

Policies and procedures for monitoring student progress

Computational Biology (COBI) Graduate Program

Student progress in COBI is primarily monitored by mentors and the PhD Advisory Committee, under the oversight of the Director of Graduate Studies DGS. The BIMS Academic Progress and Achievement Committee (BAPAC) reviews all recommendations for dismissal from COBI regarding students who fail to remain in good standing based on coursework achievement, academic performance issues, failure to meet professional standards, ensuring due process for students.

COBI expectations for student progress are detailed here. If a student fails to meet one or more expectations, the DGS will work with the student's mentor to determine consequences, which may include dismissal or a remediation plan. If remediation is offered, the plan will outline specific steps and timelines. The student will be notified in writing, and the notification will clearly state that failure to adhere to the plan may result in immediate dismissal.

Expectation 1: Achievement in coursework

All graduate students are expected to:

1. Earn a passing grade in all coursework.
2. Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 each academic term.
3. Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

A passing grade is A+, A, A-, B+, B, or B- in graded courses and S in courses graded S/U. A grade of NC (no credit) is not considered passing. Failure to meet these expectations places a student at risk of dismissal from COBI for unsatisfactory academic progress.

Expectation 2: Advancement to candidacy exam

Students must complete a qualifying exam by the end of their second academic year (June 30) to advance to PhD candidacy. This exam, conducted by the PhD Advisory Committee as defined in the COBI program graduate record, consists of two parts: a written document and an oral defense. Each component may result in one of three outcomes: Unconditional Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. Students must pass both components to advance to candidacy. This milestone will be documented in SIS by the program Administrator.

For a conditional pass, the committee will communicate deficiencies and remediation expectations orally at the exam's conclusion and provide a written report within two weeks. The report will clearly state that failure to meet expectations within the specified timeline may result in dismissal from the program.

If the committee determines that the student has failed the qualifying exam, the student will not advance to candidacy and will be dismissed from the program. The outcome will be documented by the committee chair in consultation with the DGS within two weeks, and the student will be formally notified in writing. The DGS, in consultation with the committee, will determine whether the student's achievements merit award of the Master of Science in Biological and Physical Sciences.

Expectation 3: Academic progress after advancement to candidacy

After advancement to candidacy, academic progress continues to be monitored. The PhD Advisory Committee must meet at least annually, though more frequent meetings may be required. At these meetings, the committee will review progress toward PhD completion. Criteria for satisfactory progress include:

- Timely scheduling of advisory committee meetings.
- Attendance and participation in required program activities (e.g. Seminars, Journal Club, Retreat).
- Adherence to all program policies.
- Research progress toward goals established at prior meetings.

At the close of each meeting, the committee chair will document goals and timelines for the next period and distribute the report via email to the student, mentor, DGS, and committee members within two weeks. If concerns arise, they will be communicated orally and documented in writing, including a statement that failure to meet expectations may result in dismissal.

Expectation 4: Compliance with Program, School, or University policies

In addition to the expectations on course and research progress, COBI students must also comply with all other applicable Program, Department, School of Medicine, and University policies, including those governing responsible conduct of research, safety, student conduct, academics, and the Code of Honor. Non-compliance may result in immediate dismissal from the program. Violations will be considered case-by-case, following School and University procedures.