Medicine website; go to each department's site and look at the faculty lists. An alternative is to perform a Google or PubMed search using the scientist's last name and initials (for example, Dickerson, HW) and a search term that includes their major research area (for example, teleost immunology). PubMed is an online site maintained by the National Library of Medicine; it indexes nearly all medical and science journals.

The Major Professor must be a member of the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and part of the UGA Graduate Faculty. If the proposed Major Professor is not affiliated with the CVM, they may serve as a co-major advisor alongside a CVM-associated faculty member. Students should discuss potential research projects with their mentor, ensuring the project is based on a sound hypothesis that will guide the research approach.

As an interdepartmental program, PhD research projects can vary widely, including laboratory benchtop research, field work, educational research, and computational projects (such as epidemiological analysis or bioinformatics). Projects must be robust enough to provide substantial training, data for publication, and contribute to the thesis. They should involve a range of methodologies to ensure students gain proficiency in multiple techniques and understand their application in scientific inquiry.

The Major Professor, along with other graduate students, technicians, postdocs, or Advisory Committee members, should have experience with the techniques used in the project to provide adequate guidance. Additionally, the techniques should be manageable and achievable within a reasonable timeframe.

Questions to consider when selecting a Major Professor include:

- o Does he/she have publications in the area in which you seek training?
- o Does he/she have a laboratory and/or an active research group?
- o Does he/she have funding for the research?
- o Is there a testable hypothesis for the research?
- o Is he/she a member of the Graduate Faculty?
- o Is their mentorship style compatible with your training needs?

<u>**Selecting an Advisory Committee**</u>
The advisory committee and the major professor share responsibilities to monitor graduate student progress and guide the student toward timely completion of their degree program.

Scope: The advisory committee, in consultation with the student, is charged with planning the student's program of study. It is also charged with approving the program of study, arranging the comprehensive written and oral examinations, approving a subject for the dissertation, approving the completed dissertation, and approving the student's defense of his or her research. The committee should advise the student of required research skills and other requirements.

Composition. The committee must consist of a **minimum of three UGA graduate program faculty members, including the committee chair/major professor.** Additional voting members with proper rank may be appointed to the committee, including no more than one non-UGA faculty member, who must hold the terminal degree in their field of study. If there are more than three members, there must be greater than 50% UGA graduate program faculty representation.

- *Non-UGA Committee Member:* The student and mentor may select a committee member who is not affiliated with UGA but is an external collaborator for the mentor's lab or possesses unique expertise in the research area (e.g., scientists from other institutions or government agencies). Since this external member will not have graduate faculty status at UGA, the major professor must write a letter of justification to the Graduate School for their selection. This letter, along with the selected scientist's CV, should be submitted to the Graduate Director and Program Coordinator. The documents will be forwarded to the Graduate School for approval. Ideally, permission from the Graduate School should be sought before or simultaneously with the submission of the Advisory Committee form. *Please consult with our office before submitting the form.*

<u>Important Program Policies regarding the Advisory Committee:</u>

- ***The members of the advisory committee should be identified and a committee meeting should be scheduled by the end of the first year in the program***.

- ***The Advisory Committee must be approved by the Office of Graduate Affairs and must be officially requested through the*** Enrolled Student Progress Portal.

Further information regarding the advisory committee can be found in eLC (CBS Current Student Resources) and on the Graduate School Website. More information regarding UGA policies regarding the advisory committee can be found here.

Advisory Committee Meetings

The Advisory Committee supports the mentor in the training and testing of the student's competency to first become a PhD candidate and then obtain a PhD. The advisory committee meetings provide an opportunity for the student to update their committee on their academic and research progress and are a necessary part of a student's PhD training.

Committee meetings must be scheduled *at least once a year*, and as the student progresses through the program (for preliminary exams, etc.), they may take place more than once a year.

The student should be prepared for each meeting by rehearsing the presentation before the meeting and by bringing all necessary forms. The student is responsible for filling in (*typed*) and printing out a hard copy of the "Record of Graduate Student Committee Form" to the committee to be completed following the meeting. Additional forms may be necessary at each meeting, and the student is responsible for printing them and obtaining the signatures. All signed forms must be returned to the Program Coordinator for filing. The forms are available through the checklist below and on eLC. A guide to plan and conduct committee meetings is available for all students in the program on the eLC website.

Outline of advisory committee meeting objectives:
- The *first committee meeting* is designed to introduce all members of the Advisory Committee to the student's research plan and preliminary program of study. This is the time when the committee may suggest additional course work for the student and provide input towards the suitability of the doctoral dissertation topic. This meeting should occur **by the end of the first year of study**.

- The *second committee meeting* should outline the progress made in the research topic and courses taken. In this meeting, the committee will decide if the student has gathered enough information to write a Prospectus and has taken all necessary classes to take the preliminary exam. If so, a date for both of these may be set. A Final Program of Study form should be completed online in Grad Status. If given approval by the committee, the student will then write the Prospectus (explained below) and take the written preliminary exams. The format for the written exam may vary by department (please check with your department's graduate director) and must be discussed beforehand with the mentor and advisory committee to allow preparation by the student.

- The *next committee meeting* should be the **oral examination** portion of the Comprehensive Examinations, which should **take place at least two weeks after passing the written portion** and delivering the Prospectus to the committee (see below for more details on the comprehensive examinations, including the Prospectus and the written and oral exams).
  - ***The student must email the Program Coordinator the time, place, and committee composition for the oral exam **at least two weeks** prior to the date of the exam.*** This information will be used to notify the Graduate School.
  - The Graduate School will then mail the necessary forms to the student for the committee at the oral examination. Ideally, the student will pass the written and oral exams by a unanimous decision from the advisory committee. Alternatively, the Graduate School allows a majority vote.
  - Once the student passes both examinations, he/she becomes a doctoral candidate (Application for Candidacy form is completed online in Grad Status).

- *Committee meetings following admission to candidacy* will be scheduled to evaluate the student's research progress and their readiness to write and defend the dissertation.
  - o Committee approval is required before proceeding to the defense. This approval can only be granted once the student has presented a comprehensive view of their original research in the form of a dissertation, fulfilling the objectives outlined in the prospectus.
  - o The student must set a date for the final defense in accordance with Graduate School regulations.
  - o **The student must notify the Program Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the oral defense date. The final meetings will include an oral defense seminar followed by the dissertation defense.**

Selecting Courses, Program Course Requirements, and Program of Study
Students will work with their Major Professor and their committee to determine the courses that are appropriate to fulfill the requirements for their degree in line with the Graduate School, Program, and Departmental requirements.

The Program of Study will differ for each student depending on previous education, experience, and research focus. The Program of Study should consist of 16 or more hours of 8000- and 9000-level courses in addition to research, dissertation writing, and directed study. No grade below a C will be accepted on the Program of Study. To be eligible for graduation, a student must maintain a 3.0 (B) average on the graduate transcript and a 3.0 (B) average on the Program of Study.

The Program of Study must contain 4 semester hours of University of Georgia courses open only to graduate students in addition to 16 semester hours of 8000 and 9000 level courses. Doctoral research (9000), independent study courses, and dissertation writing (9300) may not be counted in these 20 hours.

The Program of Study will be submitted to the Graduate School prior to notification of the comprehensive examination. This Program of Study must be submitted through https://gradstatus.uga.edu/ for approval by the Advisory Committee, the Graduate Director, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The program of study must show all graduate courses relevant to the doctoral program and not just courses satisfying the minimum degree requirement. Courses from the master's degree and courses taken at other universities should be listed in the "Relevant Master's or Other Graduate Degree Courses" section of the program of study form. The **program of study must carry a minimum of 30 hours of course work, three hours of which must be dissertation writing (9300).** A maximum of six credits hours of 9000 and three credit hours of 9300 may be applied toward the minimum of 30 semester hours listed on the program of study, although you can enroll in more. For additional information on how to fill out the form click here. Please see "Final Registration Requirement" section (p. 21-22 of this document) for additional course requirements.

Required Courses

The **following courses are required for all PhD students in CBS** (Note: *Additional courses are required for the degree but will vary depending on the department, field of study, research project, etc. and are determined by the student, their major professor, and their advisory committee)*.

Course No.	Course Name	Credit Hours	Additional Information
GRSC 7001	GradFIRST	1	Taken in the first Fall semester (CBS Students have specific sections reserved; please contact the program administrators for CRN)
VETM 8001	Research Communications	1	Students in VPAT exempt; IDIS students take IDIS 8170 instead
GRSC 8550	Responsible Conduct of Research	1	
VETM 8700	Research in Progress Seminar	1	Recommended in the second or third year of program.
Various	Graduate-level statistics course	3-4	Examples include BIOS 7010, POPH 8310, etc.
Various	Seminars	4 total (4x 1 credit)	VETM 8700 can contribute to this requirement
VETM 9300	Dissertation writing	3	Or department equivalent

The student, in conjunction with the Major Professor and committee, is responsible for:

- Developing and updating the Program of Study for coursework
  - A Preliminary Program of Study Form, located in eLC, is optional but may help with creating a timeline for scheduling your comprehensive examinations and progress towards degree completion.
  - A Program of Study Form should be completed and submitted in Grad Status ideally within the first two years but MUST be on file by the time the oral comprehensive exam is scheduled.

- Assessing progress in the program
- Approving credit overloads
- Filling out forms in accordance with Graduate School, Program, and departmental requirements

Students are responsible for monitoring their progress throughout the program. Students will initiate meetings with their Major Professor and Committee prior to registration and will adhere to the deadlines for registration form processing.

Registration [back to top]
Registration is completed online at specified times on ATHENA. For specific details, visit the Office of the Registrar website. Please refer to UGA's Academic Calendar for important dates regarding registration deadlines, semester schedules, and deadlines for course drop/add and withdrawal periods. Students will receive an email from the Program Coordinator about 2

months into the semester regarding registration. It is imperative that a response is received by the indicated deadline to prevent registration delays, as this will negatively affect tuition waivers and your student account.

Students MUST be cleared for each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) by the Program Coordinator if enrolled.

Before registration, take these steps to prevent registration delays:

1. Meet with Major Professor and Advisory Committee
2. Respond to the email from the Program Coordinator
3. Turn in paperwork to the Office of Graduate Affairs
4. Check for registration flags on ATHENA and contact the appropriate University department if applicable.

Students seeking a PhD must register for VETM 9000 (research) and/or VETM 9300 (dissertation writing) when applicable. The OGA clears all PhD-CBS students to register and grants access to VETM 9000 & VETM 9300. The OGA can only grant access to VETM courses. For permission to take courses with other course prefixes (ie. VPAT, IDIS, VPHY, etc.), you will need to contact that department's graduate or course coordinator.

Payment of Tuition and Fees. The deadline for fee payment during the registration phase of each semester may be found on the Bursar and Treasury Services website. Failure to make a payment by the due date may result in a late fee. Please contact the Bursar's Office for more information.

Procedures for Late Add after Drop/Add. If a student is registering for the first time or adding additional courses to his/her current schedule after the drop/add period, they must receive permission from the instructor, department head/director responsible for the course, and the dean of the Graduate School. Such permission will be granted only under extenuating circumstances. For additional information, please see the Registrar's website.

Course Withdrawals. A graduate student may withdraw from a course in Athena. The withdrawal deadline is two weeks after the midpoint of the semester. NOTE: A student holding an assistantship must maintain the required minimum course load throughout the semester or they will lose their tuition waiver. No refund will be issued for withdrawal from a course after the drop/add period.

Research Project/ Prospectus

The research project is an original piece of the mentor's scientific area of research, unique to the student and an integral part of the PhD training. The project can consist of laboratory experiments, field work, and/or computational work. The purpose of the research is to reveal knowledge or answer a question for which an answer is not yet known. Therefore, *a robust hypothesis for the research is necessary to provide a framework for the experiments to be performed*. The student will be required to have a working knowledge of what is known about the problem to be studied. The mentor will be very knowledgeable about the area; however, students must seek to become at least as knowledgeable as their major professors in their particular project area to be successful in their training. *The student's job is to become an expert in their research area and, thus, they must read all available material on that particular area.*

They may want to start with review articles or book chapters that summarize most of the information known at the time that the article was written. However, by nature, these publications will reflect a certain perspective and may not fully reveal what is known of the topic. Once the student has read a few reviews, a PubMed search will reveal the recently-published literature with new information about the topic. Students are encouraged to become scholars in their particular area of expertise, and this should be shown in their Prospectus.

The Prospectus is a document written by the student and edited by the major professor that must be presented to the Advisory Committee **at least two weeks before (but preferably much earlier than)** the written and oral examination for PhD candidacy but does not need to be tied to Admission to Candidacy. It cannot take the place of the written examination. **The Prospectus should be written in the style of a grant application, with, at minimum, an introduction, an extensive literature review, a hypothesis/hypotheses, aims/objectives, an approach to reach those goals, and references**. The specific style may vary by department. All preliminary results supporting the hypothesis should be presented at this time. The Advisory Committee will give the student guidance on whether the research approach is appropriate to address their hypothesis, whether the preliminary data is sufficient to support their hypothesis, and will help the student focus on what needs to be done to complete their degree. Allowing the Committee to discuss these issues and come to a consensus is a very important part of their contributions to a student's training, as the Prospectus serves as a "soft contract" to protect both the student (from having to do an unreasonable amount of additional work) and the Major Professor/Committee (from the student not at least attempting to perform the proposed work). Students should learn as much as possible from these discussions and should not be afraid to ask questions. The members of the Advisory Committee may not fully agree with the Major Professor in every aspect of the research proposal. Although it may not be easy, students must engage in the discussion of these issues with their Committee and try to determine what should be done to strengthen their research. *We also recommend that the student present the Prospectus as a research seminar to the home department, as this gives the department an opportunity to provide helpful comments and insights into the project*. If presented, a Prospectus evaluation form should be provided to at least 10 members of the department (students, faculty, staff) in attendance and who are not members of the committee. Filled out evaluation forms should be returned to the OGA. This is an important measure of assessment of verbal, scientific communication skills. *****A signed, hard copy of the approved Prospectus must be filed in the Office of Graduate Affairs by the time of the oral examination.*****

Publication of the findings in manuscripts and the dissertation is ultimately the goal of the research project, and thus, students should perform each experiment with the intention of producing reproducible, publication-quality data. Good record-keeping is one of the most important components of experimental research. Each experiment must be carefully recorded; the results should be analyzed and interpreted before conclusions can be drawn. Although mentors have different rules about the work required for a doctoral dissertation, as a general rule, students are expected to be in the lab working on their project every day when they are not in class. Vacation time is to be determined between the student and the mentor. Graduate students in the CBS program will be expected to work on their research when classes at UGA are not in session. This time without classes provides a great opportunity to make progress in the student's research. [back to top]

Comprehensive Examinations (Qualifying Exams, Preliminary Exams)

Written examination: Students must pass a written exam determined by their Advisory Committee. The student should communicate with each Committee member to determine the format of the written exam. This may differ depending on the student's home department. If Committee members feel that there are deficiencies in the student's responses to the written exam, these issues must be brought to the student's attention in a timely manner, so that he/she can address these deficiencies either in written form or during the oral examination. A simple majority is required to pass the written examination.

Oral examination: ***An announcement must come from the Graduate Director's office at least two weeks prior to the exam and after the student has passed the written portion.***** The student must have completed their 30 credit hour residency requirement prior to the exam. There must be an approved Advisory Committee form and an approved Final Program of Study form on file with the Graduate School prior to this announcement. All members of the Advisory Committee must be present for the entire exam (although Zoom and teleconference is acceptable for off-campus or traveling members of the Committee). If this is not possible, a suitable substitute should be identified. The Graduate School must be notified if the exam is postponed or the student fails the exam. If the student fails the exam, the Committee must determine the course of action (i.e., retaking the exam, transfer to a MS program, or release from the graduate program).[back to top]

Application for Admission to Candidacy

Once a student has passed the comprehensive examination, the student is eligible for candidacy.
- More information on the UGA policy regarding admission to candidacy can be found [here](#).
- More information on the Application for Admission to Candidacy paperwork is available on the Graduate School website and the form is submitted in [GradStatus](#). [back to top]

Dissertation

A Dissertation is required by all students enrolled in the PhD-CBS in the College of Veterinary Medicine. UGA policies regarding the dissertation approval and defense can be found [here](#). Formatting details are found in the UGA Graduate School's [website](#). Students must submit a copy of their Dissertation to the Major Professor and Committee **at least 4 weeks before the defense date**. The student should work closely with the Major Professor to ensure that the dissertation content is acceptable and complete prior to submission to the rest of the Committee. The dissertation must be approved before the oral defense. In general, the review of the literature should be a more updated and comprehensive version of the one written in the Prospectus. The Dissertation or Thesis may be written in either the traditional or the manuscript (journal article) style described below.

The Dissertation or Thesis **must include an introduction and a literature review** with the purposes of defining the problem, presenting hypotheses or theories, stating objectives, and thoroughly reviewing pertinent literature. There must also be a **concluding chapter** or section that unites the preceding chapters or sections and may include a general discussion integrating the major findings into the current body of literature.

Traditional style: In addition to an introduction, literature review, and conclusion, this style should include materials and methods, results, discussion, literature cited, and figures and tables as appropriate to the student's discipline for each objective proposed in the Prospectus. Each objective should be self-contained within a chapter of the thesis. Documentation and format must be consistent throughout the Dissertation.

Manuscript style: The practice of using the manuscript (journal article) style Dissertation format shall be at the discretion of the department. In this style, the introduction, literature review, and concluding chapter or section will be presented separately from their briefer presentation in each manuscript to allow thoroughness not usually permitted by space limitations in scientific journals.

For the doctoral degree, the manuscript style permits the inclusion of two or more manuscripts submitted or prepared to be submitted to scholarly journals as chapters or sections of the Dissertation or Thesis. Each manuscript must be prepared in the style of the appropriate scientific journal, but instructions peculiar to submission of manuscripts to editors must be eliminated. Each manuscript must blend appropriately with the other parts of the dissertation or thesis, with the exception of the particular differences required by journals (e.g., literature citations, table designations). Numbered lines, as required by some journals, must not be used. Captions must accompany each figure on the same or preceding page of each manuscript. No reprints or photocopies of reprints will be permitted. The student must be the first author or co-first author of each manuscript in this style. The names of all authors, in journal-submitted order, and the name of the journal (with volume, page numbers, and date, if published) must be given as a footnote to the title on the first page of each manuscript to indicate the current status of each manuscript. The Graduate School must receive proof of permission to use articles that have been published or accepted for publication.

Continuous pagination is required throughout the Dissertation or Thesis. The usual requirements for margins, consistency in chapter or section titles, and other formatting as specified in the Graduate School Dissertation and Thesis guide will apply.

Students can choose to release their Dissertation or Thesis in several ways. Please review the official Graduate school policy for explanations and details of release options. Additional information regarding this process may be found here. [back to top]

Dissertation Defense & Examination

In accordance with the Graduate School and CVM guidelines, students must conduct an oral presentation of their research findings in a seminar to their Advisory Committee, CVM faculty, and graduate students. *The dissertation defense must be announced via the Graduate Director or Program Coordinator to the Graduate School with **at least a two-week notice** using the PhD Internal Oral Comprehensive Exam Announcement Form located in the CBS eLC course.* The Defense Announcement form can be found on eLC. Students must have had approval from their Advisory Committee to proceed to the defense. Students work with their Major Professor to prepare this talk. A defense evaluation form should be given to at least 10 members of the

department (students, faculty, staff) in attendance and who are not members of the committee. Filled out evaluation forms should be returned to the OGA. This is an important final measure of assessment of verbal, scientific communication skills. A final committee meeting following the seminar will be necessary to defend and discuss findings and receive feedback from the committee regarding the dissertation. Students may have to revise their dissertation based on recommendations and submit the final copy and signatures to the Graduate School by the deadline. For this reason, students must plan their defense before the Graduate School's submission deadline. [back to top]

Graduation Process

Application for Graduation. A student must apply for graduation ***no later than the Friday of the second full week of classes in the fall and spring semesters and no later than the Friday of the first full week of classes in the summer of the anticipated graduation date***.
- These deadlines are published on the Graduate School website for three semesters in advance (see "Important Dates & Deadlines").
- Students must **enroll for a minimum of three hours** during the semester in which degree requirements are completed (see Final Registration Requirement).
- The application for graduation is submitted in Athena and requires no signatures.

Late Filing for Graduation. A student who misses a graduation deadline by failing to file the Application for Graduation, Advisory Committee Form, and/or Program of Study Form will have the option of paying a single fee of $50 (check or money order in U.S. dollars) for the late processing of all required forms. A completed Late Filing for Gradation (G139) Form in GradStatus, all required graduation forms, and the late fee payment must be submitted to Enrolled Student Services (gradinfo@uga.edu) within 45 calendar days of the original deadline. More information can be found here. ***After the 45-day late period, no students will be added to the commencement roster for the current semester.***

Change in Graduation Date. If a student cannot complete degree requirements in the semester for which a graduation application was submitted, the student should notify the Graduate School by sending an email to Enrolled Student Services (gradinfo@uga.edu). The major professor or graduate director may also notify the Graduate School by e-mail of the student's intent. Once notified, the graduation record will be removed, and the student will have to apply for a later term. If a student does not complete degree requirements for the term they applied, Enrolled Student Services staff will remove the graduate record by the end of the term.

Doctoral Information for Commencement Program. Because the commencement program contains dissertation titles and major professor names for all doctoral candidates, doctoral candidates must submit this information via G120 form in GradStatus by the deadline for the graduation semester listed on the Graduate School's "Important Dates & Deadlines" page.

All requirements for the degree must be completed and reported to the Graduate School no later than one week prior to graduation. A student must enroll for a minimum of three hours of credit the semester in which graduation requirements are completed unless additional stipulations are required by other units of the university.

Forms and Required Procedures

Unless indicated, all forms are completed through https://gradstatus.uga.edu/ . The required forms can be found on the checklist included at the end of this handbook or by visiting the Graduate School website. [back to top]

Advisory Committee Request [back to top]
Refer to the "Selecting an Advisory Committee" section on page 10 for more information, including requirements, about the Advisory Committee.

Once the advisory committee has been selected, the Graduate School must be formally notified of the members of the committee. This is done through the Enrolled Student Progress Portal. Instructions on completing this process can be found here.

This should be submitted by the end of the first year, before or with the Program of Study Form.

Record of Graduate Student Committee Meeting Form [back to top]
This is a mandatory form due to the OGA each time students meet with their Advisory Committee. *This form is available in eLC.* As a reminder, PhD students are required to hold a committee meeting **at least once per year.**

Preliminary Program of Study Form (optional) [back to top]
A Preliminary Program of Study, developed by the Major Professor and the doctoral student and approved by a majority of the Advisory Committee, can be submitted to the OGA by the end of the student's first year. The form requires the Graduate Director's signature but is for program use only and will not be sent to the Graduate School. The form may be found in eLC. For more information on developing the Program of Study, please see the section above (Program of Study).

Program of Study [back to top]
The final Program of Study Form (G138) is completed and submitted through https://gradstatus.uga.edu/ for approval by the Advisory Committee, the GraduateDirector, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Ideally, students should have their Program of Study developed and submitted during the first or second year of the program. ***The Program of Study form must be submitted in GradStatus by the time the oral comprehensive examination is scheduled.*** For more information on developing the Program of Study, please see the section above (Program of Study).

Announcement of Oral Comprehensive Exam [back to top]
****The announcement must come from the Graduate Director's office **at least two weeks prior to the exam.****** The student must have completed their 30 credit hour requirement prior to the exam. There must be an approved Advisory Committee form and an approved Program of Study form on file with the Graduate School prior to this announcement. All members of the Advisory Committee must be present (or available via Skype or teleconference) for the entire exam. If this is not possible, an appropriate substitute must be identified. The Graduate School must be notified if the exam is postponed or the student fails the exam.

Application for Admission to Candidacy
This form notifies the Graduate School that the student has met certain requirements, including the passing of written and oral qualifying exams, the prospectus, and appropriate GPA. The form is submitted to the graduate school through Grad Status: https://gradstatus.uga.edu/.

Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) Submission Approval
The Graduate School Style Manual (available for download here) establishes a set of standards designed to ensure consistency, legibility, and professional appearance of theses and dissertations. These standards are not intended to comprehensively address all of the minutiae of style and formatting. Students should refer to their academic department's choice of style for such specifics.
Note: Students must follow these guidelines to format the thesis/dissertation for the first format check. If it is apparent that a student has not made a reasonable attempt to do so, the document will not be checked, and graduation may be delayed until a future semester. The ETD Submission Approval G129 form is submitted to the graduate school through GradStatus.

Application for Graduation
This application must be filled out electronically via Athena in order to participate in Graduate School Commencement. The deadline is no later than the end of the second week of classes during the graduating semester. Please note that there is no summer graduation ceremony.

Announcement of Doctoral Defense of the Dissertation
*****The announcement must come from the Graduate Director's office at least two weeks prior to the exam.***** The student must be registered for the appropriate number of hours prior to the defense. The Graduate School must be notified, if the exam is postponed or the student fails the exam.

Dissertation and Final Examination Approval
Results of the final oral examination (defense) must be reported to the Graduate School *at least two weeks before graduation*. This Dissertation and Final Examination Approval form G164 form must be filled out by the appropriate deadline with the appropriate signatures and votes in Grad Status

Doctoral Commencement Information (G120)
Completed in GradStatus prior to graduation.

Graduation

As you approach completion of your degree, be sure to consult the Graduate School's website regarding the important dates and deadlines for graduation here. **You must meet these deadlines to ensure your graduate date is not delayed.** In order to graduate, the following paperwork must be on file with the Graduate School after processing with the CVM Office of Graduate Affairs:
- o Advisory Committee Officially Formed
- o Record of Committee Meeting (annually)
- o Program of Study
- o Prospectus
- o Comprehensive Examinations (oral and written)
  - o Oral examination Announced (*at least 2 weeks prior to date*)
- o Application for Candidacy (*semester BEFORE graduation **at the latest***)
- o Application for Graduation
- o Doctoral Commencement Information
- o Dissertation Defense Seminar Announced (*at least 2 weeks prior to date*)
- o Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) Submission Approval Form
- o Dissertation and Final Examination Approval Form
- o Submit an electronic copy of dissertation to vetgrad@uga.edu by the last day of class

A graduation check list is available in the Comparative Biomedical Sciences Student Resources Course in eLC.

UGA & CVM Enrollment Policies*

Minimum Enrollment
All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must register for a minimum of 3 hours of credit during any semester in which they use University facilities and/or faculty/staff time. This includes semesters in which they are completing comprehensive examinations and defending their thesis or dissertation.

A student who holds an assistantship must register for a minimum of 12 hours of graduate credit during the fall and spring semesters and nine hours of graduate credit during the summer semester. Other programs, offices, and agencies, such as the Veterans Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Services, and the Office of Student Financial Aid may have other minimum requirements for enrollment.

Continuous Enrollment Policy [back to top]
All enrolled students pursuing a graduate degree at the University of Georgia must maintain continuous enrollment until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated. Additional information can be found here.

Doctoral students must maintain enrollment during fall and spring semesters (breaking only for summer semesters) until the residency requirement has been met.

All students must be enrolled for at least three graduate credits in the semester in which degree requirements are completed.

Residence Credit Requirement
The residency requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is interpreted as 30 hours of consecutive graduate course work that is included on the approved program of study.

PhD Time Limit

- PhD Time Limit for students matriculating before Fall 2024
All pre-candidacy requirements for the degree (i.e. coursework on the program of study) must be completed within a period of six years. This time requirement dates from the first registration for graduate courses on a student's program of study.

After passing the comprehensive examination and being admitted to candidacy, a candidate for a doctoral degree must complete all degree requirements, including the dissertation and final oral examination, within five years. A student who does not complete all degree requirements within five years of admission to candidacy will be required to take the comprehensive examinations again and be admitted to candidacy a second time.

A student may petition for an exception to this policy by writing a letter to the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. This request for an extension of time must include the specific reasons that the student did not complete the requirements in the time allotted. The student must include a specific timeline for the completion of degree requirements. The student's major professor must review the student's request and write a letter to the Vice Provost and Dean stating approval or disapproval of the petition. The graduate directorand department head must review the major professor's recommendation and indicate their concurrence by writing an additional letter. If they do not concur with the recommendation, further information should be provided by them in the letter. An extension of time may be granted only on conditions beyond the control of the student.

- PhD Time Limit for students matriculating Fall 2024 and after
Doctoral students must complete all requirements for the doctoral degree and the degree must be awarded within eight (8) calendar years after initial enrollment/registration in the program. For example, if the date of first registration for a doctoral student is the fall semester of 2024, the eight-year time limit expires in summer semester of 2032. The student's time-to-degree clock starts with the first course approved for inclusion in their doctoral Program of Study, or the date of matriculation into the program, whichever occurred earlier. Individual colleges/schools or academic programs may have more restrictive requirements than the above stated Graduate School policy. The eight-year time limit does not include approved periods of leave. Additionally, doctoral time to degree is calculated separately for degrees obtained in each academic program.

Students who fail to complete their degrees within eight years after initial enrollment will be considered as not making satisfactory progress to degree completion and will be dismissed from Graduate School. The Graduate School will notify all doctoral students when they have reached the 7-year mark to warn them about the impending 8-year degree time limit.

Probation and Dismissal [back to top]

Students may be dismissed from the Graduate School and the PhD-CBS program if they have not made sufficient **academic and/or research progress** to continue in the program.
- Academic progress is measured by GPA, and the *Graduate School requires that students maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA throughout their graduate studies*.
- Research progress is assessed and documented by the advisory committee in their annual meetings and should be reflected in the Record of Committee Meeting form.

In addition to insufficient academic and/or research progress, Graduate School policy states that students may be dismissed from the program for:
- Failure to pass comprehensive examinations
- Failure to meet program requirements (academic, professional)
- Research misconduct
- Violation of professional standards
- Failure to adhere to the UGA honor code
- Title IX/ Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment violations
- No clear path to degree

Further information on these policies:
Academic dismissal: Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 will receive a warning letter from the Graduate School explaining the probation procedure. If a student's cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for two consecutive terms, the student will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. After the "warning letter" and after being placed on probation, the student will meet with the Major Professor, Director, and Program Coordinator to develop a written plan of action, which must be processed through the OGA. While on probation, students must have at least a 3.0 for the semester GPA each succeeding semester. Probation status ends when the student's cumulative GPA reaches at least a 3.0. If a student makes below a 3.0 semester GPA while on probation, he/she will be dismissed from the Graduate School and the College of Veterinary Medicine. Students on warning or probation should take graded courses in order to raise their GPA.

Students who are dismissed by the Graduate School may not apply for admission to another graduate program offered by the University. Students who are dismissed by the Graduate School for academic reasons may appeal the dismissal to the Dean of the Graduate School. The appeal must be submitted within 30 calendar days following receipt of the notice of dismissal. Information concerning the appeal process may be obtained from the Graduate School.

When students repeat a graduate course, the last grade will be utilized to calculate the cumulative GPA that is used for probation, dismissal, and graduation. Grades of S, U, and I will not be used in calculating the cumulative grade average. However, when a grade of I converts to F, this may result in an action of probation or dismissal for the semester in which the conversion takes place, even if the student is not registered for that semester.

Research dismissal: As an original research thesis is required for the PhD degree, a student's inability to complete the work for the thesis may result in his/her dismissal. Probation and dismissal due to lack of adequate progress in their research area must be recorded in the student's Record of Graduate Student Committee Meeting form by the student's advisory committee. The mentor, in majority accordance with the advisory committee, will meet to

evaluate the research progress and will place the student on probation, if he/she is found to have made insufficient progress towards graduation. At this time, the committee will provide the student with specific written instructions that will result in remedial reasonable research improvement to be completed within a 3-month period. At the completion of this time period, the committee will meet again with the student and determine the outcome of the probationary period. This will result in either dismissal for continued lack of progress or continuation in the program, if the student has responded favorably to the advisory committee's recommendations. Students with 2 or more unfavorable committee meetings documented in the record form and signed by a majority of the advisory committee members may be dismissed from the program. Dismissal for lack of progress in a research project may be appealed in a written letter from the student to the College's Graduate Affairs Committee within 30 days of the advisory committee's dismissal decision. A written decision from the committee will be communicated to the student and Graduate Affairs.

No clear path to degree: Per UGA policy: students 'enrolled in the program who cannot identify a major professor or who cannot form an advisory committee shall be placed on a status called "No clear path to degree completion." This status is distinct from "Not in good standing", which refers to academic status. Students will be given one semester after being placed on this status by their unit/program to identify a major professor or form a committee. Graduate directors should work closely with the student to try to rectify the problem. If the situation is not resolved during this semester, the student can be dismissed from the program.'

Academic Professionalism

As part of the academic curriculum of the CVM, graduate students are expected to exhibit the behavior and competency essential for a constructive learning environment. This guidance is meant to inform students of their obligations towards their peers, staff, and faculty as well as prepare students for success as they embark on a professional career. By maintaining a professional atmosphere, all members of The College of Veterinary Medicine will be better able to participate and thrive throughout their enrollment.

EXPECTATIONS

Admission to, or enrollment in the CVM creates an obligation upon each student to conduct themselves in a professional manner as further outlined below.

a. Competency

The quality of a student's performance is not determined solely by the end product, but by every aspect of a student's work towards completing their degree objectives. Students must demonstrate competence in the field including, but not limited to:

- Exhibiting the requisite training, preparation, and disposition of an aspiring professional.
- Completing assignments within the time allotted and with the degree of care that is expected of them.
- Staying apprised of deadlines, maintaining a satisfactory attendance record, and completing work in an honest and dependable manner.
- Keeping sensitive patient/student/client personal information confidential.
- Promptly seeking guidance from their supervisor/advisor, instructor, or program coordinator when they have doubts about their ability to complete an assignment or confusion about instructions they have been given.
- Holding oneself accountable for mistakes, and remaining cognizant of personal strengths and weaknesses.

- Being open to assessments of one's work and responding in a constructive manner. This does not prohibit scholarly disagreement between students, staff, and faculty.
- Completing all work and assignments truthfully, and without fraud, misrepresentations, or the intent to deceive.
  - *Policy on Use of Generative AI Tools*
    - Generative AI use, unless explicitly permitted by the instructor and/or major professor, to complete academic work (assignments, examinations, etc.) and/ or materials for publication (manuscripts, thesis, etc.) is considered an express violation of ethical standards and may result in sanctions or even dismissal from the program. When expressly permitted by the instructor, any work generated by or in consultation with generative AI should be explicitly disclosed to the instructor. Students are encouraged to reach out to instructors or their advisor for explicit instructions regarding use of generative AI tools.

b. Disruptive Behavior

Students must exhibit behavior that is suitable for the setting and reflects that the student possesses reasonable professional judgment. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Demonstrating the ability to function effectively while upholding the standards of The College of Veterinary Medicine.
- Abstaining from behavior that substantially interferes with the ability of a laboratory or classroom to function. This includes behavior that affects the ability of oneself or others to complete their work or advance in their academic development.
- Engaging in respectful dialogue and expressing concerns at appropriate times and in appropriate places. By expressing opinions and concerns in a respectful manner, students and faculty will be better able to reach satisfactory resolutions.
- Demonstrating the ability to work efficiently in a collaborative environment.
- Avoiding the use of distracting audio, visual, or communicative devices unless required for accessibility or permitted by the instructor. Technology should always be used for appropriate purposes and as instructed.
- Students should be cognizant of their verbal and written communication, including email, social media, text messages, and other electronic forms of communication and how it impacts their professional reputation.

c. Inappropriate Relationships

Professional boundaries must always be observed. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Complying with the UGA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (*See (II) (B)* Prohibited Consensual Relationships). Students, faculty, staff, and graduate teaching assistants should familiarize themselves with the UGA NDAH Policy.
- Complying with all rules set forth by The College of Veterinary Medicine.

d. Safety Protocols

Students must adhere to all safety protocols outlined by the principal investigator, lab manager/technician instructor, lab guidelines, or in the syllabus, including, but not limited to:

- Wearing the appropriate clothing, shoes, and other accessories required for the setting.
- Working with regard to one's own safety and the safety of others.

- Refraining from roughhousing which may harm others or their work area, and is unacceptable in a professional environment.
- Preventing the unauthorized entry of others into a restricted space. If a student is given a key or key card to access a University facility, they may neither duplicate nor loan that means of access, nor provide access to an individual not authorized to enter the facility. This includes restricted areas within facilities otherwise open to the University community.

REPORTING
Certain unprofessional behavior may also be subject to the Student Code of Conduct, Academic Honesty, and other proceedings by the school. This Guidance does not give specific colleges within the University the power to handle matters that concern Student Conduct or Academic Honesty internally.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES
Students should acquaint themselves with all applicable Board of Regents, University of Georgia, and The College of Veterinary Medicine policies, including, but not limited to the following:

- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy https://eoo.uga.edu/policies/non-discrimination-anti-harassment-policy
- Prohibited Amorous Relationships https://eoo.uga.edu/About/things_to_know/
- Workplace Violence http://safeandsecure.uga.edu/workplace.html
- Handbook for The College of Veterinary Medicine graduate programs.
- Code of Conduct https://conduct.uga.edu/content_page/code-of-conduct
Academic Honesty https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/

Academic Appeals
University of Georgia students have the right to appeal certain academic decisions. The appeals process starts at the unit responsible for the decision (ex. grades will start with the department that offered the course). For most appeals, an unfavorable ruling at one level can be appealed to the successive level. All appeals are heard by the Appeals Committee of the Graduate Council. The appellant must submit a letter of appeal. Appellants are also allowed to submit up to 10 pages of supporting documentation beyond the appeal letter. Appellants do not need to submit any documentation that is already in their file at the Graduate School. Appeal letters, supporting documentation, and questions about the appeals process should be submitted to gradassociatedean@uga.edu.

The Appeals Committee hears the following appeals from students: admission decision appeals; dismissal appeals; grade appeals; denials of a request for a change in degree objective; denials of extension of time; and appeals regarding the Continuous Enrollment Policy. The committee also hears appeals from faculty regarding appointment, reappointment, removal, or revocation of Graduate Faculty Status.
During the appeals hearing, each party (appellant and respondent) has a maximum of 10 minutes to present their case. The Appeals Committee then meets to discuss the case and renders a decision.

Below are the most common types of appeals heard by the Committee:

Admission Decision Appeals
Appeals of admissions decisions must first be made to the applicant's intended department. After the department has rendered a decision, the student has 30 days to initiate their appeal at

the Graduate School. Decisions made by the Appeals Committee regarding admissions decision are final. There is no higher level the applicant can submit an appeal to.

Dismissal Decision
There are two types of dismissal appeals: departmental dismissals and Graduate School dismissals. Students wishing to appeal a departmental dismissal must first appeal to their department and then their college. After an unfavorable decision at the college level, the student has 30 days to contact the Graduate School to initiate their appeal. Students dismissed by the Graduate School must appeal to the Graduate School first. Dismissal appeals decisions made by the Appeals Committee can be appealed to the Educational Affairs Committee of the University Council.

Grade Appeals
Students appealing grades must first contact the instructor of a course to appeal a final course grade. If the student receives an unfavorable decision, the student can then appeal to the department in which the course is housed, using procedures established by the requisite school or college. Please note that students can only appeal final course grades. If the student is given an unfavorable decision from the department, the student can then appeal to the college. After the decision at the college level, the student has 30 days to initiate their appeal to the Graduate School. Grade appeal decisions made by the Appeals Committee can be appealed to the Educational Affairs Committee. The Appeals Committee of the Graduate Council does not hear grade appeals from professional programs. Appeals involving hardship withdraws and Incompletes (I's) converting to F's are heard by the Educational Affairs Committee, not the Appeals Committee. To contact the Educational Affairs Committee, please email ovpiappeals@uga.edu. For questions regarding appeals heard by the Educational Affairs Committee, please visit their website.
Neither body considers appeals of grades received during a course (e.g. exams) and Programs of Study.

Request for Leave of Absence from Graduate Enrollment [back to top]

A. A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual circumstance to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy. A leave of absence requires approval of the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Dean of Graduate School. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause such as serious medical and health-related issues, major financial and employment issues; pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and recovery therefrom, adoption or fostering of a child, child care, elder care, and other significant family issues; and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. An approved leave of absence stands in lieu of registering for the minimum of 3 credits for each semester for which the leave of absence is granted. During a leave of absence, students may not use UGA facilities, resources, or services designed or intended only for enrolled students; receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship, or financial aid from the University; or take any UGA courses related to their program of study. The amount of time approved for leave of absence will not count toward time limits governing a graduate degree. **Application.** Students may apply for a leave of absence for good cause, such as: serious medical and health-related issues, major financial and employment issues, pregnancy, childbirth, child care, elder care, and other significant family issues, and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. An approved leave of absence stands in

lieu of registering for the minimum of 3 credits for each semester for which the leave of absence is granted.

B. **Student Responsibility.** It is the student's responsibility to apply for a leave of absence in a timely fashion. An approved leave of absence does not exempt students from the enrollment requirements of other programs, offices, and agencies, such as the Veterans Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and federal financial aid programs. Eligibility for certain types of financial aid, including graduate assistantships, requires enrollment for more credits than the Continuous Enrollment Policy.

C. **Deadlines.** A student may apply for a leave of absence before or during any semester in which they are **not** registered for courses. Application for a leave of absence must be received by the Graduate School Office of Enrollment Services on or before the last day of classes for the semester for which it is requested. A leave of absence will not be granted retroactively after the end of a semester.

D. **Limits.** A student may submit multiple requests for a leave of absence subject to a 3-semester limit. A student may request a leave of absence for one semester, two consecutive semesters, or three consecutive semesters (summer semester included). There is a 12-month limit for any one request of leave of absence. A student may submit multiple requests for a leave of absence subject to these overall limitations: (a) 3-semester limit for doctoral students prior to advancement to candidacy; (b) 3-semester limit for doctoral students after advancement to candidacy. A leave of absence will not be granted retroactively after the end of a semester.

E. The leave of absence form is available under forms available through gradstatus.

Course Load [back to top]

A full-time course load is 9 hours per semester during the academic year and 6 hours during the summer semester. The maximum semester course load for any student is 18 hours per semester. **Students on at least a one-third time graduate assistantship or on a ROOST waiver must register for 12 hours per semester (Fall/Spring) and 9 credit hours per summer session.** For those students whose degree program officially requires more than 18 hours of credit per semester, the students will be limited to the program maximum. The minimum/maximum course load for which a graduate student may enroll is governed by the following:

	Minimum Semester Hours	Maximum Semester Hours
Students who do not have an assistantship	3	18
Graduate Assistants: One-third (.33) time	12	18
Graduate Assistants: Four-ninths (.44) time	12	18
Graduate Assistants: One-half (.50) time	12	18

A. To exceed the maximum course load, a student must obtain approval from his/her major professor and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Department Head or the Director of Graduate Studies may sign the overload request in the absence of the student's Major Professor.

B. Generally, a request to exceed the maximum course load will not be approved unless the student satisfies the following criteria: (1) is a prospective candidate (or candidate) for a graduate degree, (2) has a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher, (3) has no incompletes on his/her graduate record, and (4) is not a first-semester student.

C. The maximum course load for an eight-week summer thru session is 18 hours. The minimum course load for any summer session is 3 hours. The maximum course load during pre-summer session (Maymester) is 6 hours. For students on an assistantship, the

minimum course load during summer sessions is 9 hours. Permission to exceed the maximum load is not granted during summer semester.

Final Registration Requirement
Students must be registered at the University of Georgia for a minimum of 3 hours of credit during the semester in which they complete all degree requirements. This is usually the dissertation writing course (VETM 9300). Students on assistantship must register for 12 hours for fall and spring and 12 hours in the summer.

Doctoral students must register for 10 hours of appropriate graduate credit after being admitted to candidacy before being allowed to graduate – see the candidacy policy in the Graduate Bulletin.

A graduate course, GRSC 9270 (Graduate Study Completion), is designed for students completing degree requirements who will be using staff time or University facilities and for whom no regular course is appropriate. Permission to register for this course must be granted by the Graduate School. This course cannot be used to fulfill requirements on the program of study.

Students will not be approved for graduation if they have a grade of Incomplete (I) or an error (ER), which, when changed to a recorded grade, could cause the graduate GPA to fall below the minimum required for graduation.

Standards of Behavior
Students at the University of Georgia are responsible for maintaining and adhering to the strictest standards of honesty and integrity in every aspect of their lives.

Academic Honesty
Honesty in academic matters is a large part of this obligation. Click here for the *Academic Honesty Policy*. All students must abide by the University's academic honesty policy. Any student accused of academic dishonesty has certain due process but may be dismissed from the program, if they are determined to be in violation of this policy.

Code of Conduct
The Office of Student Conduct maintains and publishes the *Code of Conduct* for the University of Georgia. They are responsible for processing alleged violations of the Code. The *Code of Conduct* can be found here. All students must abide by the University's Code of Conduct. Any student accused of violating the Code has certain due process but may be dismissed from the program, if they are determined to be in violation of this policy.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy (NDAH Policy)
The University of Georgia is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work, and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, Board of Regents' policy, and University policy, the University prohibits any member of the faculty, staff, administration, student body, or visitors to campus, whether they be guests, patrons, independent contractors, or clients, from harassing and/or discriminating against any other member of the University community because of that person's race, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disabled status, or status as a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Students must report these incidents and will be protected from retaliation according to University guidelines. If a student reports an incident to the Major Advisor or member of the

OGA, the recipient of this information MUST report the incident to the Equal Opportunity Office, or they are in violation of NDAH policy. For the entire NDAH policy, click here.

Code of Conduct in the laboratory setting [back to top]
The student is considered to be a guest in the major professor's laboratory. As such, the student will be subjected to the University's and laboratory's rules of conduct and lack of compliance may result in the student being dismissed from the program.

Student-Mentor Disagreements [back to top]
Students who have complaints about the conduct of the faculty mentor or other personnel in the laboratory setting which do not fall under the NDAH Policy, should schedule a meeting with the Chair of the mentor's department and communicate the specific problems. The Director of Graduate Studies and/or CBS Director will be informed by the Chair of the department, and the student's complaints will be appropriately investigated and assessed. The student's Advisory Committee, along with the Chair, will try to mediate a solution to address the student's complaints. The student and the mentor should come to an agreement for successful completion of a PhD degree. The support system in the College (Advisory Committee members, Departmental Chair, and Graduate Director) will work to help the student reach that agreement.

Students who have disagreements with their mentors related to courses or thesis requirements to complete their degree should bring up their case to their Advisory Committee. The majority vote of the Advisory Committee will determine the course of action for the student and the mentor.

Arrest and Conviction Policy [back to top]
Board of Regents' policy requires any current employee who is arrested or convicted of a crime to report that information to the Office of Legal Affairs within a predetermined time limit. For additional information, click here.

Georgia Open Records Act [back to top]
The Office of Public Affairs is responsible for administering the University's compliance with the Georgia Open Records Act. This law places important responsibilities on the student as a University community member. For additional information, click here.

Graduate Assistantships

Registration [back to top]
Students with Graduate Assistantships or on the ROOST waiver must register for 12 credit hours each semester during Fall and Spring and the summer semester. Graduate assistants who do not receive a stipend during the summer, but opt to register and receive the reduced tuition, must register for a minimum of 9 credit hours.

Tuition Waiver [back to top]
To be eligible to pay a reduced tuition, holders of assistantships must: (1) be hired for at least 13 hours per week, (2) be paid at the approved rate for graduate assistants in the CVM, and (3) register for the appropriate number of graduate credit hours.

Outside Employment

Outside Employment

Successful graduate study is, at minimum, a full-time endeavor. The faculty of the CVM work very hard to maintain the stipend at its maximum, allowable level (within the limits set by the State Government acting through the University Board of Regents). The stipend provides sufficient income for the expected cost of living of a graduate student in Athens, leaving little justification for undertaking other outside employment. Thus, employment is prohibited without consent of the mentor and majority consent from the remaining members of the graduate Advisory Committee.

Wellness

There are many free resources available at both the college and University if you are struggling with wellness issues during your program.

College-Specific Resources:

Wellness Boards

At both locations, there is a wellness board with location and hours of the embedded counselor, as well as helpful handouts regarding mindfulness or reducing stress. At the CVM, this board is located near the vet student mailboxes on the 2nd floor. At the VMC, the board is next to the student mailboxes in the VEC.

Wellness Rooms

There are also designated wellness rooms at each location, at H302 CVM and 1084 VMC, if you need a place to catch your breath, practice meditation or yoga, or just need to be alone. Please pay attention to signage on the door, though, so you don't walk in on someone!

Bulldawg Support Network

There is a group of graduate student volunteers who have been trained on recognizing signs of stress, anxiety, and depression, and who are available to listen and provide resources, if you need someone to talk to. You are also welcome to talk to any of the other volunteers in the BSN. Names and email addresses can be found on the posters up around both locations, as well as at this link http://vet.uga.edu/bulldawg-support-network.

Embedded counselors

Graduate students can also make free appointments with counselors at the vet school. At the CVM, the counselor is Stevie Stigler, and the counselor at the VMC is Liz Cheely. Their respective rooms are H306 and 2168.

Graduate Students can schedule counseling appointments for CVM/VTH specific location **online** through the UGA Health Center Patient Portal. Here are the instructions on how to do so:

- Visit the Health Center website and log into your **Patient Portal** @ https://patientportal.uhs.uga.edu/login_dualauthentication.aspx .
- After log-in is complete (need to verify birthdate, etc.), click on **Appointments** in the side menu bar.

- Choose **Schedule an appointment** - then under *General Appointment Categories* choose **Vet Med Services**.
- Two appointment options will appear- **Vet Med First Appointment** or **Vet Med CAPS Counseling**
- For a *first appointment* select **Vet Med First Appointment** option. This will allow access to the *Pre- Appointment Paperwork* that is to be completed prior to the appointment.
- If this is an on-going counseling appointment select **Vet Med CAPS Counseling** option.
- Next, you will **select the DAY and TIME** of the appointment.

*Remember: Stevie's appointments are at the Main Campus/CVM (office # H-306) and Liz's appointments are at the Teaching Hospital/VMC (office # 2168), please choose appointments accordingly!

 *All students affiliated with the College of Veterinary Medicine are allowed to utilize counseling services and the services are provided at no cost to the student. If the student wishes to be seen at CAPS (Counseling & Psychiatric Services, also at no charge) this can be done online through patient portal as well OR by calling 706-542-2273 to schedule an appointment.

Graduate Student Support Group
Stevie also runs a weekly support group for graduate students. Information regarding date/time/place will be announced through vetgrad@uga.edu

Wellness Activities
A number of different activities, such as free yoga or spin classes, knitting groups, or health and fitness challenges are offered either weekly or sporadically through the CVM. These will be announced through the CVM news email or graduate student listservs.

University-Wide Wellness Resources:
UGA Well-Being Resources
Located within the Tate Student Center, this office is dedicated to providing students with information and resources to improve well-being and mental health. They provide numerous in-person and online resources for students year-round. Please visit their website for more information, including upcoming events, activities, and programs. University Health Center also provides a variety of wellness resources, including workshops, classes, and virtual counseling. Be sure to visit their website to learn more about these resources.
Headspace Another free online resource, Headspace is a mindfulness and meditation digital platform that is available to all students. For more information visit here.
Togetherall An online safe-space and peer support network designed to support and improve mental health and well-being. UGA has recently begun providing this resource free to students and feedback from the UGA student community has been overwhelmingly positive. Learn more about joining here.
Professional Development Resources

- The CBS program and the college typically offer several professional development opportunities, including seminars and workshops, each year and these are usually advertised via email (CVM news and graduate student listservs).
- The Graduate School has recently launched a designated site, GradUP, that has aggregated resources and outlined a roadmap for professional development.

CHECKLIST FOR PhD DEGREE

It is the responsibility of the student to keep this checklist up to date and to meet all requirements **on time.** Forms are listed at the end of each in parentheses and can be found on eLC or at http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/forms/.

*indicates soft deadlines for combined PhD/residents.

_____ Attend **ORIENTATION** (preferably) or meet with Graduate Director and Program Coordinator at the beginning of the first semester of enrollment.

_____ Read this **GRADUATE MANUAL** and sign the last page (Student Acknowledgment of Guidelines/Requirements). Please turn this in to the OGA.

_____ Make appointments with faculty members to discuss the research being conducted in faculty laboratories in order to choose a Major Professor (if not chosen prior to arrival).

_____ Select a **MAJOR PROFESSOR** with the approval of the Graduate Director before enrolling for the second semester of class work. An earlier selection of the Major Professor is encouraged.*

_____ Self-funded students and their Major Advisors must fill out and sign a financial waiver and mentoring agreement form. (Financial Waiver and Mentoring Agreement Form).

_____ A **MENTOR-MENTEE COMPACT** between the student and mentor is highly encouraged. This is completed during the GRSC 7001 GradFIRST seminar required during the first (or rarely second) semester.

_____ An **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** should be developed and set up at http://myidp.sciencecareers.org by the end of the first semester. This is also discussed in the GradFIRST seminar.

_____ **GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE** set up before the end of the first year of study.* Must be officially reported to Graduate School via Enrolled Student Progress Portal.

_____ **1st COMMITTEE MEETING** should happen **by the end of the first year**.* (Record of Graduate Committee Meeting form found in eLC)

_____ **PRELIMINARY PROGRAM OF STUDY** *optional*, submitted to the OGA by the end of the student's first year of study.* (Preliminary Program of Study form)

_____ **PROSPECTUS.** The student will prepare a dissertation prospectus outlining the research problem, central hypothesis, and specific aims including pertinent details regarding the research approach. This should be written with the guidance of the Major Advisor in accordance with individual departmental guidelines and provided to the Committee **at least 2 weeks prior to the written portion of the comprehensive examination.** This should be done by the end of the 2nd year of study.*

_____ **PROGRAM OF STUDY.** A program of study *must be submitted to the Graduate School prior to application for admission to candidacy.* Program of Study G138 form completed in GradStatus

_____ WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS. This is part of the Comprehensive Examination for Admission to Candidacy for the PhD degree. This should be **done preferably at least 1 year but no less than 1 full semester prior to dissertation defense**.

_____ ORAL EXAMINATION. This is part of the Comprehensive Examination for Admission to Candidacy for the PhD degree.

- *This should be done at least 2 weeks following the written exams.*

- ****This must be announced to the Graduate School by the Graduate Director at least 2 weeks prior to the date.****
  - *EMAIL THE PROGRAM and GRADUATE COORDINATOR 3 WEEKS BEFOREHAND TO BE SAFE*

_____ ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY. This certifies that specific requirements for the PhD degree have been met. An Application for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degrees (G162) Form is completed in Grad Status by the student upon successful completion of the oral and written portions of the comprehensive examination. The form is then routed to the Graduate Coordinator approval and submission to the Graduate School.

_____ APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION AND PAYMENT OF FEES. An application for graduation must be filed with the Graduate School in ATHENA *no later than Friday of the second full week (the first full week for summer) of classes in the semester of the anticipated graduation date*.

_____ DISSERTATION DEFENSE ANNOUNCEMENT. Email vetgrad@uga.edu

- ****This must be announced to the Graduate School by the Graduate Director at least 2 weeks prior to the date.****

_____ DOCTORAL DISSERTATION FORMATTING CHECK. One complete formatted copy of the dissertation must be electronically submitted to the Graduate School for a format check *no later than four weeks prior to graduation.*

_____ APPROVAL FORM FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AND FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION. Results of the final oral examination (defense) must be reported to the Graduate School *at least two weeks before graduation.* (Dissertation and Final Examination Approval form G164 completed in Grad Status)

_____ DISSERTATION SUBMISSION. The dissertation is submitted electronically to the Graduate School *no later than two weeks prior to graduation*.

_____ GRADUATION CEREMONY INFO. Complete this form (Doctoral Commencement Information (G120)) in GradStatus if attending the graduation ceremony.

My signature acknowledges that I have received a copy of the Doctorate of Philosophy – Comparative Biomedical Sciences Handbook, reviewed the contents, and understand my responsibility as a PhD-CBS degree-seeking student.

Student's Name: _____

UGA ID Number: _____

Signature: _____