

Virtual Curriculum Committee Meeting December 2019

The Curriculum Committee was called to consider a proposal for modifications to the Pharmacology Graduate Program curriculum. These changes involve addition of a new course, the proposed schedule for which generates several conflicts with existing BIMS coursework. Both the new course and the schedule were therefore subject to review by this committee.

Summary of Proposed Changes (modified from information provided by Jolene Kidd)

1. **Remove PHAR 9003** (Molecular Targets) and **PHAR 9004** (Discovering Drugs) as course requirements. These classes will no longer be offered. They will be kept in the Graduate Record (for now) as potential courses, but they will be pulled from regular course offerings.
2. **Add PHAR 9400: Grant Writing in the Pharmacological Sciences** as a requirement. (Proposed syllabus attached.)
 - a. The course will be 2 credits
 - b. It will run for 10 weeks
 - c. It will be offered by Thurl Harris, Director of Graduate Studies, and restricted to instructor permission.
 - d. The participating (teaching) faculty will change from year-to-year based on who has students that are Advancing to Candidacy that year.
 - e. The course will contain some class-time/faculty instruction on the following topics: Grant Writing, Specific Aims, Significance and Background, Research Plan, Abstract, Revisiting Your Specific Aims, and Completing the Non-Proposal Components of a Fellowship Application.
 - f. There will be 4 peer workshops (students work with each other)
 - g. There will be 4 mentor workshops (students work with their primary mentor)
 - h. Students may workshop their intended Advancement to Candidacy Exam topic in this course.
3. **Add a writing requirement.** Students must complete either PHAR 9400 or another writing course, such as CELL 8450. *How this works:* If a student chooses to take CELL 8450 as an elective or is required to take it for their training grant appointment, then the PHAR 9400 course will be waived. Students may choose to take both courses, but the program will not require PHAR 9400 if another writing course was successfully completed.
4. The structure of the **Advancement to Candidacy Exam** will be updated to **include an NIH-style grant review process** wherein the students both receive feedback from their faculty reviewers and respond to that feedback with a resubmission.
5. **Add an expansive third aim to the Advancement to Candidacy Exam** This aim **must be independently conceived and written.**

These proposed changes involved new coursework that introduced several scheduling conflicts with pre-existing BIMS courses. These conflicts include:

1. For **Spring 2020**, the proposed PHAR 9400 meeting time (Tuesdays 8-11) conflicts with Foundations of Neuroscience, Statistics, Biophysics, and Chromatin 1. However, most of these are not courses that Pharm students normally take, outside of Statistics, which they are asked to take in the Spring of their first year.
2. For **Fall 2020**, the proposed PHAR 9400 meeting time (Tuesdays 8-11) conflicts with CELL 8450. As discussed above, if a student takes CELL 8450, they will be exempt from PHAR 9400, so this should not present a conflict.

Process for Virtual Meeting

The summary above and supporting documentation for these changes were provided by the program and distributed to the committee via email on December 9th, 2019. The committee was asked to review the proposed changes and to submit a vote by December 16th, 2019.

Outcome

A quorum of committee members (6 of 9, 75% (one recusal)) responded by the deadline, voting unanimously in favor of the proposed changes which were therefore approved.

PHAR 9400: Grant Writing in the Pharmacological Sciences (2 cr)

Course Instructor: Thurl Harris

Fall 2020: Tuesdays, 8:00 – 11:00 AM, Pinn 5023

Course Description:

Biomedical researchers must be able to clearly and effectively communicate scientific concepts and justify proposed experiments in writing. In this course, trainees will learn and practice effective grant writing skills. Students will submit scientific proposals and workshop them with faculty mentors and peers.

Prerequisites:

- Instructor Permission by **July 31, 2020**
- Identified research problem (may be your intended Advancement to Candidacy Exam topic or a fellowship application)
- Substantial knowledge of the literature in the proposed research area
- Commitment to ongoing participation in both writing and editing for the duration of the course

Textbooks:

Writing the NIH Grant Proposal: A Step-by-Step Guide, Third Edition

Authors: William Gerin, Christine Kapelewski Kinkade, and Niki Page

ISBN-13: 978-1506357737, ISBN-10: 1506357733

The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition

Authors: William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White

ISBN-13: 978-0205309023, ISBN-10: 9780205309023

Participating Faculty:

Thurl Harris, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacology

Bimal Desai, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacology

Michael Scott, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacology

Zhen Yan, Ph.D., Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine

J. Julius Zhu, Ph.D., Professor of Pharmacology

Assignment Due Dates:

Writing assignments should be submitted as Word documents to the course Collab site. Assignments are due on **Saturday at 5:00 p.m.** prior to the next class in order to give reviewers time to edit and review your document.

Course Schedule:

August 25, 2020 – October 27, 2020

Session 1 (08/25/2020): Intro to Grant Writing and Editing Intro to Specific Aims	Session 6 (09/29/2020): <i>Mentor Workshop</i> – Research Plan (Aim 1) Discussion – Generating “Integrated” Aims
Session 2 (09/01/2020): <i>Mentor Workshop</i> – Specific Aims Intro to Significance and Background	Session 7 (10/06/2020): <i>Peer Workshop</i> – Research Plan (Aims 2, 3)
Session 3 (09/08/2020): <i>Peer Workshop</i> – Significance and Background	Session 8 (10/13/2020): <i>Mentor Workshop</i> – Research Plan (Aims 2, 3) Intro to Abstract, Revisiting Your Specific Aims
Session 4 (09/15/2020): <i>Mentor Workshop</i> – Significance and Background Intro to Research Plan	Session 9 (10/20/2020): <i>Peer Workshop</i> – Integrated Proposal
Session 5 (09/22/2020): <i>Peer Workshop</i> – Research Plan (Aim 1)	Session 10 (10/27/2020): Completing the non-proposal components of a fellowship application