

# PhD Student Handbook



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## University Policies and Procedures

The information in this handbook provides degree program-specific information that supplements the information included in the [Graduate Division's Graduate Policies and Procedures](#) document. For detailed information on university policies, please refer to the above-linked document and/or Graduate Division's [website](#), or contact the SPPS Student Affairs Office ([pharmsci-grad@uci.edu](mailto:pharmsci-grad@uci.edu)) for clarification.

## Welcome

Welcome to the **Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Program**. The Student Affairs Office and I want to help you succeed in graduate school and your future career, and our immediate goal is to help you earn your PhD degree in Pharmacological Sciences and be ready for what comes next.

This is an exciting time for the field. We have at our disposal an incredible array of knowledge and techniques, from high-resolution structural analysis of drug targets, to genome-wide transcriptomics and proteomics information on diseases and the downstream effects of drugs, to high-throughput and fragment-screening technologies and cutting-edge computational tools to aid pharmaceutical drug discovery. This multidisciplinary area poses great opportunities and challenges. We need to understand aspects of biology, techniques from chemistry, and in some cases bring in elements from physics and math. Then, we bridge between these disciplines and advance the frontiers of knowledge at this exciting interface. We in the Pharmacological Sciences Program at UCI are committed to the goal of training scientists who will one day spearhead their own research. You have been selected to join our program because of your potential to do exactly this.

We are here to guide you through the next few years of your academic life: from passing your advancement examination to advancing to candidacy and, finally, to successfully defending your dissertation. Our goal is to ensure you have a rewarding experience full of personal and professional discovery and growth.

One day you will stand in front of the School, your doctoral committee, and your colleagues, and you will defend your dissertation. On that day, you will receive the highest degree, a PhD, which we hope will signify that you have a great desire for wisdom and truth – not just in your specific area, but in all of life.

We intend that your PhD studies will be a time when you advance the frontiers of our knowledge of life and at the same time are amazed by its complexity and beauty.



**David Mobley, PhD**

Professor and Graduate Advisor  
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

## Program Advising

The Graduate and Concentration Advisors are available for guidance on topics such as elective course selection, laboratory rotations, and research advisor matching. We also encourage you to talk with current students and ask about their experiences in the program. Furthermore, the academic counselors in the SPPS Student Affairs Office can provide information on course enrollment, campus resources, policies, and procedures.



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## SPPS Student Affairs Office

Graduate Affairs Officer

209 Steinhaus Hall

[pharmsci-grad@uci.edu](mailto:pharmsci-grad@uci.edu)

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## Course Registration

You are required to be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units and a maximum of 16 units of graduate or upper division courses each quarter. You will need approval from the Dean of Graduate Division for more than 16 units.

You are responsible for registering for courses to ensure that your fees are paid by the appropriate deadline each quarter; otherwise, you may be dropped from your courses, and have to pay a late fee (see the [Academic Calendar](#) for details on due dates).

Graduate Division has a policy that any student who is not enrolled by the end of the 3rd week of the term will be dropped from the graduate program! **NO EXCEPTIONS!** To continue, you will need to re-apply following the procedures required for any new applicant (online application, application fee, letters of recommendation, GRE scores, etc.). To prevent this from happening, please ensure you are registered by Friday of week 2.

Before registering for courses, you may need authorization codes for some courses you plan on taking. Contact the Graduate Affairs Officer in the [Student Affairs Office](#) to receive your codes for PHRMSCI courses. For courses in other departments, contact the instructor or the respective staff in those departments for codes.

Search for courses using UCI's Web [Schedule of Classes](#) (WebSOC) and register in classes through UCI's [WebReg](#).

### Registration Fees

The tuition and fees are generally paid by fellowships or GSR/TA fee remissions. These fees include the mandatory Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) premium. If you have insurance coverage from a different source and wish to waive GSHIP, please file [a health insurance waiver](#).

Submission of this waiver is required each quarter.

If you have any other questions concerning registration, payment of fees, international student or non-resident problems, please see the Student Affairs Office and they will be happy to answer your questions or send you to someone who can help.

# Statement of Legal Residence

All students are required to complete a Statement of Legal Residence (SLR).

The Residence Deputy at UCI sends out an email to all incoming students that directs you to complete and submit your SLR online. This email also provides you with both your UCI Student ID Number and your “Application ID Number” that you will need to enter to complete the SLR. Please note that the “Application ID Number” is different from your “Electronic Application ID Number,” so be sure to use the Application ID Number you receive in the email.

## [Online Statement of Legal Residence Form](#)

The SLR is an important step used to determine residence classification for tuition purposes. You are required to file a SLR form with the Office of the Registrar regardless of whether you expect to be classified as a California resident or not. It is very important to complete your SLR in a timely manner. Your fees and tuition amounts are determined on the basis of your SLR information. Therefore, you cannot enroll in classes before your SLR is received and processed by the University.

All domestic students must establish California residency before the start of the Fall Quarter of their second year.. If you fail to establish residency, you must pay the Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition (NRST) until your residency is established. The department will not provide financial support to cover NRST in the interim

The requirements for establishing California residency are included on the [Petition for Resident Classification](#), which is due to the Registrar’s Office by August between your first and second year. Any questions about establishing residency and your particular situation can be directed to the Resident Deputy in the [Registrar’s Office](#).



## Academic Standards

The following is an excerpt from the University of California, Irvine Catalogue concerning the scholastic **requirements** for graduate students:

For a graduate student, only the grades A+, A, A-, B+, B, and S represent satisfactory scholarship, and only coursework in which these grades are received may be applied toward degree requirements. If the student has a grade point average of at least 3.0 in all courses applicable to the degree, one UCI course in which a grade of B- is earned may be accepted by the petition process in partial satisfaction of the degree requirements. Graduate students may not apply courses graded Pass/Not Pass toward any degree or satisfactory progress requirements. A grade point average below the B level (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) is not satisfactory, and a student whose grade point average is below that level is subject to academic disqualification. The minimum grade point average standards, as stated in this handbook, are minimum UCI requirements.

If you do not uphold these scholastic requirements, you may be subject to academic conditional status or disqualification. Additionally, if you earn a grade of C or below, you will not be eligible for university funding.

The following is a list of examples that demonstrate unsatisfactory academic progress:

- A cumulative grade point average below 3.0; or
- A quarterly grade point average below 3.0 in two successive quarters; or
- Fewer than 24 units completed and applicable toward the advanced degree requirements in the last three quarters; or
- Failure to complete required courses or examinations satisfactorily within the period specified by the Pharmacological Sciences Program; or
- Failure to pass the comprehensive and/or advancement exams in two attempts; or
- Failure to progress academically within the Normative Time to Degree framework specified; or
- The appropriate faculty committee's determination that there has not been satisfactory progress toward completion of the dissertation.

Any graduate student who has not demonstrated satisfactory academic progress is not eligible for any academic appointment/employment or fellowship support or other financial awards.

**Additionally, the academic requirements for the Pharmacological Sciences PhD Program include successfully matching with a faculty research advisor no later than week 7 of the Winter Quarter of your first year.**



# Curriculum Requirements

## Pharmaceutical Sciences Track

### YEAR 1

During the first year, students in the Pharmaceutical Sciences Track must take three (3) required courses chosen from the list below, plus three (3) elective courses that can be selected from 1) the below list, 2) the Pharmacology Track required course list (see p. 11), and/or 3) the Medicinal Chemistry electives list (see p. 13). Elective courses not on the above lists must be approved by the Graduate Advisor. All required courses must be completed by the end of your first year.

#### Required Courses (select three)

PHRMSCI 223 – Biological Macromolecules

PHRMSCI 254 – Introduction to Pharmacology

PHRMSCI 255 - Neuropharmacology

PHRMSCI 264 – The RNA World: From Discovery to Mechanisms

PHRMSCI 265 – New Frontiers in Chemical and Synthetic Biology

PHRMSCI 272 – Special Topics in Pharmaceutical Sciences (topics change quarterly/annually)

PHRMSCI 277 – Medicinal Chemistry

PHRMSCI 279 – Emerging Technologies in Pharmaceutical Sciences and Medicine

#### Elective Courses

Elective courses are very flexible as to meet each individual student's goals. We encourage you to discuss elective courses with your faculty advisor or with the PI of labs you are rotating in.

#### Additional Courses

PHRMSCI 250A/B/C – Topics in Pharmaceutical Sciences\* (entire series may count as 1 elective course)

PHRMSCI 257 – Ethics in Research or equivalent (Responsible Conduct of Research training – [UC Learning Center](#) online modules – send the SAO the certificate of completion)

PHRMSCI 298 – Research Seminar (all PharmSci students must enroll in this course quarterly)

PHRMSCI 299 – Graduate Research (all PharmSci students must enroll in enough research units to bring their quarterly total to 12-16 units each quarter)

#### Comprehensive Exam

\*Successful completion of this course series, including the final paper, fulfills your comprehensive exam requirement. If you do not complete this course series, you must take a separate, additional written comprehensive exam.

## Curriculum Requirements (cont.)

Fall	Winter	Spring
PHRMSCI 254; and/or Other Elective PHRMSCI 250A PHRMSCI 298 (Seminar) PHRMSCI 299 (Lab Rotation)	PHRMSCI 277; and/or PHRMSCI 270; and/or Other Elective PHRMSCI 250B PHRMSCI 298 (Seminar) PHRMSCI 299 (Lab Rotation)	PHRMSCI 223; and/or PHARM 255; and/or PHRMSCI 265; and/or PHRMSCI 279; and/or Other Elective PHRMSCI 250C PHRMSCI 298 (Seminar) PHRMSCI 299 (Research)

^Quarterly course offering subject to change without notice. Please refer to the WebSOC for the most accurate course listings.

### YEARS 2-5

After your first year, your research advisor may suggest additional elective coursework. You must also enroll in PHRMSCI 299 and PHRMSCI 298 **each quarter** for a minimum of 12 units and a maximum of 16 units total until you complete your degree.

# Curriculum Requirements

## Pharmacology Track

### YEAR 1

During the first year, students in the Pharmacology Track must take the below required courses. All of the courses must be completed by the end of your first year.

PHRMSCI 241 – Advanced Topics in Pharmacology  
PHRMSCI 251 – Experimental Pharmacology  
PHRMSCI 254 – Introduction to Pharmacology  
PHRMSCI 255 – Neuropharmacology  
PHRMSCI 256 – Experimental Design for Pharmacologists  
PHRMSCI 257 – Ethics in Research

#### Required Courses

PHRMSCI 298 – Research Seminar (all PharmSci students must enroll in this course every quarter)  
PHRMSCI 299 – Graduate Research (all PharmSci students must enroll in enough research units to bring their quarterly total to 12-16 units each quarter)

#### Comprehensive Exam

After completion of first year courses, you must pass a comprehensive exam covering first year coursework subjects. It will be offered once per year during the summer and will normally be taken prior to the second year. It may be deferred to the following year only under unusual circumstances and with the prior approval of the Track and Graduate Advisors. You must pass the comprehensive exam no later than the end of your second year.

## Curriculum Requirements (cont.)

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
BIOCHEM 210A (if required) PHRMSCI 254 PHRMSCI 298 PHRMSCI 299 (Lab Rotation)	PHRMSCI 251 PHRMSCI 298 PHRMSCI 299 (Lab Rotation)	PHRMSCI 241 PHRMSCI 255 PHRMSCI 298 PHRMSCI 299 (Research)	PHRMSCI 256 ^ PHRMSCI 257 ^ Comprehensive Exam

**PHRMSCI 256 and 257 are offered alternating summers – so, you will attend both courses either after your first year or after your second year. Though instruction occurs over the summer, you must enroll in the courses the following Fall Quarter to receive credit.**

**^Quarterly course offering subject to change without notice. Please refer to the WebSOC for the most accurate course listings.**

### YEARS 2-5

After your first year, your research advisor may suggest additional elective coursework. You must also enroll in PHRMSCI 298 and PHRMSCI 299 each quarter for a minimum of 12 units and a maximum of 16 units total until you complete your degree.

# Curriculum Requirements

## Medical Chemistry Track

### YEAR 1

During the first year, students in the Medicinal Chemistry Track must take four (4) core courses and at least two (2) elective courses from the lists below. Elective courses not on the below list must be approved by the Graduate Advisor. All of the courses must be completed by the end of your first year.

#### Required Core Courses (complete all)

PHRMSCI 254 – Introduction to Pharmacology  
PHRMSCI 223 – Biological Macromolecules  
PHRMSCI 250A/B/C – Current Topics in Pharmaceutical Sciences\*  
PHRMSCI 277 – Medicinal Chemistry^

#### Elective Courses (select at least two)

##### *Chemistry Department*

CHEM 201 – Organic Reaction Mechanisms  
CHEM 202 – Organic Reaction Mechanisms II  
CHEM 203 – Organic Spectroscopy  
CHEM 204 – Organic Synthesis I  
CHEM 205 – Organic Synthesis II  
CHEM 218 – Metallobiochemistry  
CHEM 219 – Chemical and Structural Biology

##### *Molecular Biology & Biochemistry Department*

MOLBIO 203 – Nucleic Acid Structure & Function  
MOLBIO 204 – Protein Structure & Function  
MOLBIO 211 – Structural Biology

##### *Pharmaceutical Sciences Department*

PHRMSCI 263 – Pharmacogenomics and Epigenetics  
PHRMSCI 275 – Discovery Computing Techniques  
PHRMSCI 279 – Emerging Technologies in Pharmaceutical Sciences & Medicine  
PHRMSCI 255 – Neuropharmacology

## Curriculum Requirements (cont.)

*^ Students who completed PHRMSCI 177 as a UCI undergraduate student within the past 5 years and received a grade of B or better may substitute PHRMSCI 277 with an elective course approved by the Graduate Advisor.*

### **Additional Courses**

PHRMSCI 257 – Ethics in Research or equivalent (Responsible Conduct of Research training – [UC Learning Center](#) online modules – send the SAO the certificate of completion)

PHRMSCI 298 – Research Seminar (all Med Chem students must enroll in this course every quarter)

PHRMSCI 299 – Graduate Research (all Med Chem students must enroll in enough research units to bring their quarterly total to 12-16 units each quarter)

### **Comprehensive Exam**

\* Successful completion of this course series, including the final paper, fulfills your comprehensive exam requirement.

## Curriculum Requirements (cont.)

	Fall	Winter	Spring
<b>Core</b>	PHRMSCI 250A PHRMSCI 254 (optional) PHRMSCI 298 (Seminar) PHRMSCI 299 (Lab Rotation)	PHRMSCI 277 PHRMSCI 250B PHRMSCI 298 (Seminar) PHRMSCI 299 (Lab Rotation)	PHRMSCI 223 PHRMSCI 250C PHRMSCI 298 (Seminar) PHRMSCI 299 (Research)
<b>PHRMSCI Electives</b>	PHRMSCI 255	PHRMSCI 263 PHRMSCI 254 PHRMSCI 275	PHRMSCI 279
<b>CHEM Electives</b>	CHEM 201	CHEM 203 CHEM 204 CHEM 219	CHEM 202 CHEM 205 CHEM 218
<b>MB&amp;B Electives</b>	MOLBIO 211 MOLBIO 204	MOLBIO 203	

<sup>^</sup>Quarterly course offering subject to change without notice. Please refer to the WebSOC for the most accurate course listings.

### YEARS 2-5

After your first year, your research advisor may suggest additional elective coursework. You must also enroll in PHRMSCI 298 and PHRMSCI 299 **each quarter** for a minimum of 12 units total until you complete your degree.



# Additional Curricular Requirements

## Research Seminars

You must enroll in Research Seminar (PHRMSCI 298) each quarter until you defend your dissertation. Research seminars are given by invited speakers and occasionally by our own faculty and post-docs. Seminar attendance is mandatory.

## Research Lab Rotations

The primary purpose of laboratory rotations is to find a research lab to join, so your rotations should focus on that goal. You may rotate during Fall and Winter Quarters of your first year (as well as Summer before your first year, if you have arranged for an early start). The amount of time spent in the laboratory working on your rotation research should be negotiated with the faculty member whose lab you are rotating through. (You may join a specific lab as soon as you have found a lab willing to take you.) All students must join a lab by week 7 of winter quarter to maintain satisfactory progress in the degree program.

To obtain the maximum benefit from this program, it is best to familiarize yourself with each faculty member's research and then consult with that faculty member about available space and potential projects. It is advisable that the search for a lab begins as soon as you are able after you have accepted your offer of admission.

After the rotations, and by week 7 of the winter quarter of your first year, you must reach an agreement with the faculty member with whom you wish to pursue your dissertation research. Before the end of Winter Quarter, you will be asked to complete the Departmental/Research Advisor Choice Form identifying the advisor you will begin working with subsequently. The form is required and may be obtained from the SPPS Student Affairs Office (pharmsci-grad@uci.edu). This form ensures that funding availability has been confirmed with both the selected research advisor and the department. **You must secure a research advisor before the end of Winter quarter of year 1 in order to continue in the PhD program.**

Once you have been placed in a lab, while it is obviously advantageous to remain in the same lab for the duration of your graduate school tenure, if necessary, you may change research advisors, if you can find a suitable advisor and arrange for financial support. In general, this is discouraged because it can delay research progress, but in principle it is possible. Thus, you are strongly encouraged to consult with Student Affairs staff and the Graduate Advisor before making any major changes in this regard.

# Individual Development Plans

Students are required to complete an annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) with their research advisors. This is to ensure both the student and advisor are on the same page in terms of the student's research and future career goals, as well as to develop intermediate milestones in order to achieve those goals. You should complete the IDP form, go over it with your research advisor, and then discuss the plan with your Advisement or Doctoral Committee during your annual meeting. Your committee will sign off on the form after you have discussed it with them, then a copy should be submitted to the SPPS Student Affairs Office for your file.

## Advising Prior to Advancement

Advisement meetings must take place before the end of the Spring Quarter every year until you advance to candidacy. For first year students, this meeting will take place with your research advisor in Spring Quarter of your first year. For students between Year 2 and advancement, you are required to form and meet with your Advisement Committee before the end of Spring Quarter beginning in your second year. This committee, which is not the same as the Advancement Committee, is charged with providing general oversight and guidance on your progress before advancement to candidacy. The committee is composed of your advisor and two faculty members (that you select). Typically, this committee would become your Doctoral/Dissertation Committee after advancement. For the advisement meeting, you are required to meet with your research advisor and at least one of the other two Advisement Committee members. You will complete the IDP, and then send it to your advisor for their feedback/comments before your advisement meeting.

## Advising After Advancement

After advancing to candidacy, you are required to continue meeting with your entire Doctoral Committee (described in the Advancement to Candidacy section below) each year before the end of Spring Quarter to discuss the IDP form and evaluate progress towards your final dissertation defense. An Annual Doctoral Committee Meeting Report (last page of the IDP form) must be signed by the Doctoral Committee members and you and then given to the Student Affairs Office to be kept on file.

## Time to Degree Policy

The UCI Graduate Council has established a Time to Degree policy for all graduate students. The Pharmacological Sciences PhD program has the following standards:

- **Normative time to Advancement to Candidacy (A) = 3 years**
- **Normative time to degree (N) = 5 years**
- **Maximal time to degree (M) = 7 years**

Students not making normal progress according to the written departmental standards, or who do not meet the normal time to Advancement to Candidacy, shall be notified in writing, and given one year to resume normal progress or file a petition to the Dean of Graduate Division (see below).

If, by the end of this period, a student has neither resumed normal progress, nor had their petition approved, the Dean of Graduate Division shall block their registration. A student exceeding the maximal time to degree (M), shall not receive non-instructional University resources (financial aid, TAs, housing, etc.). Graduate programs may also propose stronger sanctions (including blocking registration) for students who exceed maximal time to degree.

Up to one additional year may be applied to these time limits for students on an approved leave of absence, or who require remedial work at the time of their enrollment. Upon petition, the Dean of Graduate Division may relax these regulations in exceptional circumstances. Petitions for such exceptions will require full documentation and will rarely be granted.

# Advancement to Candidacy

Sometime during your third year, but before the start of your fourth year, you **MUST** advance to candidacy. If you wait until after your third year to advance, you will **NO LONGER BE IN GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING**.

## Advancement Committee

The Advancement Committee must consist of three or more members (typically three or four members). At least two members should be from within Pharmaceutical Sciences.

- The student's primary advisor does not serve on the advancement committee.
- No member of the committee can be directly associated with the project of the student's advancement exam as it may present a conflict of interest.

Typically, the three PharmSci faculty involved will have served on the Advancement Committee (see IDP section).

Because your research advisor's input is important for the committee's deliberations, please ask your advisor to submit a letter to the committee sometime in the week leading up to the exam which provides your advisor's impression of your progress, qualifications, and potential.

## Forming your advancement committee and scheduling

To form your advancement committee, work with your advisor to come up with a proposed committee of 3-4 members and then contact the Graduate Advisor with this list to request composition of your committee. Committee composition is subject to Graduate Advisor approval and revision. In your message, include a brief (one to three sentence) summary of your research area along with a reminder who your faculty advisor is. Once you have approval from the Graduate Advisor, you may proceed with scheduling.

## Conflict of Interest

If the Chair, Research Advisor or other member of the committee has a financial interest in an outside entity that carries a possibility of a conflict of interest potentially harmful to the graduate student, an oversight member must be appointed in addition to the two general members. It is understood that the Oversight Member will not bear a possible conflict of interest potentially harmful to the graduate student.

The student, the Graduate Advisor, and the Committee Chair must complete the Conflict of Interest statement, which is included in the Advancement to Candidacy DocuSign electronic paperwork.

## Advancement to Candidacy (cont.)

At least four weeks prior to convening a student committee for Advancement to Candidacy examination, the student must submit a Conflict of Interest statement and meet with the Graduate Advisor to discuss **if a conflict exists**. The student must bring a letter from the research advisor stating whether or not there is a conflict of interest relating to the research. If a positive conflict of interest is disclosed, a non-voting oversight member will be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Division to the student's Advancement committee. The student and their advisor should submit the names of three suitable members to the Graduate Advisor.

### Advancement Exam

The primary purpose of the Advancement to Candidacy Exam is to validate that you can thoroughly think through and explain a research topic, undertake scholarly research, and successfully produce the dissertation required for a doctoral degree. Upon successful completion you will officially be advanced to candidacy for the doctoral (PhD) degree, choose your doctoral committee, and, if you wish, file for a Master's degree.

### Written Document

The purpose of the written document is to demonstrate a clear understanding of the student's primary research project or area, and of the scientific method, as well as an ability to express this understanding in written form. The document should be laid out as follows:

- It must be substantial, but no more than seven pages.
- It should be single-spaced, using one-inch margins. Acceptable fonts are Arial or Times New Roman 11 pt.
- The written document should be a proposal-style document, not a report on your previous research (though it may include preliminary data). Thus, it should clearly explain the relevance of your work and the motivation for your specific project.
- Remember that your target audience is your full committee, some of whom will typically NOT be in your specific area, so the proposal should be suitable for a general technical audience without expertise in your area.
- The following sections should be clearly outlined and follow logically:
  - Single page: introduction, specific aims (max of three).
  - Six pages: background, significance and innovation of research, experiments for each specific aim (including preliminary data and planned experiments), future directions.

Include a statement from your advisor detailing any guidance or assistance they have provided during your document preparation.

## Advancement to Candidacy (cont.)

The written document should be submitted at least 10 working days (two weeks) before the scheduled oral exam.

### Presentation & Oral Exam

The purpose of the oral examination is to defend the research project and demonstrate a clear knowledge of the material required for advancement to candidacy.

- Exams should normally be scheduled for a 2-hour time slot, and you and your committee chair should work together to ensure the exam is completed during that time. In particular, if you are 1.5 hours into the timeslot, you will want to remind your committee that the meeting has been scheduled for 2 hours.
- You should plan no more than 10-15 slides for presentation, which would normally be roughly a 30 minute presentation. However, the exam will likely take much longer, typically lasting up to two (2) hours.
- The presentation should mirror the written document in content and logical flow.
- At the beginning of the exam, the committee will briefly and privately discuss your progress thus far, and the written proposal.
- At the conclusion of the exam, the chair will facilitate discussions by the committee members to reach a final recommendation. In reaching their decision, members will consider all areas of your progress, including your academic record, your performance on specific parts of the exam and your overall performance and potential for scholarly research.
- The chair will inform you of the decision--Pass, Conditional Pass or Not Pass--immediately at the conclusion of the discussion and voting. In the case of a Conditional Pass, the advancement committee chair must clarify the nature of the deficiencies identified and provide a written description of the requirements that should be met and the timeline for meeting them (typically within one quarter). You and your research advisor will be notified of the conditions within 72 hours of the exam.
- In the case of a Not Pass, you will be placed on Academic Conditional Status by the Graduate Division based on your unsatisfactory performance, as passing the exam is a requirement for remaining in the program. You may retake the exam within one year to attempt to resolve this problem. A student whose performance on the second attempt remains unsatisfactory is subject to academic disqualification. Alternatively, the committee may recommend a pass at the M.S. level if performance on the exam was sufficient to establish competence at that level. You and your research advisor will be provided with a rationale for the Not Pass and areas for improvement within 72 hours of the exam. Your research advisor may also provide you with milestones you must achieve in preparation for retaking the exam. Missing any of these milestones may also be grounds for academic disqualification.

## Advancement to Candidacy (cont.)

- For both the Conditional Pass and the Not Pass students have the right to appeal the committee's decision for cause as delineated by the Graduate Division. To appeal, students must submit a formal appeal in writing to both the Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Advisor and the Director of Student Affairs, within two weeks of the exam. These two will convene an ad hoc committee to consider the appeal; if the Graduate Advisor is a member of the committee or the student's research advisor, the Graduate Advisor will defer to a substitute to prevent a conflict of interest. The formal appeal may include attachments, such as a letter from the student's research advisor or other materials the student deems relevant.

The PhD Advancement to candidacy will be initiated by the Student Affairs Office via DocuSign after your advancement exam. All committee members must sign this form confirming whether you have passed or not. See section below on Doctoral Committee Selection and Advancement Fee for additional information about the PhD Form I.

### MS Degree

Once you pass your Advancement Exam at the PhD level, you may also receive your MS degree. Let the Student Affairs Office know if you would like this, and they will initiate the Advancement to Candidacy - Master's form via DocuSign for signature.

Students are eligible to receive a **terminal MS** without continuing in the PhD program if they have:

- Completed all course requirements for the Pharmacological Sciences PhD program;
- Passed the Comprehensive Exam or completed the capstone project and paper for PHRMSCI 250C;
- Completed three quarters of research (including summer) after Year 1; and
- Submitted a satisfactory Master's thesis, approved by a committee of three faculty (including the research advisor) chosen by the Graduate Advisor.

The Student Affairs Office will initiate the Advancement to Candidacy-Master's form via DocuSign once the student notifies the SAO that they have met all the above requirements for the terminal MS degree. Students must pay the **Master's Thesis Submission Fee** found on the Filing Deadlines page of the Graduate Division web site. Diplomas can be requested on the Graduation section of the Registrar's web site and are typically available four months after degree conferral.

### Doctoral Committee Selection

Following passage of your advancement exam, you must formally select your dissertation committee, indicating the selected members on your advancement to candidacy form and identifying who the committee chair will be. Your dissertation committee must consist of three



## Advancement to Candidacy (cont.)

members, one of whom will be your advisor as Chair and at least two other members (a majority of whom must be from the PharmSci Department, and at least one with a primary appointment). Typically, this committee will have the same membership as your Advisement Committee (see IDP section). You should determine the composition of this committee in consultation with your research advisor and, if needed, the Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Advisor. Ideally, you would already have selected your committee prior to advancing so you can submit advancement to candidacy form expeditiously.

### **Advancement Fee**

After the committee confirms you passed your advancement exam by signing the PhD Advancement to Candidacy form, you will have to pay the Advancement to Candidacy Fee found on the Filing Deadlines page of the Graduate Division website. Once the DocuSign is emailed to you for signature, you will upload your payment receipt where requested. Your official date of advancement is the day the completed PhD Advancement to Candidacy Form is received in the Graduate Division; however, it can take the Graduate Division an additional two weeks to process the form.

## Dissertation Defense

There are specific guidelines for dissertation document formatting. These can be found in the [UCI Thesis and Dissertation Manual](#). It is important that you set up the formatting before you begin your final document to save yourself a lot of time when you are getting ready to submit. The above page also includes other important information on filing deadlines, the dissertation checklist, etc.

When you are ready to schedule your dissertation defense, contact your Doctoral Committee members to schedule a time. All committee members must be present at your defense presentation, so allow enough time (at least three to four weeks but determine with your committee members exactly how much time they will need) to find a date that works for all and that is at least a couple weeks before the filing deadline. Once you have a date and time selected, you can schedule a room by contacting the SPPS Student Affairs Office at [pharmsci-grad@uci.edu](mailto:pharmsci-grad@uci.edu). The PharmSci Department will also send out a defense invite to the SPPS community. Contact the Student Affairs Office to coordinate this and be prepared to submit your dissertation title, an abstract, time/date, location, and a headshot.

A final draft of your dissertation should be emailed to all your committee members at least two weeks prior to your defense date to allow enough time for them to read and critique your work. It is more than likely that you will need to rework/rewrite some things in your dissertation before it can be submitted, so allow enough time for this after your defense date to submit your dissertation by the filing deadline for that quarter (see the Filing Deadlines page on the Graduate Division website for current deadlines).

### Dissertation Submission Guidelines

Follow the steps found on the Graduate Division's [Instructions for Electronic Submission](#) page.

The below forms must be attached to the Ph.D. Dissertation Checklist/final degree paperwork packet when the DocuSign is emailed to you:

- PhD Submission Checklist
- Final Degree Paperwork Signature Page - Report on Final Examination for the PhD Degree serves as the official signature page, which is sent in the DocuSign Final Degree paperwork initiated by the Student Affairs Officer.
- Final approval notification e-mail from the ProQuest/UMI website
- Survey of Earned Doctorates
  - Upon completing the survey, students are given the opportunity to enter their email address to which a confirmation email will be sent. The student will upload the confirmation email to final degree paperwork.
- UCI Exit Survey

## Dissertation Defense (cont.)

### Filing Fee

Students must either be registered (enrolled and fees paid) during the academic term in which they file their dissertation, or they must pay a Filing Fee, which is one-half of the quarterly Student Services fee. A Filing Fee is appropriate when all a student has left is the final defense or when a student files during the summer. However, it is important to understand:

- The Filing Fee may be paid in lieu of registration for only one academic quarter or summer during the student's entire graduate career
- Students must have been registered and paid in the preceding academic quarter
- Students may not petition for a Filing Fee the quarter after a Leave of Absence
- Students are not eligible for campus student services, health insurance, financial assistance, or campus employment (except during the summer)
- Students may lose housing and library privileges
- Students should not go on Filing Fee if they are still performing research

The Student Affairs Officer can initiate the Filing Fee Petition via DocuSign. The student, Research Advisor and Graduate Advisor will be prompted to provide their electronic signature. Students must pay the Filing Fee by the deadline for the respective quarter (there are two different forms for summer and the regular academic year. For more information on the Filing Fee, refer to the [Graduate Policies and Procedures](#) document.

# Timeline for Degree Completion

## Year 1

**Sept-June** - Complete Required Coursework

**Winter** - Apply to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (if eligible)

**June** - Comprehensive exam/paper (PHRMSCI 250A/B/C)\*

**April** - Identify a research lab and complete the Research Advisor Choice Form

## Year 2

**Summer** - Complete [Petition for Resident Classification](#) (if applicable)

**Sept-June** - Explore any additional elective coursework, as suggested by your research advisor. Contact the Graduate Advisor for approval of your advancement committee members

**Winter** - Apply for [continuing student fellowships](#)

**Spring** - Meet with your advisement committee to review your individual development plan (IDP)

## Year 3

**Winter** - Apply for [continuing student fellowships](#)

**Spring** - Meet with your advancement/dissertation committee to review your individual development plan (IDP)

**Before Sept** - Advancement exam (PhD Advancement to Candidacy)

- Establish doctoral committee
- Obtain MS degree (Advancement to Candidacy-Masters)
- Begin dissertation research

## Year 4

**July-June** - Continue dissertation research

**Winter** - Apply for [dissertation year fellowships](#)

**Spring** - Meet with your dissertation committee to review your individual development plan (IDP)\*\*

## Year 5

**Before Sept** - Defend dissertation - Ph.D. Dissertation Checklist/final degree paperwork packet

- [Dissertation Electronic Submission](#)
- Filing Fee Petition (if applicable)

## **Timeline for Degree Completion (cont.)**

\* If this course series is not completed, you must take a separate, additional written comprehensive exam.

\*\* This meeting should include student-specific job search preparation and strategies for the final year.

# Graduate Student Funding

During the first two quarters of study, the program covers tuition and fees (resident or non-resident tuition, campus fees, and health insurance) and a stipend/salary (amount to be determined on an annual basis). This funding will be provided by a combination of departmental or university scholarships, Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) positions, and/or Teaching Assistantships (TA). Beginning in the spring of your first year, financial support will be provided through your faculty research advisor from similar sources listed above, and may also include extramural grants and fellowships. For domestic students, Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition(NRST) will only be covered by the department during year one, so it is important for non-resident students to establish California residency before the start of year two. For continued funding, you must maintain good academic standing and normal progress.

## Direct Deposit

In order to receive your funding more rapidly, we highly encourage students to have their salary and stipend payments directly deposited into their bank accounts. You can set up direct deposit by selecting "Electronic Funds" on the sidebar when signed into your ZOT Account.

## Graduate Student Employment

### *Teaching Assistantship*

You are generally required to be a Teaching Assistant (TA) for at least one quarter during year one, then as needed for funding and/or teaching experience during years two through five. You will usually TA undergraduate PharmSci courses, but can occasionally TA courses in Chemistry, MB&B, as well as other department courses for which you are qualified. To be eligible for a TA position, students must be enrolled in at least 12 units, and be in good academic standing. The position provides a salary, as well as all tuition, fees, and insurance. For detailed information on TA responsibilities and requisite qualifications, please see the [Academic Personnel site](#).

All graduate students, including those with Permanent Resident status, must meet the English Language Proficiency requirement as specified by UCI Graduate Division:

- A score of 26 or higher on the speaking component of the TOEFL, or
- A score of 8 or higher on the speaking module of the IELTS, or
- A score of 50 or higher on the SPEAK exam at UCI.

All graduate applicants are required to demonstrate English proficiency for admissions consideration. Applicants are waived from the English Language Proficiency requirement if they have earned an undergraduate or master's degree from an institution at which English was the sole language of instruction according to the World Higher Education Database (WHED). Please see WHED's instructions on how to search for your institution. If English is not the sole language

## Graduate Student Funding (cont.)

of instruction listed or if no language is listed at all, the waiver does not apply, and the applicant is required to take and pass an approved English proficiency test.

### *Graduate Student Researcher*

Typically, starting in Spring Quarter of year one, students are hired as Graduate Student Researchers (GSR) in their research advisor's lab. In order to maintain a GSR position, you also must be enrolled in at least 12 units and be in good academic standing. The position provides a salary, as well as all tuition, fees, and health insurance.

**Note:** You cannot work more than 50% time combined for all on-campus positions. You are not allowed to have concurrent employment while you are enrolled in the Graduate Program.

### **Fellowships – Graduate Division**

All continuing students should consider applying to any Graduate Division fellowships for which they are eligible. A list of all fellowships can be found on the Graduate Division Funding site. Some of the fellowships require departmental nomination, so keep a lookout for emails from the Student Affairs Office regarding department deadlines for applications, generally during the Winter Quarter.

### **Fellowships – Extramural**

You are encouraged to apply for at least one extramural fellowship at some point in your graduate career. To explore extramural funding, such as NSF, visit the Graduate Division Extramural Fellowship page.

Furthermore, below is a list of publications that can be searched through the UCI Libraries online or on the main campus:

- The Grants Register
- Directory of Financial Aid/Minorities
- Directory of Financial Aid/Women
- Peterson's Guide: Grants for Graduate Students



# Department Policies and Procedures

The following are the policies and procedures of the Graduate Program in Pharmacological Sciences. Under exceptional circumstances one or more of these policies may be waived with approval of the Graduate Advisor.

## General

1. In order to be issued keys to the different PharmSci labs and rooms in the department, you must obtain emailed permission from the PI. Keys are then checked out to you by the Department Manager. For labs in other departments, contact their administrative offices for their key check-out protocol.
2. You must read your email every day, and be responsible for any information and deadlines sent out. The administrative staff ONLY use the uci.edu email address for student correspondence!
3. We have a limited number of conference rooms available for reserve on a first come, first served basis. Contact the SPPS Student Affairs Office to request a room [pharmsci-grad@uci.edu](mailto:pharmsci-grad@uci.edu). Note:, COHS-related courses take priority over all other reservations.

## Academic

1. You are responsible for knowing class start dates well before the quarter begins. This is particularly important if a student is taking courses in the medical school, as they are on a different academic calendar.
2. If you have been admitted under provisional status, you will have until the end of your first academic year to clear the provisional status by submitting final transcripts to the Graduate Division.
3. Policies within a particular course are determined by the instructor.
4. All course waivers/substitutions need to be approved by the Graduate Advisor. Send an email including the course name, your rationale for a waiver, and any supporting documents (i.e. syllabus) to the Graduate Advisor for review.

# Graduate Student Representation

There are a couple ways to get involved with graduate student issues on the UCI campus.

The **Graduate Admissions and Recruitment Committee** for the Pharmacological Sciences PhD program welcomes student representation. Student reps will participate at recruitment events, answer any questions from prospective students, and provide follow-up contact with top recruits. The Student Affairs Office will send out a call for any interested students in early Fall.

The **Associated Graduate Students (AGS)** is the campus-wide graduate student government organization. Each academic school on campus is allotted one representative per 100 students. These are elected by the members of the school in the spring for the following year. AGS is your main source of information regarding all issues affecting graduate students on this and all UC campuses. As a graduate student you can, through AGS, be a voting member on many campus-wide committees which influence the direction of university policy. In addition to representing all students on graduate student campus matters, they also provide resources such as travel grants, student event or project funding, area discounts, etc.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **How many units of 299 Research should I take?**

There is no set amount of research units you are required to take. Usually, you will take any amount of units left over from the required courses that you have to take in order to be enrolled in 12 units total. For example, if you are taking 10 units of required courses, you can take two (2) units of research to the minimum amount of units per quarter. Third-year students and above will take 10 units of research since their 298 Seminar is two (2) units.

### **How often should I meet with the Graduate Program Advisor?**

During your first year you should arrange a meeting with the Graduate or Track Advisors as needed for help narrowing down elective courses or if you are having issues identifying a research advisor. After the first year, you generally receive advising from your research advisor. However, the Graduate Advisor is available as necessary to discuss any academic, research, or personal issues you may be having.

### **Who do I go to for questions about paperwork and/or requirements for Advancement, Dissertation, or other administrative issues?**

You may go to the Student Affairs Office ([pharmsci-grad@uci.edu](mailto:pharmsci-grad@uci.edu)) anytime for questions or concerns regarding administrative issues with enrollment, leaves of absence, normal degree progress, advancement, dissertation defense, financial issues, forms, UCI academic policies, etc.

### **Who do I go to if I have questions about my student employment (i.e. GSR, TA, or Reader position)?**

Contact the Human Resources Coordinator, Tracy Calvert, at (949) 824-5365 or [tcalvert@uci.edu](mailto:tcalvert@uci.edu).

### **Who do I go to for questions about my fellowship?**

For fellowships provided by the SPPS, you will contact the Graduate Affairs Office at [pharmsci-grad@uci.edu](mailto:pharmsci-grad@uci.edu). For training grants, contact the finance office managing the training grant (see your award letter for contact information). For extramural or Graduate Division fellowships, contact the person assigned to the fellowship program (see your award letter for contact information).

### **What is the difference between stipend and salary?**

A stipend is funding provided by a fellowship or training grant for living expenses and is not tied to employment. Stipends are typically dispersed monthly or quarterly and are not taxed at the time of dispersal (though they must be reported on your tax forms). When you are employed as a GSR, TA, or Reader, you receive a monthly salary based on the hours you work on

## FAQ (cont.)

course-relative activities (TA/Reader) or in the lab towards a specific research grant (GSR). Salary has income tax deducted from your paycheck at the time of dispersal.

### **I am an international student and need help acclimating to UCI and US culture, to whom do I go for guidance?**

A great resource for all international students is the [UCI International Center](#). The UCI International Center, “counsels and assists international students, faculty, researchers, staff and scholars with immigration, orientation, employment and adjustment needs throughout their stay at the University of California, Irvine. In addition, the IC staff brings together international and American members of the UCI community for a variety of cultural, educational, social and recreational activities.”

The UCI Cross Cultural Center is another great resource to meet various organizations and clubs that focus on making transitions to UCI life easier, as well as getting involved on campus. Please visit <http://www.ccc.uci.edu/> and click on Organizations to learn more.

### **Does UCI offer child care services?**

Yes, you can contact UCI Child Care Services at (949) 824-2100 or visit their website at: <http://www.childcare.uci.edu/>. Contact them as soon as possible, as there may be a waitlist to enroll your child for child care.

### **I am feeling stressed and overwhelmed and having trouble focusing on my studies. Is there someone I can talk to?**

Yes, you are encouraged to visit the [UCI Counseling Center online](#) or call them at [949-824-6457](tel:949-824-6457). Call them or visit their office – 203 Student Services I – Mon-Fri 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM to schedule an appointment. The Graduate Division also has licensed counselors at (949) 824-0246. In addition, you can also contact the academic counselors in the SPPS Student Affairs Office who can refer you to any additional campus services.

If you are struggling in your courses or your lab rotations, please contact the Counseling Center, the SAO, and/ or the Graduate Advisor early on so you can receive support in time to mitigate the issue before the end of the quarter. We are here to help!

### **I was assaulted and/or sexually harassed on campus. What do I do?**

UCI is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which all persons who live, work, and learn in our campus community can be free of all forms of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. Every member of the University community should be aware that sex offenses are prohibited by law as well as our University policy and will not be tolerated.

## FAQ (cont.)

Report any incidents to the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#) or the [Police Department](#) as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable with these options, you may talk to an academic counselor and/or the Graduate Advisor with the knowledge that staff and faculty are mandatory reporters of these types of crimes. The [Counseling Center](#) and [Campus Assault Resources and Education \(CARE\)](#), however, can discuss it confidentially.

Please note, you are protected by law from any retaliation, and the UCI campus is here to help you through it.

### **How do I locate gender inclusive bathrooms on campus?**

The [LGBT Resource Center](#) has created a map of all the gender inclusive bathrooms on campus.

# Important Contacts

## Graduate Program

David Mobley  
Graduate Advisor/PharmSci Track Advisor  
(949) 824-6383 | [dmobley@uci.edu](mailto:dmobley@uci.edu)

Naoto Hoshi  
Pharmacology Track Advisor  
(949) 824-0969 | [nhoshi@uci.edu](mailto:nhoshi@uci.edu)

SPPS Student Affairs Office  
209 Steinhaus Hall  
(949) 824-1991

Dana Onorato  
Graduate Affairs Office  
(949) 824-7362 | [donorato@uci.edu](mailto:donorato@uci.edu)

Jill Richardson  
Director of Student Affairs  
(949) 824-9708 | [jillkr@uci.edu](mailto:jillkr@uci.edu)

## SPPS Administration

Ellen O'Bryant  
Assistant Dean  
(949) 824-1385 | [eobryant@uci.edu](mailto:eobryant@uci.edu)

Trinh Tran  
Director of Finance  
(949) 824-5630 | [ttran4@uci.edu](mailto:ttran4@uci.edu)

Tracy Calvert  
Human Resources Coordinator  
(949) 824-5365 | [tcalvert@uci.edu](mailto:tcalvert@uci.edu)

Bianca Rodriguez  
Purchasing & Operations Coordinator  
(949) 824-2545 | [pharmpur@uci.edu](mailto:pharmpur@uci.edu)

## Additional Resources

Graduate Division  
120 Aldrich Hall  
(949) 824-4611  
[grad.uci.edu](http://grad.uci.edu)

Student Health Center  
501 Student Health (Bldg 5)  
(949) 824-5301  
[shs.uci.edu](http://shs.uci.edu)

GSHIP Coordinator  
(949) 824-2388

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships  
102 Aldrich Hall  
(949) 824-8262  
[ofas.uci.edu](http://ofas.uci.edu)

Counseling Center  
203 Student Services  
(949) 824-6457  
[counseling.uci.edu](http://counseling.uci.edu)

Division of Career Pathways  
100 Student Services I  
(949) 824-6881  
[career.uci.edu](http://career.uci.edu)

Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
103 Multipurpose Science and Technology  
Building  
(949) 824-5594  
[oeod.uci.edu](http://oeod.uci.edu)