Graduate Studies Handbook
Department of Biomedical Engineering
Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences
University of Rochester

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I. PHD PROGRAM

A. Program objective
Biomedical engineers use engineering to solve problems in biology or medicine with the goal of improving human health. With guidance from a research mentor, classroom instructors, and other faculty advisors, each PhD student will help define a domain of biomedical engineering and become one of the world’s experts in that domain. It is the expectation of the faculty that at the time of a thesis defense, each student will demonstrate the ability to identify problems in biology and/or medicine, to devise and execute unique solutions, and to explain both the problem and solution in the clearest terms. It is also our expectation that graduates of the program will enjoy careers in academia or industry marked by professionalism, leadership, and many notable contributions to their field.

B. Curricular overview
The curricular component of the PhD program is designed to span two years with a transition from more general coursework in the first year to thesis-specific courses in the second year. While students entering the PhD program will have identified a general area of interest, each will be given an opportunity to explore the range of opportunities at Rochester before committing to a research laboratory at the end of the second semester of study. A faculty seminar and a laboratory rotations course, which together span both semesters of the first year, are important ways for students to conduct this exploration.

Because it is the ability to apply engineering and physics principles to topics in biology and medicine that defines the biomedical engineer, the PhD program requires that students take at least two Advanced BME courses that provide in-depth examples of such application. An Advanced BME course is a specialized graduate course (>200-level) in which students apply the principles of engineering, physics or advanced mathematics to solve problems in biology or medicine. This group includes 4-credit BME courses and a small menu of 2-credit courses. These courses can be on specialized topics, but may be chosen for exploration or as a part of the preparation for thesis research. To ensure the depth of training required for problem solving in doctoral research, the program requires that students choose several relevant courses in both biology and engineering from pre-approved lists.

The curricular preparation for research concludes with a course in proposal writing taken at the end of the second year of study. In this course, the student consults with his/her thesis advisor and works with the course instructor to write a draft proposal for the doctoral research. An updated version of this proposal will be presented as part of the official PhD qualifying exam in the fall of the same calendar year (see below).

Total Credits
It is recommended that first year PhD students complete 30 credit hours by the end of their 1st year in the program. For a doctoral degree the University requires a total of 90 credit hours. Students need to enroll every semester they are in the program. The number of course credits needed to meet the minimum BME PhD requirements is 40. The remaining 50 credits, if not earned through additional coursework, will be earned as research credits under BME 595: PhD Research.
The following summarizes the curricular requirements for the PhD degree.

**General Requirements (4 Credits)**
- IND 501 *Ethics in research* (1 credit)
- BST 467 *Applied Statistics in the Biomedical Sciences* (3 credits)

**BME Core (13 Credits)**
- 8 credits of *Advanced BME* (list below)
- BME 402: *Research Methods* (1 credit)
- BME 589: *Proposals writing* (2 credits)
- BME 593: *Lab Rotations* (2 credits)
- BME 496: Weekly BME Seminar (0 credits)

**Advanced Requirements (23 Credits)**
- 11 credits of Approved Biology (list below)
- 8 credits of Approved Engineering (list below)
- 4 credit elective (should be relevant to a career in BME)

* Zero Credits BME Seminar is required attendance throughout the academic year
C. Detailed Curricular requirements:

General Requirements (4 credits)
- **IND 501 Ethics & Professional Integrity In Research (1 credit)**
  The ethical practice of research is a serious, multi-faceted topic important to all scientists. It is of particular importance in the biomedical sciences where human and animal subjects are part of the research landscape. Thus as a key part of the BME core, all students will take IND501: Ethics and Professional Integrity during their first semester.

- **BST 467 Applied Statistics in the Biomedical Sciences (3 credits)**
  This is an introductory level biostatistics course designed for PhD students in the biomedical sciences. This course will cover the topics on probability and probability distributions, sampling distributions, statistical inferences from small and large samples, analysis of categorical data, analysis of variance, correlation and simple linear and non-linear regression analysis. All analytical topics will be illustrated using examples from biomedical sciences areas.

The BME Core (13 credits)
- **BME 593 Laboratory Rotations (2 credits over 2 semesters)**
  As part of the BME Core, students are required to complete three laboratory rotations. Each student should contact each of the three faculty members that will supervise the rotations to set up a schedule that will complete three rotations by mid-April of the following year. To meet this schedule, the first rotation should begin on or about October 1st. Below is the recommended rotation schedule for a first year PhD student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotation Begins:</th>
<th>Rotation Ends:</th>
<th>Evaluation Due:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>December 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>March 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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The duration of each rotation will be approximately 6 weeks and must be at least 5 weeks. While required activities in different laboratories are typically very different, a satisfactory rotation generally requires at least 10 hours per week. Exceptional circumstances such as summer rotations may allow students to devote more time per week for fewer weeks. To obtain a satisfactory grade for a rotation, students must meet a performance standard that will include, among other things, proper attendance and participation in lab activities (such as journal clubs, seminars, and lab meetings), completion of experimental tasks agreed upon with the advisor, appropriate documentation and presentation of data, analyses, etc. It is not sufficient for a student to merely shadow another lab member, nor is it reasonable for faculty to expect the successful completion of a specific experimental outcome. Each student must prepare a written
report on the project he/she conducted in the lab. Two credits are awarded at the end of the spring semester for three satisfactory rotations. At the conclusion of each rotation, a Rotation Evaluation must be completed by the student and rotation mentor. The Rotation Evaluation is sent to the Program Director and Program Coordinator. Rotation Evaluation forms are available from the Program Coordinator. The rotation mentor and student should meet to discuss the evaluation before the form is deposited in the student’s file.

- **BME 589 Writing Proposals in BME (2 credits)**
  Writing successful research proposals is vital to the livelihood of most PhD-level scientists. The defense of a research proposal is also the basis for the qualifying exam in BME (see below). In BME 589, students will be trained to write an NIH-style research proposal. The student will work with both his/her faculty advisor and the course instructor to devise a document that can be the basis for the qualifying exam and potentially the basis of an actual pre-doctoral fellowship application.

- **BME 496 Current Research Seminars in BME (0 credits)**
  Current Research Seminars is a series of talks given by visiting speakers from around the world to present their research findings. Students are required to register for BME 496 Current Research Seminars every semester they are in the program with the exception of the final semester in which they defend their MS or PhD thesis. However, students will need to continue attending the seminar in their dissertation semester until the MS or PhD thesis defense is scheduled. Students are allowed to miss 2 presentations each semester and still receive a passing grade. Students who miss seminar due to attending a scientific conference will be excused. Students who miss more than 2 seminars will need to write 2-3 page summary from each speaker whose seminars they missed and send it to the Program Director and Graduate Coordinator within one week of the missed class.

- **BME 402 Research Methods (1 credit)**
  This course prepares Ph.D. students to carry out independent research. Research tools, laboratory skills, experimental methods, critical thinking, presentations, and career planning are discussed as are facilities and resources at UR/URMC.

**Advanced BME (8 credits)**
Students are required to take at least 8 credits of Advanced BME courses from the list below. Note that some courses are not offered every year. All courses are 4 credits unless noted. Courses in green are not offered in the 2019-2020 academic year.

- BME 404 Computational Methods Applied to Biological Systems (Fall)
- BME 406 Signals, Noise and Matrix Methods (Fall)
- BME 412 Viscoelasticity in Biological Tissues (Spring)
- BME 418 Introduction to Neuroengineering (Fall)
- BME 420 Biomedical Nanotechnology (Fall, 2 cr)
- BME 425 Human Neurophysiological Measurement (Spring)
- BME 428 Physiological Control Systems (Fall)
- BME 442 Microfluidics for Biomedical Applications (Spring)
- BME 445 Biomaterials Science & Engineering
- BME 448 Controlled Release Systems (2 cr)
- BME 451 Biomedical Ultrasound (Spring)
**Advanced BME (8 credits continued)**

- BME 425 Human Neurophysiological Measurement (Spring)
- BME 452 Medical Imaging – Theory & Implementation (Fall)
- BME 453 Ultrasound Imaging (Fall)
- BME 455 Translational Biomedical Optics
- BME 460 Quantitative Physiology (Fall)
- BME 462 Cell and Tissue Engineering (Spring)
- BME 465 Cell Mechanics and Mechanobiology (Spring)
- BME 466 Bioprocess Engineering
- BME 468 Intro to Structure & Analysis of Biomolecules (Spring)
- BME 472 Intro to Optical Microscopy in Biology and Medicine (2 cr, Spring)
- BME 474 Biomedical Sensors, Circuits & Instrumentation (Spring)
- BME 483 Biosolid Mechanics (Fall)
- BME 486 Finite Elements (Fall)
- BME 489 Electrochemical Biosensor Design Syllabus
- BME 492 Neuroenhancement & Rehabilitation Engineering (Fall)
- BCS 513 Intro to fMRI: Imaging, Computational Analysis and Neural Representations (Fall, 3 cr)
- BME 519 Microenvironmental Cues that Control Cell Behavior
- BCS 521 Auditory Perceptions (Spring, 3 cr)
- OPT 448 Intro to Optical Microscopy in Biology and Medicine (2 cr, Spring)

**Advanced Requirements (23 Credits)**

### Approved Biology (11 credits)

Students are required to take at least 11 credits of biology courses from the following approved list. Note that some courses are not offered every year. All courses are 4 credits unless noted.

- BME 411 Cell & Molec Bio Foundations* (Fall)
- BME 415 Neuroprosthetics (Spring)
- BME 416 Speech on the Brain (Spring)
- BCS 521 Auditory Perception (Spring, 3 cr)
- BCS 546 Biology of Mental Illness (Spring)
- BIO 419 Nuc Structure and Function (Fall, every other year)
- BIO 422 Biology of Aging (Fall)
- BIO 426 Developmental Biology (Fall)
- BIO 428 Lab in Cell and Dev Biology (Spring)
- BIO 453, Computational Biology (Spring)
- BPH 411 Methods in Structural Biology (Spring, 2 cr, ½ semester long class)
- CVS 401 Cardiovascular Bio and Disease (Fall, 3cr)
- GEN 506 Principles in Stem Cell Biology (Spring)
- GEN 507 Advanced Genetics (Spring)
- GEN 508 Genes, Devel and Disease (Fall)
- IND 431 Foundations of Modern Biology I (Fall, 5cr, optional modules)
- IND 432 Foundations of Modern Biology II
- IND 443 Eukaryotic Genome I (Spring)
- IND 447 Signal Transduction (Spring)
- IND 464 Musculoskeletal Basic Science (Fall, 1 cr)
- IND 525 Cell and Membrane Biophysics
- LMBI 514 Mech of Microbial Pathogenesis (Fall, 3cr)
- LMBI 473 Immunology (Fall, 3cr)
- LNSC 512 Cellular Neuroscience (Fall, 6 cr)
- LNSC 511 Human Brain Anatomy (pre-requisite to NSC531, before Spring semester begins, 1 cr)
- LNSC 531 Integrative Neuroscience (Spring, 6 cr)
- LNSC 525 Biology of Neurological Diseases (Spring, uneven yrs, 3 cr)
- LNSC 541, Neurons, Circuits, and Systems (Fall)
- PHP 403 Human Cell Physiology (Fall)
- PHP 404 Principles of Pharmacology (Spring)
- PTH 507 Cancer Biology (Fall, 3 cr)
- PTH 509 Cell Bio of Human Disease (Fall)
- PTH 510 Bio of Human Disease (Spring)
- PTH 571 Mol. Basis of Human Disease (Fall, 3 cr)
- TOX 503 Skin and the Environment (Fall, 1 cr)
- TOX 521 Toxicology (Spring)
**Elective (4 credits)**

Elective courses should be relevant to a career in BME.
D. Non-curricular Requirements

Teaching Assistantship
Each student will be required perform teaching assistantships for at least two semesters. Students are welcome to request specific teaching assignments and efforts are made to accommodate such requests. Assignments will be made by the Graduate Director.

Public Presentation
The clear communication of a research effort is a vital skill for any scientist. The research effort itself benefits from the preparation, delivery, and discussion associated with a presentation, especially if the work is not yet a completed story. For these reasons the program requires a minimum of four presentations throughout a student’s tenure. At least one more departmental presentation must be made before the thesis defense, and this will typically be satisfied by the qualifying exam presentation. The remaining presentations can be departmental seminars or presentations at national meetings. Only one poster presentation at a national meeting can be applied toward the presentation requirement. Students are strongly encouraged to give presentations during the annual Summer Seminar Series.

E. Advising and Committees

Graduate Committee
The Graduate Committee is responsible for administering the PhD program. This committee sets program requirements and policies and monitors students to determine their status within the program. The Graduate Committee assigns first year exam committees, approves thesis advisory committees (below) and assigns chairs for qualifying exams. The committee also considers petitions for graduate course transfers and exemptions to requirements or policies.

Academic Advisor
First year students will be assigned faculty academic advisors with research interests similar to their own. These advisors are responsible for helping students plan courses during the first two semesters of study.

Thesis Advisor
Any member of the BME Graduate Faculty may serve as a PhD thesis advisor. All faculty with primary appointments in the department are members of the Graduate Faculty. Many, but not all secondary appointments in the department are members of the Graduate Faculty. Graduate Faculty Members are listed on the program web pages at www.urmc.rochester.edu/bme/people/faculty/. Students may be advised by a member of the faculty outside of the BME Graduate Faculty only if they are co-advised by a Graduate Faculty member in a project with sufficient BME content. In these situations, the advising structure must be approved by the Graduate Committee.

Preliminary Exam Committee
By April 15th of the second term of study, first year students should be nearing completion of their rotations. At this time, students will be asked to select a thesis advisor. The choice of the thesis laboratory will be used to design an appropriate preliminary exam and an exam committee for each student. The preliminary exam committee will include the likely mentor and two other primary or secondary BME faculty. The exam committee will be revealed to the student at least one week in advance of the exam. The exam committee will review the student’s curricular strategy as a formal step in the exam process. Details on the preliminary exam procedure are described below. Upon successful
completion of the exam, students are expected to immediately begin work in their laboratory of choice. The student’s thesis advisor will also become his/her academic advisor for the second year of study and beyond.

**Research Advisory Committee**

After beginning work together, a student and his/her thesis advisor(s) must define the direction of the doctoral research and identify members of the UR faculty that will comprise the thesis advisory committee. The thesis advisory committee performs several functions. It provides advisory input during the development of the thesis research project with respect to scientific merit, techniques and methodology, relevant literature, etc. It serves as the Qualifying Exam Committee (see below). Finally, it, along with a representative appointed by the University Dean of Graduate Studies as Chair, is the examining committee for the thesis defense.

The thesis advisory committee must consist of the research advisor, at least two other full-time tenure-track members from the Graduate Faculty in Biomedical Engineering with the rank of Assistant Professor or higher, and one full-time tenure-track faculty member with the rank of Assistant Professor or higher who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty. At least one member of the advisory committee is expected to have trained a graduate student through completion of a doctoral degree. Additional committee members may be included from either within or outside the University if it is considered useful or necessary. Thus, the minimum size of the committee will be four members, but five (or more) is allowed. In the case of co-advisors, a minimum of five members is required. Any exceptions to this procedure will require submission of a petition to GEPA. **By January of the second year, the student must submit a list of suggested committee members to the Graduate Coordinator for review by the Graduate Committee.**

Once the advisory committee is formed during the spring of the second year, the student should quickly hold an informal meeting with the committee. The student and the committee should discuss the student’s emerging research proposal in the concurrent proposals class, the courses taken by the student in preparation for the research topic, and the appropriateness of the committee members to serve as advisors. **It is strongly encouraged that students set a fall date for the Qualifying Exam at this meeting.**

**F. Grading & Performance Evaluation**

**Grading**

Graduate students in Arts, Sciences & Engineering are graded in two standard ways: either with a standard letter grade (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, E) or on the basis of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S, E). In either case, the course must be graded consistently for all students. Courses that are graded with standard letter grades may not receive a grade of S or vice versa. Dissertation courses (897, 997, 899, 999) can be graded only on the basis of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S, E). For more information about the graduate grading scheme, visit the registrar’s webpage.

While some courses will be graded via a standard letter grade, GPAs are not calculated for graduate programs due to the number of courses graded on the basis of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. If necessary, students can estimate a GPA using the GPA calculator found on the registrar’s website. If necessary, the AS&E Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) office can provide verification that a GPA is not issued.

The minimum passing grades for courses or research work carrying graduate credit are C or S. However, only one C grade is allowed in a student’s graduate program of study.
A student who receives a grade of C or the grade of E in one or more courses will be considered to have an unsatisfactory record and will be automatically placed on academic probation. A student on academic probation cannot be awarded a graduate degree. Students in extenuating circumstances may appeal to the AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA).

Students who receive their first and only C in their final semester are not subject to academic probation. When a student is placed on probation by the AS&E GEPA office, the student will be notified in writing and will be given one semester to resume satisfactory academic standing. During the probationary period, students will remain eligible to receive federal and institutional assistance (except when they have exceeded their degree deadline). At the end of the probationary period, progress will be reviewed by the AS&E GEPA office. If a student does not re-establish satisfactory academic standing, the student will become ineligible to receive financial aid and will be excluded (dismissed) by the AS&E Dean of GEPA.

A student will be removed from academic probation if the student completes 12 semester hours of graduate credit with no grade lower than B-. If the student receives a grade below B-, the student is subject to removal from the program.

**Course Registration Deadlines**
Students are required to be registered each semester until the degree has been awarded. If students are not registered by the drop/add deadline, they will be withdrawn. Registration deadlines can be found on the AS&E GEPA calendar.

**Policy for Transferring in Credits Toward a PhD**
The School of AS&E allows up to 30 credit hours of acceptable graduate work taken at this or another university prior to entrance into the PhD program to be transferred toward the 90-credit requirement for the doctoral degree. All transfer credits must not have been used as part of an undergraduate or Master’s degree program and require the approval of the program BME Graduate Committee and the AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs in order to be applied to a PhD program of study.

**Annual Evaluations**
Starting in 2019, all PhD students are required to submit an annual evaluation. The Graduate Committee reviews the performance of first year PhD students. Student progress is evaluated based on grades, instructor feedback, rotation evaluations, rotation reports, oral presentations, and the preliminary exam. The preliminary exam serves as an annual evaluation during the first year of PhD study. Students may be placed on academic probation or a mentoring plan based on these evaluations.

Second year PhD students and above will complete the BME department Advisory Committee Meeting Report Form. After completing a Qualifying Exam, the student is required to schedule their advisory committee annually. **Scheduling thesis committee meetings is the responsibility of the student.** After each committee meeting, the student and committee must complete the Advisory Committee Meeting Report form and submit it to the Program Office. If a progress report is not on file each academic year (by July 1), stipend funding may be terminated.

**Research Internship Policy**
Research Internship requests are managed by the Office of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA). GEPA requires time to approve an internship and create a unique course registration number
(CRN) for an internship. **All completed paperwork is required in GEPA at least two weeks prior to the start of the term in which the internship will be held.**

A graduate practical research internship is designed to allow a student to obtain practical experience in their graduate research field by working on an internship outside the University for a short period of time during their graduate education.

An internship requires a faculty member to agree to serve as the advisor. The student must obtain the signature of the faculty member (on the Internship Approval Form) in order to register for an internship. Students are required to submit a short write-up of their internship experience to their internship faculty advisor. The faculty member will provide a grade for the one-credit internship based on this write-up.

The student must register for one credit under
- Full-time internship: 594 (PhD)
- Part-time internship (less than 20 hours/week, in the Rochester area) 594P (PhD)

If a full-time internship is taken over the semester rather than over the summer, the student must also register for continuing enrollment, 999A (PhD). Each one-credit internship, up to a maximum of two, counts toward the total required credits for the degree (30 or 32 for Master’s; 90 for PhD) and must be included in the student’s program of study. In order to count additional credits of internship beyond two toward the degree requirements, approval from the AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs must be obtained.

While performing an internship, students must maintain health insurance coverage. Students currently enrolled in the University of Rochester Student Health Insurance plan may remain on this plan during the internship period as long as they make the appropriate arrangements with University Health Service.

**Exclusion (Dismissal)**
A student who fails to resume satisfactory academic standing during the probationary period after being notified of placement on probation will be excluded (dismissed). The exclusion decision is final when a student does not meet the criteria for satisfactory academic progress and has failed to remediate within the AS&E GEPA office’s probationary period. In such cases, there is no process for appeal, and the exclusion will take effect immediately.

In BME Department, a student may be asked to leave a degree program before graduation if:

1) he/she does not pass preliminary, qualifying or final (exit) exams
2) the student earns a grade of C for eight credits or in two or more classes
3) the student’s advisory committee (or academic advisor for Plan B MS students) indicate that the student is failing to make satisfactory progress toward a degree over a period of at least one year
4) the graduate committee determines that the student has accumulated a significant record of poor performance in any number of evaluated areas including: class work, research, exams, rotations, and teaching assistantships
5) the student’s behavior is detrimental to the welfare of individuals, the program, or the department. Final decisions on termination are made by the Graduate Committee after a careful review of the student’s record. An exception is the case of poor academic standing (case 2) which, according to University policy, is reviewed by the Associate Dean for GEPA.
Funding will cease on the effective date of the exclusion unless other arrangements are made. When a student is excluded (dismissed) by the program, the student has an opportunity to appeal the exclusion decision to the AS&E GEPA office. When a student appeals the program’s exclusion decision, the exclusion becomes effective after the appeal process has concluded if the appeal is denied. More information on appeal process and academic grievance policy is available in the GEPA AS&E 2018-2019 Handbook.

**F. Preliminary (First Year) Exam**

**Objectives and basis for evaluation:**
- Clearly identify students who are not likely to make successful biomedical engineering graduate students; and
- Ensure that students are executing a curricular plan that will provide engineering and biological depth and the biological and engineering breadth appropriate to their chosen field of research.

**Subject and Procedure**

The subject of the preliminary exam is a recent article from the literature. In April of each year, the Graduate Committee will organize exam committees for each student. Selected advisors cannot chair the exam committees. Each committee will assemble a collection of papers that align with the background and interests of the student. First year graduate students will meet with the Graduate Program Director shortly after finals week in May. At this meeting, the Director will review the instructions for completing the exam and explain the expectations for passing the exam. Each student will be presented with his/her collection of papers and must select from this collection the paper that will be the subject of the exam. Exam committees will be quickly notified of the papers selected.

After selecting a paper, students will be given 14 days to prepare a report. Reports are to be no more than 20 double spaced pages, 12 pt font (or an alternative legible format of equivalent length). Figures and legends should be embedded within the text, but the references can be listed after the text. The report should begin with an executive summary. The report must include a critical evaluation of the paper and an example of the student’s ability to apply quantitative engineering approaches to medicine/biology.

The critical analysis should address:

1) the significance of the study in the context of human health;
2) the findings of previous studies that address similar questions; and
3) the quality of the work, data, and/or model(s), and 4) the strength of the conclusions.

The engineering analysis can be used to evaluate the paper, to provide a clearer explanation of complex mathematical ideas within the paper, and/or to illustrate an extension of the paper for future research.

Examples of how engineering analysis might be used for the exam include:

a) A student develops a simplified version of a simulation included in the paper and uses it to demonstrate how different (but reasonable) parameter choices lead to conclusions very different than the authors’.
b) By consulting supporting literature a student, is able to clearly derive a complex set of expressions used (but not derived) in the paper. The student concludes that the analysis is fundamentally correct. She now better understands the assumptions inherent in the work and can explain why the assumptions are reasonable given the experimental conditions used.

c) A student develops an idea for extending the work in the paper using a different device than that used by the authors. The student presents a “back-of-the-envelope” style analysis of his device that clearly identifies the design parameters for the new device and how they might be adjusted to answer the biological question.

Students are cautioned that their prepared materials must obviously include both an engineering analysis and a critique. A student failing to meet this requirement will automatically fail the exam. Students are prohibited to have already reviewed the paper in a completed rotation. The paper and engineering analysis should be original to the 1st year exam. Papers authored by any member of the exam committee are not allowed.

Within a week following submission of the document, students will have an oral exam before their Committee. STUDENTS MUST RECEIVE THE PROGRAM OF STUDY FORM FROM THE GRADUATE COORDINATOR AND RETURN THE FORM WITH THE REPORT. During this time, students are to prepare a ~20 minute oral presentation on the paper and their engineering analysis. The presentation may include extensions or corrections to the written analysis. Students are required to add to the end of the presentation a single slide listing their course choices and the rationale behind these choices. This slide and any discussions that follow will not be included in the 20 minute time limit for the student presentation. Students are advised to review all graduate and undergraduate materials that might be reasonably connected to the paper through questioning. The paper is used as a starting point for questioning, but the student’s understanding of fundamental engineering principles and biology will be tested during the oral portion of the exam.

**Basis for Evaluation**
The examining committee will question the student for a minimum of 1 hour after the student’s presentation. The committee will evaluate the student based on four equally weighted criteria:

A) Is the student an independent (i.e. critical) thinker?
B) Is the student capable of communicating in a professional, clear, and scholarly manner?
C) Is the student clearly able to apply principles of engineering/physics to biology/medicine?
D) Is the student able to apply knowledge of biology/physiology to solve a problem in biomedical engineering?

At the close of questioning, the committee will meet without the student to determine a final score. The student cannot pass the exam if the committee concludes that the student did not include an engineering analysis and/or critique in the prepared document and/or presentation. The examination panel will also determine if the student is executing a curricular plan that will provide engineering and biological depth and breadth appropriate to their chosen field of research. A member of the exam committee will meet alone with the student to explain the results. Students must be informed that they will not officially pass or fail the exam until faculty discuss their exam and their complete academic record at the next faculty meeting. After a failure of the exam, the preliminary exam may be re-taken at the faculty recommendation.
G. Qualifying Examination

Objective and Basis for Evaluation
The goal of the PhD qualifying exam is to determine whether the PhD student is prepared to conduct a high-quality inquiry in an important area of medical or biological science. The basis of the PhD qualifying exam in BME is a research proposal that is both written and defended by the student. Through written and oral presentations, and through oral discussion, the student must convince the exam committee that:

1) The proposed research addresses an unsolved, scientifically important problem.
2) The proposal contains an approach that is well-reasoned, well-controlled, innovative, and optimized. In other words, the plan is likely to be met with some success.
3) The student has the ability to successfully complete the work using the resources available to them.

Format of the Proposal
Students are instructed to use a standard NIH-style format for their proposal. Details of the format are provided below. Include a cover page, table of contents, references, and appendices as needed. These pages do not count against a 13 page limit for the body of the proposal.

Font
- Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. A symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters. However, the font size requirement still applies.
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch.
- Type may be no more than six lines per inch.
- Print must be clear and legible.

Page Margins
- Use standard size (8 1/2” x 11”) sheets of paper. Use at least 1/2 inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages, including continuation pages.

Page Numbering
- The proposal should be single-sided and single-spaced with consecutively number pages throughout.

Figures, Figure Legends, and Footnotes
- A smaller type size may be used in figures, tables and footnotes, but it must be in black ink, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement. Embed key figures in the main document. Supplemental figures can be added to an appendix.

Proposal Sections (13 pages)
A. Specific Aims: State concisely and realistically what the research described in the proposal is intended to accomplish and/or what hypothesis is to be tested. Restricted to 1 page.

B. Significance: Briefly sketch the background to the proposal and critically evaluate the existing knowledge. State concisely the importance of the research described in the proposal by explaining
how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.

C. **Innovation:** Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s). Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.

D. **Approach:** Discuss in detail the experimental design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the work described in the proposal. Describe the protocols to be used and a tentative timetable for the investigation. Include the means by which the data will be analyzed and interpreted. Attempt to convince the reader, with preliminary data where possible, that you have a reasonable chance of achieving the aims in the proposed time. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

E. **References:** Use a standard journal format that includes names of authors and full title.

F. **Appendix:** Graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts supporting the proposal should be included in this section. One or two key publications may also be included.

**Exam Committee**
The exam committee will be the members of the student’s thesis advisory committee, with the exception of the student’s thesis advisor. The exam chair is selected by the Graduate Committee and will vote and question in place of the advisor.

**Timing**
The PhD Proposal defense should be taken before the end of the first semester of the third year. Waiting longer only increases the expectations of the advisory committee on exam day. Students must have completed a minimum of 24 hours of course work credit, as outlined above, at the time of the exam. The completed Ph.D. thesis research proposal must be submitted to each member of the thesis advisory committee and to the Program Office at least two weeks before the day of the examination. Students should inform the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two months in advance of the exam as the Graduate Committee must select the exam chair and the exam must be formally approved by AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs at least 2 weeks prior to the exam date.

**Qualifying Exam Timeline**

- **At least 8 weeks (2 months) prior to exam date:**

  Student submits a completed **Request for Chair of PhD Proposal form** to the Coordinator. The form must be formally approved by Graduate Committee before the AS&E Dean of GEPA approves it. Please note that Graduate Committee meets monthly, every 4th Monday. The Graduate Coordinator verifies with the selected Chairperson that they are able to fulfil the role and informs the student.
At least 4 weeks (20 business days) prior to exam date:

Student submits to the Graduate Coordinator:
- The date and time agreed upon by the Advisory Committee for the public seminar and closed exam
- The title and abstract of the written proposal

The Graduate Coordinator will schedule rooms for the public seminar and closed exam and prepare the Examination Appointment form and seminar announcement.

At least 2 weeks (10 business days) prior to the exam date:

The Coordinator submits the Examination Appointment form to the AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) to formally schedule the exam. At this time, the student submits the written thesis proposal to the Advisory Committee (including the chair).

Procedure
Students must hold a public oral presentation prior to the exam. While the presentation does not need to coincide with a departmental seminar series, it must be advertised to the department as an open session. The seminar should not exceed 50 minutes in duration. Following the presentation, the student and committee will meet for a closed examination. A typical examination will take between two and three hours (including the open session). At the close of the exam, the committee will meet with the student to explain their findings.

H. PhD Thesis Preparation and Registration

a. Requirements:

- PhD Proposal Defense has been passed no sooner than six months prior to the thesis defense.
- Completion of degree requirements within specific time limits (7 years for most graduate students and 6 years for students who continue after receiving an MS degree from the University of Rochester, unless an extension is granted by the AS&E Dean of GEPA).
- Satisfactory completion of the appropriate number of credit hours for the program (90 credit hours with no grades outstanding excluding the current term).
- Program of Study must be on file with all requirements met. Note that the Program of Study should be filed before student completes the Thesis Proposal exam (i.e., the Qualifying Exam) and will be used as a guideline for completion of degree work. The Program of Study reflects the minimum courses/credits needed to complete the degree.
- Student must have maintained continuous enrollment since admittance into the Graduate Degree Program.
- The PhD thesis committee must conform to the guidelines set in University Graduate Studies. Regulations available at https://www.rochester.edu/GradBulletin/PDFbulletin/Regulations.pdf

b. Written thesis: A manual entitled "The Preparation of Doctoral Theses" is available from the Program Coordinator or online at http://www.rochester.edu/Theses/. Previous theses are also available in
the BME Suite in front of Room 207. It is the responsibility of the student to see that style, format, margins, paper, binding, etc. are in accordance with University regulations. If you have questions or concerns regarding thesis preparation, please contact the Office of the University Dean for Graduate Studies, x54279.

c. **Registration guidelines:** In order to register your dissertation, student or the Program Coordinator creates a record on the Graduate Studies PhD Completion website at [https://phdprocess.ur.rochester.edu](https://phdprocess.ur.rochester.edu)

This record will include:
- Degree information
- Past degree information
- Contact information
- The defense version of your dissertation as a PDF
- Other relevant documents

The version of your dissertation attached to your online record is considered the registration copy.

When your PhD completion record is finalized, committee members will receive emails with links to access your record and approve your dissertation to progress to defense.

You will need to provide copies of the dissertation identical to the registration copy to all members, including the chair, at least five weeks before the record is finalized. Everyone but the chair is required to comment or sign off on the dissertation before it is submitted. They have ten business days to review and approve your thesis.

After all committee members have provided their approval, your thesis will be reviewed by your department chair, the AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA), and the office of the University Dean of Graduate Studies. When all of these officials have approved your committee and dissertation for defense, your dissertation is considered registered. You will be able to track these approvals in your online record and will receive a confirmation email when approvals are complete.

The GEPA Office, AS&E Dean of GEPA, as well as the University Dean of Graduate Studies, may make corrections to the PDF of your dissertation. This annotated copy of your dissertation, along with the original version, will be stored in the PhD completion website. You are not allowed to distribute updated versions of your dissertation prior to the defense, but be sure to incorporate any corrections before uploading your final dissertation to ProQuest®.

After the defense, if the committee has required major revisions to be approved by one or more of its members, it is your responsibility to provide them with the corrected final version for their approval. They will be asked to submit written confirmation of that approval to the University Graduate Studies Office. Failure to do so could delay conferral of your degree.

After the defense, you will receive additional instructions by e-mail for completion of all PhD degree requirements.
Overview of PhD Defense Due Dates

- **At least 12 months prior** to scheduling a defense:
  Student meets with the Advisory Committee to ensure that all members of the committee agree that the work is ready to progress towards thesis writing and defense.

- **At least 4 months prior** to scheduling a defense:
  Student submits a Request for Approval for PhD Chair Form to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Committee will review and approve the request. Please note that Graduate Committee meets monthly, every 4th Monday.

- **At least 3 months prior** to scheduling a defense:
  Student begins scheduling the actual defense date to ensure that the advisor, committee members, and chair are able to be present and that rooms are available on the date and time selected. The PhD date calculator is available at http://www.rochester.edu/college/gradstudies/phd-defense/dalecalculator/index.html to determine the deadline dates.

- **At least 6 weeks prior** to the date of defense:
  Student or the Program Coordinator creates a record on the Graduate Studies PhD Completion website. Student provides the title and abstract of their dissertation to the Graduate Coordinator. The coordinator uploads forms for thesis registration (UR advising record and approved Program of Study).

  The system allows student’s personal information, necessary forms, and the required approvals to be collected electronically at various points through the process prior to the defense.

- **At least 5 weeks/25 working days prior** to defense:
  Student uploads PhD thesis in a PDF format to the PhD Candidate Processing System. Student needs to ask Advisory Committee whether they prefer paper or/electronic versions of the thesis. Student provides copies of the dissertation identical to the registration copy to all members of the Advisory Committee, including the chair. The committee members have 2 weeks to review the PhD dissertation. Everyone but the chair is required to sign off on the dissertation before it is submitted for further approvals. Please note that URMC Copy Center requires 4 business days to print and bind your thesis.

- **At least 3 weeks/15 full working days prior** to the date of defense:
  The coordinator approves student’s record in the PhD Defense Processing System, triggering e-mails to committee members asking for their approval. After Advisory Committee’s approval, the BME Chair approves the record. Next the AS&E Dean of GEPA and the University Dean of Graduate Studies review and approve your thesis online in the PhD Defense Processing System.

  Student will receive notification from the University Dean’s Office confirming scheduling of the defense and the appointment of the Chair. The Chair of the defense and the committee will receive exam information from the University Dean via e-mail.
I. Final PhD Examination
The format of the Final Examination for the Ph.D. is as follows. The first hour of the exam is an open seminar to the public. The student's presentation should last 45 minutes and 10 minutes are allowed at the conclusion for questions from the audience. The student and the Examining Committee will then adjourn to a private session where the second part of the exam will be conducted. Using oral interrogation, the committee will scrutinize the student's comprehension, execution, description and interpretation of the research described in the thesis.

J. After the Defense
You can submit the final corrected copies of your dissertation as soon as you address any remaining comments that were brought up during the defense or noted in the registration copy of your dissertation, which will be returned to you usually within a few days before or after the defense. You can take up to one semester following the defense to address any comments, during which you can remain a full-time student. Your degree conferral date will depend on when you submit the final corrected copies of your dissertation.

Final Corrected Copies of the Dissertation
The day after your defense, you will receive an email from the University dean of graduate studies that provides instructions on how to:

- Submit the final corrected copies of your dissertation through ProQuest
- Provide authorization for the release of your dissertation through UR Research
- Complete a mandatory online exit survey
- Verify to the University dean of graduate studies’ office that the dissertation has been submitted

Publishing Your Final Dissertation
The University of Rochester requires all doctoral candidates to deposit their dissertations for publication with ProQuest Dissertation Publishing and with the University libraries. Hard copies are not required. The library receives an electronic copy of the dissertation from ProQuest, but students must give the University permission to obtain it. For questions regarding publishing through ProQuest, contact Author Relations at disspub@proquest.com or (800) 521-0600 ext. 77020.

Check with your graduate coordinator to see if your department wants a bound copy of your dissertation, and, if so, how the cost of binding is covered

K. Summary of PhD Student Responsibilities

At the end of the first academic year

- Choose a PhD research advisor (April 15)
- Complete rotation sequence and make department presentation
- Complete preliminary examination (June)
- Begin PhD thesis research (Mid-June)

Second Year

- No later than January, submit a proposed PhD Advisory Committee to the Program Office
- Complete course work
Meet with PhD Research Advisory Committee by June 1
Complete an annual evaluation
Organize PhD thesis proposal
Complete TA requirements

Third Year, Fall Semester
Notify Graduate Administrator of planned date for proposal two months ahead of time so Chair can be selected during the Graduate Committee Meeting; please note Graduate Committee meets monthly on the 4th Monday of a month
Submit final copy of PhD research proposal to Program Office and PhD Advisory Committee Members (two weeks before exam).
Complete qualifying examination by December 1

Each year after – One PhD Advisory Committee meeting is required per year.

Note: the expectation of the program is that students should not take more than six years to successfully complete the PhD. University Regulation require that students exceeding a 7 year stay receive approval for an extension both from the department (Graduate Committee) and the AS&E Dean of GEPA.

L. General Graduate Program Policy in BME

This handbook summarizes the major features and policies of the graduate program in Biomedical Engineering. The broader policies that govern BME and all graduate programs are summarized in the Graduate Bulletin (http://www.rochester.edu/GradBulletin/) updated every two years. Both students and advisors will need to consult both sources, though it is our intent to provide the salient features here. Policy, of course, continues to evolve in response to the changing needs of the graduate program and the students in it. Thus, it is wise to verify any crucial decisions with the Biomedical Engineering Graduate Committee.

Stipends/ health fees/ tuition: All matriculated BME PhD students in good standing receive a stipend to cover living expenses that is paid semi-monthly (on the 15th and last day of each month). Stipends are not guaranteed following the 6th year in the program. Paper checks are sent to the BME Coordinator and must be picked up in person.

Direct deposit may be set up online via the University of Rochester HRMS Employee Self Service or may submit a hard copy direct deposit request to the Payroll Office. When submitting hard copy, a voided check or deposit statement must be supplied in order for the Payroll Office to process the request. If you have questions about the status of your paycheck, contact your graduate coordinator.

PhD students’ positions are categorized by whether or not the position is academically required for a specific program of study. The category students are appointed to may have tax implications that students should be aware of.

Academically required codes:
• Grad Fellowship/Stipend: 6000
• Grad Assistantship: 6002
Academically required job categories are considered taxable income but are not considered “earned income” and thus do not count toward an earned income tax credit. A W-2 will not be issued for this type of payment; however, you will receive a letter in January that states your yearly payments for tax purposes. It should be noted that these job categories are not taxed at the time of payment and require the student to make estimated quarterly tax payments. For information on how to estimate your quarterly tax payments see the provost’s guide. Other tax implications may result from this type of appointment, so please make sure to consult a tax professional. International students may contact the International Services Office (ISO) for tax guidance that is provided as part of the international student fee.

**Non-academically required codes:**
- Grad Assistant-Add On: **6004**
- Grad Teaching Assistant Add On: **6006**

Non-academically required appointments are considered taxable income, have tax withheld at the time of payment, and are considered earned income. A W-2 will be issued for these payments. Please note that you must have an I-9 on file with the University for these types of appointments.

Individual health fee coverage is the basic coverage through the University Health Service. Additional coverage for family members or a spouse is available, but is not provided by the program. Full tuition costs are covered for 32 credit hours per academic year up to 90 credit hours.

**Grants & fellowships:** Students are encouraged to submit applications for grants and fellowships to support their research. You can register in the GENIUS/SMARTS/SPIN databases at http://www.rochester.edu/ORPA/funding/index.html and receive funding opportunities on a daily basis. If you are interested in learning more about grants and fellowships, you may call the Office of Research and Project Administration (ORPA) for an appointment, x54031 (Hylan Building, Rm. 515 on River Campus) or you can visit them on-line at: http://www.rochester.edu/ORPA/.

**Additional Employment:** PhD students are not to simultaneously be employed full time while maintaining full-time student status, unless it is an internship related to the student’s academic program and supported by the student’s advisor, the program director of graduate studies, and the AS&E Dean of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. Part-time employment for full-time students is limited by individual programs—any part-time employment must be approved by the student’s advisor and the program director of graduate studies. International students must discuss with the International Services Office (ISO) any special rules and regulations for internships and part-time employment, such as the number of allowable work hours.

**Vacation:** Graduate students are entitled to two weeks of vacation each year in addition to official University Holidays. University holidays include Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, and 2 days at Thanksgiving. While the scheduling of vacations is left to the discretion of the student, prior approval from the advisor must be obtained so as not to conflict with coursework, laboratory experiments and other duties.

Before scheduling an extended absence from the University (i.e., more than 10 business days), students must obtain permission from their thesis advisor and the BME Program Director. *It is extremely important that ALL international students inform the BME Coordinator of their international travel (including Canada) at least 10 days in advance, as there are specific documents from the University that are needed in order to ensure successful re-entry into the United States. Travel within
the U.S. does not require documentation (but see below).

**Travel within Rochester, and beyond:** The International Services Office (ISO) recommends that international students always carry a university ID, current I-20 or DS-2019, and passport when traveling in the U.S., even within the Rochester area. These documents, including the I-94 card stapled to your passport when you enter the country, document your valid F-1 or J-1 student status. Since Rochester is so close to the U.S. border with Canada, a team of Border Patrol agents routinely check the immigration status of individuals in the community, especially near the airport, train and bus stations. If you are stopped and questioned about your status, the ISO may be contacted to help. When you arrive, you will receive a card with ISO Contact Information to carry with you. For more information, go to http://www.iso.rochester.edu/

International students should refer to the University’s *Travel Information and Documentation website* (http://www.iso.rochester.edu/travel/index.html) before traveling within the U.S. or abroad.

**II. MS PROGRAMS**

**A. Program Objective**

**MS in BME**

The department offers three types of Master of Science degrees. The first is the Plan A or ‘thesis’ masters and the second is the Plan B or ‘coursework’ masters. The primary goal of the Plan A masters is for a student to successfully execute and communicate an in-depth research project. In Plan A, courses are taken both in support of the research project and to broaden the student’s educational experience. The primary goal of the Plan B masters is for a student to develop and demonstrate their advanced understanding of biomedical engineering principles. Courses are selected to provide depth in an area of the student’s interest and to develop an understanding of the breadth of applications in biomedical engineering.

**MS in CMTI**

The third Master of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering is offered by the Department of Biomedical Engineering through the Center for Medical Technology and Innovation (CMTI). The CMTI is a joint collaboration between the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences and the School of Medicine & Dentistry.

The CMTI MS degree program in Biomedical Engineering is designed to be completed within one year. Students have the option of extending the program to three semesters in order to accommodate a corporate internship during the second summer.

The CMTI MS degree in Biomedical Engineering follows the Plan B coursework-only path within the Department of Biomedical Engineering. Students who choose this program must complete a total of 30 credits to graduate. The primary difference of the CMTI MS Program is that students take designated courses focused on medical device design that serve to prepare them for a career in the medical device industry. This option features an eight-week summer program that includes workshops and clinical observations within the operating rooms of Strong Memorial Hospital. During the clinical...
rotations, students observe surgical procedures within the clinical setting and are trained in identifying unmet clinical needs that serve as the foundation for new medical products. The CMTI program is team-oriented, and allows students to develop technical expertise, creativity, and communication, while also gaining knowledge related to the process of medical device design and regulation. For more information please visit the Center for Medical Technology and Innovation website at http://cmti.rochester.edu/.

B. Curricular Requirements
All three MS degrees require 30 credits. The content of all courses has to be “advanced in content, rigor, and requirements.” A faculty member must review the program of study for any student with a course below 400-level and provide approval for including these courses. Specific credit requirements for each degree are summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan A</th>
<th>Plan B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BST467 Applied Stats in Biomedical Sciences (3 credits)</td>
<td>BST467 Applied Stats in Biomedical Sciences (3 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 credits from:</td>
<td>14 credits from:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced BME (4 credits minimum)</td>
<td>Advanced BME (4 credits minimum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Engineering (4 credits minimum)</td>
<td>Approved Engineering (4 credits minimum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Biology (4 credits minimum)</td>
<td>Approved Biology (4 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND 501: Ethics in Research (one credit)</td>
<td>BME 496: Current Research Seminars (0 credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME 496: Current Research Seminars (0 credit)</td>
<td>6-13 additional credits (6 research credits maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME 495: Research credits 6-12</td>
<td>1 TAship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME 897 or BME 899 MS Dissertation</td>
<td>30 credits total (not to exceed 34 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 TAship</td>
<td>30 credits total (not to exceed 34 credits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific course descriptions, and lists of courses satisfying the Advanced BME, Approved Engineering and Approved Biology requirements are specified in the detailed description of the PhD curricular requirements. All full-time MS students are required to complete one TAship.

C. Financial Support and Teaching Assistantship
Competitive tuition scholarships are available for both Plan A and Plan B students. Students receiving a tuition scholarship may be asked to serve as teaching assistants for 1 semester. Part-time students are not eligible for the tuition scholarship and are not required to be teaching assistants.

The department does not guarantee stipend support for any masters student, although some Plan A (and even some Plan B) students may be paid for their work in research laboratories. Federal loans are available to assist with cost-of-living expenses. Information on graduate loans is available at the University’s financial aid website: http://www.rochester.edu/living/services/financial/financialaid/.

D. Continuity of Registration
All MS students, including part-time students, must register each term to continue progress toward the MS degree. If students fail to enroll for any term, the College may terminate a student’s status with the university. To maintain continuity, full-time Plan A students who have completed coursework should register for 0 credits of BME899: Master’s dissertation until the thesis is complete. When they register for MS dissertation for the 1st time, students register for BME 897. Part-time Plan B students who do not
wish to take a course in a particular term should register for BME895: Continuation of Master’s enrollment or for BME985: Leave of absence if they anticipate more than one term away from the university.

**E. Duration**
A full-time student should not take more than 1 year to complete all the Plan B Master’s requirements. A full-time student will typically take more than one year to complete the Plan A thesis. In the first year of study, a student in Plan A should satisfy all credit requirements, become fully trained in the laboratory, and make substantial progress on the thesis project. The teaching assistantship should also be completed in this year. Typically, all efforts beyond the 1st year are devoted to the completion of the research thesis. The University has a five-year limit on the time taken to complete any Master’s degree (Plan A, Plan B, full-time or part-time).

**F. Advising**
Plan A students should identify a thesis advisor before beginning their first term and the thesis advisor will serve as the student’s academic advisor. The advisor will help the student construct a program of study appropriate to the student’s interest, abilities, and the demands of the research project. All members of the BME Graduate Faculty as well as Secondary Faculty may serve as a MS thesis advisor. Graduate and Secondary Faculty are listed on the program web pages at www.urmc.rochester.edu/bme/people/faculty/.

Plan A students are also required to form a thesis advisory committee. This committee must consist of 1) the thesis advisor, 2) one faculty member who is part of the BME Graduate or Secondary Faculty, and 3) one faculty member from outside the department (i.e. not part of the BME Graduate or Secondary Faculty). The student is required to meet with the advisory committee at least once before taking the exit exam and this meeting should take place at least four months before the exam.

Plan B students will be assigned an academic advisor before beginning their first term of study. This advisor will help the student construct a program of study and must sign registration forms each term.

**G. MS Thesis Preparation and Exit Exam**

**MS - Plan A**
Plan A students are required to prepare a written thesis following the format specified for the PhD thesis. The thesis manual is available at https://www.rochester.edu/Theses/ThesesManual.pdf. The thesis document must be registered with the AS&E Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) office at least 5 days prior to the defense. Thesis copies must be delivered to the members of the examining committee at least two weeks prior to the oral exam. The BME Graduate Coordinator will assist the student in registering the thesis with the GEPA office. The thesis work must be presented in a public seminar and followed by a closed session oral examination. The written document, the prepared presentation, and the oral exam will be used in evaluating the following criteria:

A) Is the student clearly capable of executing an original study over a prolonged period?
B) Is the student capable of presenting the rationale and results of new study in a clear manner?
C) Did the student become thoroughly acquainted with the literature in a limited field?
**MS Thesis Registration Timeline**

**At least 8 weeks (2 months) prior to exam date** student submits Request for Approval of MS Advisory Committee to the Coordinator. The form must be formally approved by Graduate Committee. Please note that Graduate Committee meets monthly, every 4\textsuperscript{th} Monday.

**At least 4 weeks (20 business days) prior to exam date** student submits to the Graduate Coordinator:

- The date and time agreed upon by Advisory Committee for the public presentation and closed exam
- The title and abstract of the written proposal

The Graduate Coordinator will schedule rooms for the seminar and exam and prepare necessary paperwork (Examination Appointment form) and seminar announcements.

**At least 2 weeks (10 business days) prior to the exam date** student submits the written thesis proposal to the Advisory Committee including the chair.

**At least 5 days prior to the exam date** the Graduate Coordinator submits Examination Appointment form to AS&E Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) office along with a registration copy of the thesis.

Defenses can be held on any day the University’s Graduate Studies Office is open (not weekends, evenings, holidays, or the days between Christmas and New Year’s). The student is advised to check the academic calendar for important dates and deadlines.

**After Defense**

Student submits two final corrected copies of the thesis as soon as all comments that were brought up during the defense or noted in the registration copy of the thesis are addressed. Two corrected, unbound copies of the final thesis are required by the AS&E GEPA office to provide to the University libraries. Thesis copies can be dropped off in GEPA’s office located in Lattimore 206. Student should check with your Graduate Coordinator to determine if there is additional paperwork that you need to complete before your student status is terminated.

**MS - Plan B**

A student in Plan B must pass a comprehensive oral examination. Two formats are offered for the exam:

1) a course-based exam, or
2) a literature-based exam. The advantage of the course-based exam is that a student can schedule the exam at any time. A student wishing to participate in May commencement can schedule the exam in the final weeks of the spring term (the student will receive a firm deadline by e-mail for May commencement). The literature-based exam follows the PhD preliminary examination schedule and thus will always take place in June. A student must inform the program office of the desired exam format by March 1\textsuperscript{st} (Oct 15\textsuperscript{th} if a course-based exit exam is to be taken at the end of the fall term).

**Course-based exam:** In advance of this exam, the student will ask two or more members of the BME graduate faculty to serve on his/her exam committee. The student should have taken at least one course from each of these instructors satisfying the BME Advance, Approved Biology or Approved Engineering requirements. The names of the proposed exam committee members and the proposed date of the exam
should be registered with the BME office one month prior to the exam to give the Graduate Committee time to approve or revise the student’s suggested examiners and exam schedule. During the exam, the exam committee members will each question the student on topics covered in their courses. Typically, each examiner will begin by asking the student to answer questions similar in scope to questions that appeared in either exams or problem sets during the original course. The student will solve these problems on the board, providing a detailed rationale for each step. If appropriate, the examiner may ask follow-up questions to more deeply test the student’s knowledge of the course material and its broader applications. The entire exam should last 60 to 90 minutes, where each examiner is allotted 30-45 minutes for his/her portion on the exam. Once the exam is finished, the student is excused and the examiners deliberate on the performance and outcome. The student passes the exam if he/she demonstrates 1) the ability to solve problems relevant to the course with few deficiencies; and 2) the ability to effectively communicate his/her understanding of the course material. It is the responsibility of the examiners to provide a written brief of the exam proceedings and student’s performance to justify the outcome. This justification should be communicated orally in person to the student at the conclusion of the exam, and then in a formal letter by the Graduate Committee Chair based on the exam committee’s report.

**Literature-based exam:** This exam follows the PhD preliminary exam format except that the basis for evaluation is different. Like 1st year PhD students, MS student’s taking this exam will meet with the Graduate Program Director the first Monday after finals week in May. At that time, each student will be given a collection of articles assembled for him or her by the Graduate Committee. The student will be given until Friday to select the article that will be the basis of the exam. The student will then have two weeks to prepare a report on the paper. The MS report should begin with an executive summary and be no more than 20 double-spaced pages, 12 pt font (or an alternative legible format of equivalent length). Figures and legends should be embedded within the text. The report should demonstrate a clear understanding of the article and include all the key engineering and biology background. After turning in the report, students are to prepare a ~20 minute oral presentation on the paper and their report. Students are advised to review all graduate and undergraduate materials that might be reasonably connected to the paper through questioning. The Graduate Committee will assemble an exam committee consisting of three members of the Graduate/Secondary faculty including one member of the graduate committee (or a representative). This committee will evaluate the student’s written report and presentation. As criteria for passing, the exam committee must decide:

- **A)** Is the student capable of understanding a recent journal article from a field of interest, and of clearly explaining the article in oral and written presentations?
- **B)** In an oral examination, is the student able to draw on graduate coursework to explain concepts contained within or peripherally related to the article?

Students who fail to satisfactorily meet either of these criteria will fail the exam.

**Re-examination:** Any student failing either format of the exit exam may be allowed to re-take an exam of the same format. The Exam Committee will recommend whether or not a student should permitted to retake the exam, but the Graduate Committee will make the final decision. According to university regulations, the re-examination can happen as soon as the following semester, but not more than one year after the first exam. No student is permitted to take the exit exam a third time.
III. MD/PhD PROGRAM

Students earning a PhD in Biomedical Engineering through the MD/PhD program will begin PhD training in the third year of graduate school after two years of medical school training. Unless explicitly stated below all requirements and definitions for the PhD in Biomedical Engineering apply to students in the MD/PhD program.

A. Curricular requirements
Because the medical school training emphasizes biology and physiology, the BME PhD requirement for 11 credits of Approved Biology is waived. Additionally, only 4 credits of Advanced BME courses are required, and the preliminary exam is waived. A teaching assistantship is encouraged but not required. The BME faculty believe that experience and training in teaching is a valuable part of doctoral education for biomedical engineers, however the program does not require TA service in order to be consistent with MD/PhD requirements in other departments. At least two rotations are required by the MD/PhD program and these are typically completed before beginning the PhD training. The following summarizes the full non-research requirements for BME PhDs in the MD/PhD program:

- 12 credits of approved engineering
- BST 467: Applied Statistics in the Biomedical Sciences (3 credits)
- 4 credits of Advanced BME
- The proposals writing course (2 credits; spring term)
- Research ethics (1 credit; fall term)
- BME 496: Current Research Seminars (0 credit)
- Three formal presentations in a public forum

A student should complete the curricular requirements in one academic year, and it is expected that 2-3 additional years will be required to complete the PhD thesis. Students must select a research advisor by the beginning of the spring term, and research should be underway by the spring term so that the proposal writing class is most effective. The qualifying exam should be taken in the fall of the second year of PhD study.

B. Clerkships
During the years of doctoral training, students will continue with clerkship activities for one afternoon each week to remain active in medical training. The clerkship time accumulates as medical school credit, and enables the student to have a free block in the last year of medical training to pursue either additional elective or further research activities.

IV. CAMPUS RESOURCES

BME Graduate Student Council fosters a threefold mission to promote scholastic excellence, community engagement, and mentorship extending across the biomedical engineering department and into the greater Rochester area.
**Graduate Student Association (GSA)**
The GSA exists to act as an advocate and liaison for, and to promote interaction among, the graduate students in departments of Arts, Sciences & Engineering at the University of Rochester. Visit the GSA website and Facebook page to find out more.

**Graduate Housing**
The University of Rochester has several graduate housing options available for students and their family members. Visit the Graduate Housing website for more information.

**Department of Transportation and Parking Management**
Get connected in, around, and between campuses when you ride on the University’s shuttle fleet or register your vehicle and purchase a permit to park on campus. Visit the Department of Transportation and Parking Management website for details on shuttle services and parking permits.

**Customer Service Center/ID Office**
Visit the Customer Service Center for ID cards, dining plan enrollment or modification, URos account deposits, OneCard inquiries, and laundry and vending transfers. The office is located on the first floor of Susan B. Anthony Halls. Please note that you should report a lost or stolen ID card to the ID Office as soon as you become aware that it is missing.

**Athletics and Recreation**
Full-time graduate students enjoy free access to the campus fitness and aquatic centers. Part-time students can join the membership program, R Club, to use campus athletic facilities. Both full-time graduate students and R Club members can participate in club and intramural sports. For a full list of offerings, visit the Athletics & Recreation website.

**Interfaith Chapel**
The Interfaith Chapel provides students of many faith traditions a place to meet, meditate, and mingle, contributing to the rich diversity that is the University of Rochester experience.

**Academic and Career Support**
**Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)** provides graduate students with resources to support their work as classroom TAs, laboratory TAs, and instructors. CETL also offers academic honesty support, including educational outreach programming and confidential counseling for students.

**The URBEST Program** is one of seventeen programs funded by the NIH to experiment with methods to enhance training opportunities for early career scientists and prepare them for a variety of career options in the dynamic biomedical workforce landscape. BEST’s mission is to Broaden Experiences in Scientific Training for today’s PhD graduate students and postdoctoral scientists. We believe that all biomedical research and science careers are equally valued as successful careers. The URBEST Program aims to increase the confidence and motivation of trainees to identify and pursue their career goals, and to reduce training time by enabling trainees to more efficiently direct their efforts.

**Libraries**
With combined holdings of more than 3.5 million volumes and extensive collections of online databases, electronic journals, rare books, and musical scores, Rochester’s libraries rank among the top academic research libraries in the United States and Canada.
Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program (WSAP) in concert with faculty across the College, builds a strong community of undergraduate and graduate writers, speakers, and researchers. WSAP offers a range of services designed for graduate student writers, including writing groups, tutoring, writing boot camps, and workshops.

The Gwen M. Greene Center for Career Education and Connections
Career advisors at the Greene Career Center assist students in achieving their individual career goals while providing them with the resources and tools they need to develop connections among their aspirations, academic pursuits, and co-curricular experiences.

University Health Service (UHS) provides confidential, high-quality health care services for students, employees, and other members of the University community. Services include treatment for illnesses and injuries, management of ongoing medical problems, and care and advice for health care concerns.

University Counseling Center (UCC) provides a comprehensive initial assessment and an individualized treatment plan to fulltime members of the University community who pay the mandatory health fee. The center offers individual, couples, and group therapy; outreach and consultation services; and referral services to help coordinate care.

Health Promotion Office offers resources to help students develop healthy skills and attitudes related to their personal health decisions. The office offers programs and services to address many student health needs, and there is a health educator available to answer questions and provide health related guidance.

CARE Network allows University faculty, staff, students, and parents to report when a student is in or headed toward distress. The CARE team responds to referrals by connecting with the student and referring them to appropriate support resources on campus.

International Services Office (ISO) provides immigration and related support services for the University’s international population and the divisions and departments that sponsor them. The office staff offers support through immigration advising, cross-cultural counseling, advocacy, and programming.

Office of Disability Resources offers a variety of services for undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty. These services aim to provide an inclusive experience and equal access to academic content and program requirements.

The David T. Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity strives to expand the educational pipeline through the doctoral degree for low-income, first-generation college, and underrepresented minority students. The center also helps develop and guide the University’s diversity and inclusion efforts.

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX coordinator and deputy coordinators assist with the prevention of and response to incidents of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment and assault. Students, faculty, and staff can connect with the Title IX coordinator for information on options for reporting if they or someone they know has been subject to harassment or discrimination. Visit the Sexual Misconduct and Title IX website for a full list of resources or to report an incident.
**Ombudsperson for the Natural Sciences and Engineering is Kara Bren**
The Ombudsperson provides a resource for and information about institutional policies and acts as a facilitator to help students resolve their problems, connecting students with those who can help, accompanying the student in discussions of problems or issues with faculty or administrators, and acting as an informal mediator between the student and faculty or administrators. Ombudsperson can also help to effect positive change by providing feedback on patterns of problems and complaints to appropriate administrators. Students can contact either Ombudsperson for general questions. For questions related to the student’s particular field of study, students are encouraged to contact the appropriate Ombudsperson for that discipline. Discussions with the Ombudsperson can be through email, phone or in-person. **Ombudsperson for the Natural Sciences and Engineering is Professor Kara Bren.** She can be reached by phone at 585-275-4335 or by email at bren@chem.rochester.edu. Her office is located in 448 Hutchinson Hall.

**University Intercessor** promotes a respectful, inclusive University for all members of the community by resolving disputes, challenging perceptions, and advocating for fairness at the University. Any member of the University community may request their assistance.

**Department of Public Safety** oversees matters related to life safety, crime prevention, and law enforcement. The department offers crime prevention training and awareness, victim and witness support, personal safety escorts, lost and found, and property storage. Public Safety can always be reached at (585) 275-3333.