

# **Department of Physiology & Biophysics**

## **Graduate Student Handbook**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this handbook is to help you make a smooth transition into our Department. The graduate program in the Department of Physiology & Biophysics leads to the Ph.D. degree in Biomedical Sciences. The first year of the program is administered under the integrated Graduate Programs in interdisciplinary [Cellular and Molecular Biosciences Program](#) and [Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program](#), as well as by direct admission. Current students enter the program from a variety of backgrounds (including liberal arts studies, biology, biological sciences, chemistry and psychology). This diversity is reflected in the backgrounds of the faculty.

Faculty members participate in a wide spectrum of research activities. At one end of the spectrum are large and medically relevant questions, such as the mechanisms that induce the immune response in humans and molecular bases of diseases. At the other end are physical descriptions of simple chemical processes and structures that mimic the behavior of cells or components of cells, such as artificial membranes and synthetically produced small fragments of proteins. The largest part of the departmental research falls between the entirely medical and the entirely molecular, and its objective is to understand how proteins function in catalyzing metabolically important reactions to cells, how signals such as those carried by hormones are transmitted from one cell to another, and how specialized cells such as muscle fibers perform their intended functions.

The Department of Physiology & Biophysics is dedicated to conducting innovative, cutting-edge research, engaging in high-level service and providing excellent educational opportunities and mentoring to students and postdoctoral scholars.

Dr. Michael Cahalan  
**Distinguished Professor and Chair**

Dr. Rongsheng Jin  
**Professor and Vice Chair**

Dr. Lan Huang  
**Professor and Graduate Faculty Advisor**

## **ABOUT THIS DEPARTMENT**

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The members of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics study physiological questions mainly at the cellular and molecular levels. The Department's primary faculty comprises of 28 scientists whose research achievements are internationally recognized. In addition, the Department's faculty and students interact closely with the faculty and students at the Institute for Immunology; Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center (CFCCC); UCI Diabetes Center; Center for Autism Research and Translation; Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program; and Cellular & Molecular Biosciences, among others.

The Departmental Ph.D. program trains highly qualified students for successful careers in research, teaching and industry. All students are supported by stipends and tuition throughout their graduate training.

Student training is enhanced by department sponsored seminars and student-orientated discussions with invited speakers, as well as by participating in a monthly 'Research in Progress' RIP seminar series. The Department seeks to provide a supportive environment in which each student develops fullest to their abilities to reason critically, design the most impactful and incisive experiments, and communicate research results effectively in both written and oral formats. The faculty's wide collective experience as successful researchers, teachers, journal editors, peer reviewers are available to help graduates get ready for and attain research and teaching positions in both academic and industry.

## **TRAINING PHILOSOPHY**

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The faculty has developed a robust course of study intended at preparing students with all of the necessary tools to compete effectively for academic and non-academic positions in the biomedical sciences. Our goal is to educate future health science professionals in the area of physiological and biophysical sciences who demonstrate integrity, think critically, and communicate effectively. The faculty strongly believe that this is best achieved by partnerships between faculty mentors/advisors and individual students that are mutually beneficial. Faculty and students both succeed when students are treated as promising junior colleagues deserving the best training possible in an environment where academic freedom and expression is valued and encouraged. Faculty and students each have important obligations to gear up students to be life-long scholars. Admission to our graduate program is a privilege that will provide lasting opportunities for growth throughout your professional career. A graduate student's success depends on everyone involved. This includes the Department, School of Medicine, and University, as well as faculty. But most importantly, it depends on you, the student, taking primary responsibility for your educational and research progress.

## **WORK ETHIC**

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Science is a profession that requires dedication and drive, and a strong work ethic that does not involve watching a clock. Our students are held to a high standard of accountability.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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Upon your arrival, please come to the Department Office (Medical Science I, D340) and introduce yourself. The office is open between 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Monday through Friday.

- **Keys for only the Medical Science I and Irvine Hall buildings** will be checked out to you for the outside door in and for the lab in which you are working.
- Mail will be distributed to you through your lab's mail slot in the **mail room at D346**.
- You may use the **copier/scanner** and **fax machine** in the main office.
- Please see **Claire Chen (chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)** for copier/printing codes.

Please respect the equipment and belongings of each lab and the office. Do not use other labs' computers without asking permission from faculty members. Do not borrow anything without permission.

Please clean up and lock up after yourself. If there is a problem, such as a flood, it should be reported immediately to **Facilities Management** (949-824-5444) between the hours of 7am to 4:30pm. After hours, call the Central Plant directly at (949-824-5520).

The **Police Emergency** number (911) can also be dialed for assistance. This number dialed from campus will first put you into contact with the campus police. The **Police Department** also provides a **Safety Escort Service** (949-824-7233) around campus for late hours. After 1:00AM, the phone transfers to the police station and the police will provide escort service. **The escort service should be used if you are leaving your lab late at night.**

## DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORY

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### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

<b>Janita Parpana</b> Chief Administrative Officer	jparpana@hs.uci.edu	949-824-6833
<b>Terri Warren</b> Personnel Analyst	twarren@hs.uci.edu	949-824-5865
<b>Claire Chen</b> Graduate Coordinator, Admin Specialist	chiaochc@hs.uci.edu	949-824-5864

### FACULTY:

Please visit the following link:

<https://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofmedicine/physiologyandbiophysics/#faculty>

Please contact the Graduate Coordinator Claire at [chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu) for additional information.

### GRADUATE STUDENT

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When your address or phone number changes, please notify both the Registrar's Office and **Claire Chen** ([chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)) in the Department office. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator Claire at [chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu) for additional information.

## GRADUATE PROGRAM

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The Department of Physiology & Biophysics provides numerous opportunities for graduate students interested in pursuing their doctoral degrees.

Our department is one of several core academic departments participating in the interdisciplinary [Cellular and Molecular Biosciences Program](#) and [Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program](#) at UC Irvine.

Our graduate program is a research program, with specialties covering all levels of physiology and biophysics, including:

- Chemokines
- Circadian and visual circuits
- Epigenetics
- Fungal infections
- Ion channels
- Ion pumps
- Innate and adaptive immunity
- Metastatic breast cancer
- Muscle physiology
- Neural plasticity and circuits
- Protein modifications and interactions
- Stem Cells
- Structural biology
- Vaccines and drug delivery
- Vision science

## GRADUATE COURSES AND ENROLLMENT

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Graduate Students must register each quarter, through the Registrar's website, until all requirements for an advanced degree have been satisfied, except when a Leave of Absence has been granted or Filing Fee has been paid.

### **Full-time Enrollment**

A minimum of 12 units of graduate coursework is required to be considered a full-time student. Teaching Assistant and Graduate Student Researcher positions at 25% time or more require full-time enrollment. Students not enrolled full-time will jeopardize their funding for other types of aid including university fellowships.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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Due to the broad nature of the research interests in the department and the diversity of backgrounds of our graduate students, formal course requirements are kept to a minimum and are typically completed in the first year. Students are encouraged to shape their own graduate education, as they choose the majority of their coursework and the scientific direction for their research. The courses available include those offered by other departments, both in the Medical School and elsewhere on campus.

At the end of the first year, you will have completed at least all of the course requirements of whichever gateway program you entered under (CMB or INP program).

Direct Admit students will have completed all of their course requirements as directed by your faculty mentor at the end of your first year.

### **Preliminary Exam:**

- Students who are directly admitted to the Department must demonstrate proficiency by passing a preliminary qualifying exam at the end of their first year.
- Effective Fall 2023, students entering the department through a first-year gateway program that does not require successful completion of the preliminary exam must take and pass a preliminary exam at the end of their first quarter in Physiology & Biophysics.

### The requirements for the exam are as follows:

1. Students need to form a 3-faculty member committee with the PI serving as chair. No outside department faculty members are required.
2. Students need to deliver a 20-minute presentation on their research.
3. Students need to deliver a 20-minute presentation proposing a research project based on literature.

### During the preliminary qualifying exam, students are expected to demonstrate that they have:

- established a solid foundation of knowledge in the relevant disciplines
- acquired a good understanding of research methods, including the responsible conduct of research
- improved their critical thinking skills and are ready to begin their thesis research, in which they will take major responsibility for designing, conducting, and publishing Ph.D.-level research projects.

### There are three possible outcomes of the exam:

- Pass
- Fail with an opportunity to retake the exam within one month.
- Fail

The committee decision is referred to the Department Chair and Graduate Advisor for action.

### **Classes**

***You must have a minimum of 12 units per quarter.***

### **Every student should enroll every quarter in:**

- 200 Research in Physiology and Biophysics A, B, C - credit for laboratory research [Letter Graded,



based on performance]

- 290 Topics in Physiology A, B, C – Seminar program, Journal Club and RIP seminars [S/U based on performance and participation]

**All Students:**

- **You must have a minimum of 12 units per quarter.**
- In your final quarter you should enroll in
  - 299 Dissertation in Physiology and Biophysics Preparation and completion of the dissertation required for the Ph.D. or Master of Science degree

**Electives**

From your second through fifth year, you have an option to take one elective course per year. You should confer with your dissertation advisor/mentor to choose courses best suited to your scientific objectives. Note that the Department leaves the choice of course and whether or not you take such elective courses entirely up to you and your advisor.

Please consult the “Schedule of Classes” online for available electives and confirm with the Department Graduate Faculty Advisor, **Dr. Lan Huang** ([lanhuang@uci.edu](mailto:lanhuang@uci.edu)), for their appropriateness PRIOR to enrolling.

Although one elective per year in the second and third year is recommended, the distribution of the two electives within the three-year period can be flexible with prior notification to the Department Graduate Faculty Advisor. Contacting the course organizer in advance to ensure that the class will actually be offered is strongly recommended.

## GRADUATE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

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### Teaching Opportunities

The Department of Physiology and Biophysics has no formal teaching requirements, but students wishing to gain teaching experience by TAing in particular courses can make arrangement to do so following discussion with their PhD mentor and then through the graduate coordinator, **Claire Chen** (x4-5864, [chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)). You may want to TA a particular course for your professional development, such as an upper division undergraduate biology course. If this is the case, it is recommended that you establish that you can indeed TA that course with the course instructor before making a general agreement to TA. (You must complete TA Training before you can TA; TA training is offered once a year in the fall through UCI Center for Engaged Instruction).

### RIP (Research In Progress) Seminars

Starting in year 2, students are required to give a short (30 min) oral presentation at their assigned seminar month. The purpose of this seminar is to provide a venue where students receive feedback on their research progress, and also to help develop their presentation skills. The ability to speak clearly, concisely, and knowledgeably about science to a diverse group of scientists with different backgrounds is essential for success in a scientific career.

Attendance at all department seminars, RIP seminars, and Journal Club is mandatory and failure to attend may lead to an unsatisfactory grade in Physiology & Biophysics 290. (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory only). All Physiology and Biophysics faculty rotate quarterly as instructors for Physiology & Biophysics 290. This quarterly rotation keeps the course fresh and allows you a wide range of scientific expertise. If for some reason you cannot attend any of the department seminars, RIP seminars, and Journal Club for professional reasons (conference travel) or illness, please let that quarter's Journal Club instructor know ahead of time (they keep track of your participation) and cc **Lan Huang** (x4-8548, [lanhuang@uci.edu](mailto:lanhuang@uci.edu)), the Graduate Faculty Advisor. After regular departmental seminars, students will have catered lunch with the speaker in the Department conference room MSI D338. This informal setting gives you professional contact with outside scientists.

*\*Graduate students who are mentored by faculty affiliated with the Institute for Immunology are strongly encouraged to attend biweekly Immunology Seminars by distinguished outside speakers, a weekly Immunology Journal Club, and the Annual Immunology Fair.*

## NORMATIVE AND MAXIMUM TIME TO DEGREE

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In accordance with the policies of the Graduate Division, the Department of Physiology & Biophysics has set normative and maximum times to degree for the Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences with a Concentration in Physiology & Biophysics. The normative time is the average time or expected amount of time it will take a student to complete the degree.

(A=Normal Time to Advancement; N=Normal Time to Degree)

<b>Doctoral Program</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>
Biomedical Sciences in Ph.D. with concentration in Physiology & Biophysics	3	5

### Timeline for Completion

In the normative case, the student will advance to candidacy by the end of the third year, and will complete the program by the end of the fifth year. Students who make exceptional progress on their thesis projects are encouraged to complete the Ph.D. sooner.

<b>Academic year</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	Required Courses Laboratory rotations (PB 200R) Apply for fellowships
<b>Year 2</b>	Topics in P&B (PB 290) Elective courses (optional) Laboratory research (PB 200) Apply for fellowships TA (optional) Co-author and publish paper
<b>Year 3</b>	Topics in P&B (PB 290) Elective courses (optional) Laboratory research (PB 200) Apply for fellowships TA (optional) First/Co- author and publish paper
<b>Year 4</b>	Topics in P&B (PB 290) Elective courses (optional) Laboratory research (PB 200) Apply for fellowships TA (optional) First/Co- author and publish paper

<b>Year 5</b>	Topics in P&B (PB 299) Elective courses (optional) Laboratory research (PB 200) TA (optional) First/Co- author and publish paper Write and complete dissertation
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## ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

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### Advancement Exam

Passing the advancement exam is a prerequisite for the Ph.D. degree. The purpose of the Advancement Exam is to ensure that the student has selected an appropriate research project that will yield interesting experimental data for his/her dissertation. The student should demonstrate sufficient understanding of the background and rationale, that the experimental work that has been completed or is being contemplated is scientifically sound, and that the experimental part of the thesis work is likely to be completed successfully within the normal period of graduate study. All graduate students in the Department are expected to take the Advancement to Candidacy Exam **during their third year**. The student must have advanced by the end of the Fall Quarter of their fourth year; failure to do so will require the student's Advisor to meet with the Graduate Student Advisor and the Chair to discuss the delay. It should be noted that students are expected to graduate within two years after passing the Advancement Exam. Foreign students will get the tuition reduction for a two-year period after passing the Advancement Exam.

### Nonresident Supplemental Tuition Fellowships for Nonresident Doctoral Students (including International Students)

1. Ph.D. Students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States may be awarded nonresident supplemental tuition fellowship support on the basis of outstanding scholarship for a maximum of one year (three quarters). Students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States are expected to establish California residency prior to their second year of study.
2. International Ph.D. students who have demonstrated outstanding scholarship and academic progress may receive nonresident supplemental tuition fellowship support. Following advancement to candidacy, international doctoral students will not be assessed NRST for a period of up to three consecutive calendar years. Any such student who continues to be enrolled or who re-enrolls after three years will be charged the full NRST that is in effect at that time. Quarters of Leave of Absence or Filing Fee count toward the allowable three calendar years.

### Advancement Examination Committee

The Advancement Exam committee should consist of five faculty members, at least three of whom are members of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics (including joint faculty members), including the Research Advisor and at least one outside member who must be from another department (joint faculty are excluded as the outside member). All members of the committee must be members of the Academic Senate. Furthermore, at the time of advancement, consent should be obtained from those faculty members who will serve as a dissertation/doctoral committee member. **Dissertation/Doctoral committee members** should be chosen from among the advancement committee members.

Once the Advancement Committee is formed, the student will prepare a written proposition of the thesis research. The format for the proposition should follow guidelines similar to those for a NIH

research grant proposal as described below:

### **Written Proposal Format**

- A. Abstract
- B. Specific Aims
- C. State concisely and realistically what the research described in the proposal is intended to accomplish and/or the hypothesis to be tested. Note: Parts A and B together should not exceed one page.
- D. Significance
- E. Briefly describe the background to the proposal; critically evaluate existing knowledge and specifically identify the gaps in knowledge which the project is intended to fill. State concisely the importance of the research described in the proposal by relating the specific aims to longer term objectives. Do not exceed two pages.
- F. Preliminary Studies
- G. Briefly describe preliminary studies pertinent to the proposed research which will help establish the feasibility of the project and your competence to pursue the proposed research. Append relevant figures and tables and any of your publications or abstracts which are relevant to the proposal.
- H. Experimental Plan
- I. Discuss in detail the experimental design and procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Discuss potential difficulties and alternative approaches to achieve specific aims of the proposal.
- J. References

**The committee has a right to reject any proposal that fails to conform to the format guidelines.**

**Note:** The total length of the proposal should not exceed ten pages, single-spaced, exclusive of figures, tables and references. If the proposal exceeds this length, it may be returned to the student, unread, in much the same way that funding agencies now return proposals that do not meet their guidelines or length limits.

**The proposal cannot be written in a font smaller than Arial 11pt or Times New Roman 12pt.**

### **Necessary paperwork**

The Advancement to Candidacy form must be submitted to Graduate Division in connection with the Advancement to Candidacy Exam. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure it is properly prepared for approval signatures before the exam.

The student must also choose the doctoral dissertation committee members from the members of the advancement committee and obtain their consent to serve on the dissertation committee. At least three, and up to five, members (more than 60% of whom should be Physiology & Biophysics faculty members) selected to serve on the dissertation committee need to be indicated by an asterisk (\*) on the Advancement form at the time of the Advancement Exam. Also, the PI and student must identify any potential conflict of interest and sign the Conflict of Interest form prior to the exam. If necessary, the Oversight member must be present at the Advancement exam. Any questions should be directed to the Departmental Graduate Faculty Advisor **Dr. Lan Huang** ([lanhuang@uci.edu](mailto:lanhuang@uci.edu)). The form reports that the student has passed the Advancement Exam and has now officially Advanced to Candidacy and may proceed with the doctoral dissertation. Any changes in the doctoral committee must be approved by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies at least one month prior to the final dissertation

defense. It is the student's responsibility to submit the conflict of interest form and the Advancement to Candidacy form with appropriate signatures immediately after the exam to Graduate Division. Prior to submission the student will need to take the form to the Central Cashier's Office and pay a fee in the amount of \$90. Payment of this fee is the responsibility of the student.

## APPLICATION FOR NON-TERMINAL MASTER'S DEGREE

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The department of Physiology & Biophysics can grant an MS degree in Biomedical Sciences to students who are interested in applying when they advance for their Ph.D. degree. This MS degree is a non-terminal master's degree that you can get en route to your Ph.D.

Students who have advanced for the PhD after June 1, 2021 or will advance later are eligible to apply. Students who already hold one or more MS degrees or advanced before June 1, 2021 are not eligible. For students who are eligible and interested in applying, please first consult with your PI to get their approval, and then forward the confirmation email to graduate advisor Dr. Lan Huang ([lanhuang@uci.edu](mailto:lanhuang@uci.edu)) and graduate coordinator Claire Chen ([chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)), stating that you are interested in the MS degree.

For students who plan to advance for the PhD and are interested in applying for the MS degree, you are required to send your request with PI's approval at least one quarter before your advancement and before the filing deadline in that quarter. A sufficient amount of time is needed to warrant the completion of both your MS degree and Ph.D. advancement paperwork. Here is the link to the campus filing deadlines: <https://grad.uci.edu/current-students/filing-deadlines/>.

It is the responsibility of the student to follow the guidelines stated above.

## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

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The IDP is a popular and effective tool in professional development and career planning. The NIH and other federal agencies require the IDP for pre-doctoral fellows and training grant recipients, and is required of all doctoral students in the Department of Physiology & Biophysics.

All doctoral students in the department are required to complete an individual development plan (IDP) annually **each October** and in consultation with their dissertation advisor. After completion, each student is responsible for submitting their IDP to the department's Graduate Coordinator **Claire Chen** ([chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)). The IDP will be presented at the first dissertation committee and updated annually for presentation at all future dissertation committee meetings.

The IDP plan should describe the student's career goals, desired training, and specific milestones associated with professional development and academic training (fellowship applications, technical workshops, meeting presentations, pedagogical training, development of communications, etc.) Students should be encouraged to incorporate professional activities offered by the School of Medicine and the UCI Graduate Division.

Resources for the development of an IDP are available through "myIDP" at the AAAS and the UCI Graduate Division. My IDP is an interactive website that leads a student through career goals with skill and professional assessment tools.

AAAS resources: my IDP program developed by AAAS (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>).  
UCI Graduate Division web page on Mentoring Excellence (<https://grad.uci.edu/professional-development/certificate-programs/mentoring-excellence/>).

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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An important aspect of successful progress toward the doctoral degree is the selection of and timely consultation with your Dissertation Committee (3 - 5 members). The purpose of this committee is not only to review the finished dissertation, but also to serve as a source of feedback from outside the student's own lab on how he or she is progressing on the dissertation project. The Dissertation Committee must be chaired by the student's Dissertation Advisor, and a majority of members must be from the student's department. Members of the committee should be chosen in consultation between the student and his or her Dissertation Advisor. As mentioned in the previous section, the member must be designated on the Advancement to Candidacy Form. The Dissertation Committee does not need to have an outside member but most students and their Advisor will elect to have all members from the Advancement Committee.

To make changes in the member composition of the dissertation committee, a written request must be filed by the PI at least one month prior to the student dissertation defense to Andrea Bannigan ([alanders@uci.edu](mailto:alanders@uci.edu)) at Graduate Division.

## ANNUAL RESEARCH PROGRESS

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Following Advancement to Candidacy, the student should meet with his or her dissertation committee on an annual basis. A good time to schedule a dissertation committee meeting is within a week or two after a student presents his/her research at the Wednesday Seminar Series. It is the student's responsibility to invite the committee members to attend this seminar presentation to keep the dissertation Committee informed of the student's progress and to provide the student with a means for periodically evaluating how the dissertation research is proceeding.

## COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION

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When it is determined by the Advisor and Dissertation Committee that the student has completed a body of original research sufficient to constitute the dissertation, the student must prepare the dissertation for submission to the Department and the School of Medicine. The Graduate Division has specific requirements for the preparation of the dissertation. A summary of these requirements is available at <http://www.grad.uci.edu/academics/degree-completion/index.html>.

Once the student has prepared the final draft of the dissertation, it is submitted to all members of the dissertation committee. After reading the dissertation, members of the committee may recommend changes in content and style. Completion of the dissertation will include an **Oral Defense** which is a formal seminar presentation of the research to the entire Department. The dissertation draft must be delivered to the dissertation committee members at least **two weeks before the defense date**. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the completion of the Ph.D. form including all required committee signatures. Arrangements for a room reservation for the dissertation defense and audio-visual equipment should also be scheduled through **Claire Chen**

([chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)). A bound copy of the final version of the dissertation to be placed in the Department Conference Room should be provided to **Claire Chen** ([chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)).

## FELLOWSHIPS AND TRAVEL SUPPORT

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Fellowships and scholarships for graduate students are available from a variety of sources. Some of these require nomination by your Faculty Advisor (e.g., positions on training grants at UCI). Other fellowships and scholarships are available from such agencies as NSF, the Leukemia Society of America, American Heart Association, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, etc. In addition, the UCI Graduate Division offers periodic workshops to support the NSF graduate research fellowship (GRFP) application. Internal minority/diversity and dissertation fellowships are also available. Additional information can be obtained from faculty members in the Department. Outside fellowships and scholarships are generally highly competitive, but qualified students are strongly encouraged to apply. They are prestigious and receiving one will strengthen your curriculum vitae when applying for post-graduate positions.

There are a few points worth noting about the different kinds of fellowships available. Most importantly, be aware that income taxes (Federal and State) are not automatically deducted from your fellowship stipends, as they are from paychecks. To avoid possible trouble down the road, you will probably need to make quarterly payments (known as Estimated Tax Payments) to the IRS and California Franchise Tax Board). Check out IRS Publication 970 ("Tax Benefits for Education"), IRS Form 1040-ES and Franchise Tax Board Form IRS 540-EZ for more information. These forms are available in many public libraries or by calling 1-800-TAX FORM (Fed) or 1-800-388-0505 (State) or via the internet.

The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the School of Medicine established the **Individual Fellowship Application Incentive** and the **Individual Fellowship Bonus**, as part of an incentive plan designed to encourage more students to apply for extramural funds. Students can receive a \$250 reward for submitting an individual fellowship application and \$1,000 per year, on top of other stipends, for securing an individual fellowship. For more information on these incentive plans, please visit the website at <http://www.som.uci.edu/graduate-studies/student-support/individual-fellowship-application-incentive.asp>

### Travel support

Money to cover some types of research expenses, such as travel, can be obtained from the department and school. With the support of the Dean of the School of Medicine and the UCI Graduate Division, the Office of Graduate Studies offers travel support to doctoral students in the School of Medicine at a level of \$500 per academic year. The required conditions and application can be found at <http://www.som.uci.edu/graduate-studies/student-support/travel-support.asp>

Below are some guidelines to help you in planning your trips for University business. Please keep them handy for future reference, but if you have any questions, please ask. An email from the faculty supporting this travel is required before any reservations are made. The department uses the preferred online service provided by [Connexus Travel Program](#). If you find a lower cost alternative, please print comparable airfare for the same flights offered through the [Connexus Travel Program](#) and include your reimbursement request.

- Travel that is to be reimbursed from federal grants and contracts must be booked through U.S. air carriers except in the following circumstances:
  - Travel to and from the U.S. - when the use of a U.S. airline service would:
    - Extend travel time (including delay at origin) by 24 hours or more



- For travel between two foreign destinations - when the use of a U.S. airline service would:
  - Increase the number of aircraft changes required by two or more
  - Extend travel time by at least six hours or more
- Short Distance Travel (3 hours or less) - when the use of a U.S. airline service would:
  - Require twice the travel time of a foreign carrier
- When the costs of transportation are reimbursed in full by a third party such as a foreign government or an international agency
- When one or more of the above circumstances apply, provide an explanation indicating the appropriate exception in the travel request form.
  - Please note that the availability of a flight at less cost is not an adequate justification to use a foreign carrier service.
  - Original plane ticket receipt or invoice/itinerary showing payment or ticket number. This is the last page of your ticket booklet that says "passenger receipt" at the top and has a dollar amount in the bottom left corner. If you are traveling with an e-ticket or on a ticketless ticket you need to request a "passenger Receipt" at the ticketing counter at the airport. Your passenger receipt or invoice/itinerary is required even if you requested an advance from the department and you had no out-of-pocket expense. Please also include all other flight paperwork of any kind as back-up proof of travel.
- All original hotel/lodging paperwork/receipt. If you are sharing a room, please ask for 2 copies.
- Original receipts for rental car expenses and gas
- Original receipts for any meals paid for with personal funds
- Original receipts for airport parking or taxi/shuttle to and from the airport
- Any other original miscellaneous receipts
- If you are traveling to a conference you will need to provide a copy of your registration form which will include your agenda; i.e. if you signed up to attend certain parts of the conference and they gave you an itinerary/receipt for your specific events, we will need that form. The documentation provided varies greatly between conferences. It is best to save ALL conference documentation.
- Here are a few tips on receipts and documentation:
- A receipt will contain the following information; name and address of business, an itemization of services, total amount due, statement of form of payment and it will show a zero balance (if it does not contain this information, it is not a receipt).
- When you register for a conference or make other arrangements on-line, please read the screens carefully. There will be an option to print a receipt - please do so. There will also be a confirmation page or you will receive a confirmation email - please print these pages as well.
- Too much information/paperwork is better than not enough.
- It might be helpful for you to bring a manila envelope on your trip and keep paperwork in it as you receive it.

### **Plan ahead**

If you don't, you may not save money on your airfare, get confirmed on your preference of flights, or (worse) get reimbursed for your expenses. It is to your advantage to plan ahead for your trip as much as possible. Advance notice also helps the administrative staff prepare the required paperwork. When you know you are going somewhere, let us know and we will help guide you through the process.

Travel arrangements for out-of-state travel should be made one month ahead and for in-state, two weeks ahead.

**Emergency loans** are available through Financial Aid (949-824-8262). The maximum amount for a short period loan without interest is \$300.

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## TUITION AND FEES

Please visit the below link for graduate students' tuition & fees and stipend:

<https://www.reg.uci.edu/fees/>

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## STIPENDS AND HEALTH INSURANCE

Funding, i.e., stipend, graduate student fees (which include health insurance) and non-resident tuition for domestic students (as applicable) in year 1 only, will be guaranteed for the duration of your Ph.D. program as long as you maintain good academic standing. All students admitted to the Department are offered full financial support, which is distributed on a monthly basis. The stipend is spread out over an annual year to cover living expenses. Your first stipend payment (check or direct deposit) will be paid to you on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following your initial month joining the department. The fees paid by the department on your behalf include mandatory Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHIP). If you have insurance coverage from a different source, we would appreciate it if you could let us know; if you do not need UCI's insurance coverage, we will ask you to file an insurance waiver so that the department does not pay for duplicate coverage.

As a full-time graduate student, you will receive health insurance, which also covers trips to the Student Health Center (949-824-5301). However, during the summer the actual cost of your visit is charged to the Department. The Department's financial office staff member will be happy to help with your individual questions and provide further information and brochures regarding student health.

In addition, various options are available for students' psychological care and support:

- AVC Wellness, Health and Counseling services (949-824-4642)
- Campus Social Worker (949-824-1418)
- Counseling Center (949-824-6457)

Beginning Fall 2022, students are assessed the UC Graduate and Professional Council Fee (UCGPC). This is a non-mandatory fee of \$3.00 that is **not** supported by the Department. Students have the option to opt-out of UCGPC, which will waive the \$3.00 fee assessment from their ZotBill. Otherwise, students who elect to keep UCGPC are responsible for fee payment.

For more information and options, please contact **Claire Chen** ([chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu)).

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## ESTABLISHING RESIDENCY

The U.C. system is considerably more expensive for non-California residents. It is therefore vital for out-of-state domestic students establish themselves as California residents during their first year.

In order to be considered a resident, you must obtain a Petition for Resident Classification from the Office of Registrar, fill it out, and return it to them by the appropriate deadline. You then produce the required proof of residency at the end of one year. If you don't start the proceedings early, you won't establish your residency in time and you will have higher fees. Contact the Residence Deputy Office of the Registrar, at x4-6129 or [regres.uci.edu](mailto:regres.uci.edu). If you have any questions, or look at the Registrar's Office website at [www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/residence/index.html](http://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/residence/index.html).

Nonresident students who need to become California residents for tuition/fee purposes must have their status changed at the Registrar's Office PRIOR to the fee payment deadline for the fall quarter. Documentation of residence will be required

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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### **International Students (as applicable)**

The Office of International Students provides a variety of services to international students, including assistance with visa and immigration forms and interpretation of government regulations. All international students must secure a visa before coming to the United States to study at UC Irvine. The most common student visa is an F1, but there are other kinds of visas available. If you already have a valid visa that allows you to study in a degree-earning program, then we would recommend that you check with the International Center to see if you should continue on that same visa or switch to an F1. There are distinct advantages to each kind of visa and the International Center can best advise you given your particular situation. If you do need to secure an F1 visa, you need to fill out an I-20/DS-2019 Request for New Graduate Students and return to the department as soon as you are admitted to ensure that your documents arrive on time for you to begin school in late September. The Request form will be sent to you by the department. Once you return the form to the department, the International Center will process the forms to aid you in applying for a student visa.

Information is also available about housing, tutoring, registration, financial aid, and student activities. International Students are strongly encouraged to stay in contact with the International Center - <http://www.ic.uci.edu>.

### **Orientations**

Incoming Ph.D. students will be asked to attend two orientations before the start of instruction. One of the orientations is the Campus-wide New Graduate Student Orientation. The other orientation is specific to Program in Physiology & Biophysics and is mandatory. It provides an introduction to the program and an opportunity to meet faculty and fellow students. New International Graduate Students will also attend a separate orientation welcoming them to UCI. Additional orientations may include the School of Medicine as well as the Departments.

## **REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT**

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Registration consists of two steps, enrollment and fee payment. Registration is described at [www.reg.uci.edu/enrollment/registration.html](http://www.reg.uci.edu/enrollment/registration.html)

### **A. Enrollment Process**

To register for classes, use UCI's web-based registration system WebReg

([www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/webreg.html](http://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/webreg.html)). Registration through WebReg can be completed from anywhere in the world. WebReg requires access to the internet and use of a web browser.

#### **B. Fee Payment**

- a. All of your billing information appears on your Zot Account, which you can access at <https://zotaccount.uci.edu>. It is essential that you keep track of this account. Fee payment deadlines can be found at [www.reg.uci.edu/fees/payments.html](http://www.reg.uci.edu/fees/payments.html).
- b. If you have financial support that includes fee remission, such as a fellowship or employment as a Teaching Assistant or Graduate Student Researcher, your fees will automatically be paid when you enroll for classes through WebReg, provided that you (1) enroll for the Minimum Required Units (MRU) – 12; (2) you enroll by the fee deadline; (3) the aid posted to your ZotBill covers the full amount of your registration fees, and (4) you have no past-due debts or holds. If you fail to meet any of these conditions, your aid will not be activated and your fees will not be paid automatically. The typical number of MRU needed to activate aid is 12.
- c. If you fail to register for classes on time, you will be subject to service charges, even if the Department is paying your fees. The Department will not pay the late charges for you. You must ensure that you enroll by the corresponding deadlines. Further details on enrollment procedures are on the Registrar’s website. Please read this information carefully.

#### **C. Late Fees**

- a. There are two separate late registration service charges: one for late enrollment and one for late fee payment. Late registration will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. See [www.reg.uci.edu/fees/latecharges.html](http://www.reg.uci.edu/fees/latecharges.html) for the late charges that may apply to your situation. Late service charges may be waived only if the University is at fault for your late registration or if you have been incapacitated throughout the registration period due to illness or injury. *Documentation will be required.*

#### **D. Cancellation/Withdrawal**

- a. The Cancellation/Withdrawal (C/W) form is used during the quarter when a student wishes to discontinue enrollment in a quarter for which s/he has already paid fees. If you wish to discontinue enrollment after paying fees, you **MUST** file a C/W form. Do NOT drop all of your courses. Your classes will be dropped for you automatically during the withdrawal process. Likewise, do not stop payment on the check used to pay registration fees in lieu of filing the C/W form. Please visit [www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/cw.html](http://www.reg.uci.edu/registrar/soc/cw.html) for more information. Please see the Graduate Coordinator – **Claire Chen** ([chiaoche@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaoche@hs.uci.edu)) should you choose to withdraw.

#### **E. Filing Fee**

- a. Under certain circumstances, you may be eligible to pay a “Filing Fee” if approved by your academic unit and the Dean of Graduate Division. In general, the Filing Fee option only applies to students who have completed all requirements for a Master’s, Ed.D, or Ph.D. degree except for their “official” submission of a thesis or dissertation to the Special Collections University Archives, or the final formal examination (e.g., the comprehensive examination for Master’s candidates). However, prior to the beginning of the “filing fee” quarter, all other requirements for the degree must have been met by the student, including advancement to candidacy. This means, for example, that you are not eligible for Filing Fee Status if you currently have incomplete grades (NR, I) in courses that you need to fulfill your degree requirements. You may have to pay the Filing Fee for one quarter only. During this quarter, you cannot hold an academic employment position (Reader, TA, or GSR). For more information, please visit [www.grad.uci.edu/forms/index.html](http://www.grad.uci.edu/forms/index.html).

#### **F. Leave of Absence**

- a. An academic leave of absence (LOA) is intended to cover the temporary interruption of the

student's academic program. The reason(s) for requesting a LOA must be consistent with University policy and guidelines, and with the guidelines of the student's academic program. The academic LOA can be granted for up to one year (3 quarters) if, following a review of the student's academic record, it is deemed consistent with the student's academic objectives and academic progress. While on an LOA, a student is not eligible for University fellowship support, University research grants, or financial aid. While on an LOA, student may not hold any academic employment position (TA or GSR). For more information, please visit [www.grad.uci.edu/forms/index.html](http://www.grad.uci.edu/forms/index.html).

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

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### ***Progress Toward Degree***

#### 1. Satisfactory Progress

A graduate student is expected to maintain satisfactory progress toward an approved academic objective as defined by the faculty of the program, and in accordance with policies of the Graduate Council and the University. It is important that the academic record of the student be assessed each quarter to confirm satisfactory progress. The academic unit should inform the Graduate Division by contacting the Enrolled Student Affairs Officer of any action taken with regard to a student's academic record, and should provide copies of any related correspondence between the department/program and the student.

Satisfactory progress is determined on the basis of both the student's recent academic record and overall performance. The criteria for determining satisfactory progress toward degree are outlined below. Student records should be reviewed with special attention to the following criteria:

- **GPA** - the student must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average.
- **Normal Time to Degree** – the student must advance to candidacy and complete the degree within the limitations established by UCI's Graduate Council (March 2004). A student exceeding the maximal time to degree shall be deemed not to be making satisfactory progress toward their degree; moreover, they shall not be eligible to receive University resources (e.g., financial aid, TA-ships, housing, etc.). Normal Time to Degree for each graduate program is listed in the *General Catalogue* and on the Graduate Division website.
- **Grade Reports** - all I, W, or NR grades should be reviewed and appropriate action taken as needed.
- **P/NP** - no courses graded "Pass" are to be included as part of the advanced degree program, nor are they to be considered as satisfying academic criteria for University-administered fellowships and academic appointments/employment.
- **Enrollment Units** - students must be enrolled for at least 12 graduate or upper-division units of credit each quarter, including credit for supervised teaching and research, unless part-time status or an academic leave of absence has been approved in advance by the Graduate Dean. In cases of approved part-time status, enrollment in eight (8) or fewer units of credit toward the degree is expected each quarter.
- **Distribution of units** - the number of upper-division and graduate-level units of credit completed toward degree requirements each quarter should be at least eight and no more than 16 units, unless an exception has been approved.
- **Residency** - time in residence prior to advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. or

professional doctorate degree should be within acceptable limits (ordinarily, no more than four years).

## 2. Unsatisfactory Progress

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

### a. Criteria for Determining Unsatisfactory Progress

- An overall grade point average below 3.0; or
- A grade point average below 3.0 in two successive quarters; or
  - Fewer than 24 units completed and applicable toward the advanced degree requirements in the last three quarters; or
  - Failure to complete required courses or examinations satisfactorily within the period specified by the graduate program; or
- Failure to pass a required examination in two attempts; or
  - Failure to progress academically within the Normal Time to Degree framework specified for the student's graduate program; or
  - The appropriate faculty committee's evaluation states that there has not been satisfactory progress toward completion of the thesis or dissertation.

**NOTE:** Unsatisfactory academic progress may be determined on the basis of explicit requirements such as those outlined above. However, the professional judgment of the faculty, upon review of all graduate work undertaken by the student, is paramount, and the faculty of a particular academic unit may establish more restrictive criteria for satisfactory academic progress.

### b. Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress

- It is very important to give students an early warning of potentially unsatisfactory progress. Faculty advisors must be direct and clearly communicate orally and in writing with students demonstrating academic difficulties at the earliest possible time, and must keep a written record of all such communications. Notices of potential unsatisfactory progress must be sent in writing to the student; a copy must also be retained in the academic unit files and another copy sent to the Graduate Dean (120 Aldrich Hall). **The written communication must include specific details on areas that require improvement, provide an outline and a timeline for future expectations of academic progress, and set meeting dates to maintain continuity in advisement.** The purpose of the notice of potential unsatisfactory progress is to provide the student with a period of time (usually at least one academic quarter) in which to make the necessary improvement in their academic status, and successfully complete their graduate study.
- If requested by the academic unit to do so, the Graduate Dean will also send a notice of potential unsatisfactory progress to the student.

## FILING DEADLINES

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Please visit the below link for filing deadlines:

<https://grad.uci.edu/current-students/filing-deadlines/>

## Contact

Please contact Claire at [chiaochc@hs.uci.edu](mailto:chiaochc@hs.uci.edu) if you have any questions on deadlines.

## LINKS AND FORMS

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Physiology & Biophysics Website <http://physiology.uci.edu/>

Academic Calendar & Fee Deadlines <https://www.reg.uci.edu/navigation/calendars.html>

Registrar <http://www.reg.uci.edu>

Schedule of Classes <http://websoc.reg.uci.edu/perl/WebSoc>

Graduate Division <http://www.grad.uci.edu>

Graduate Division Forms (e.g. Ph.D. Form I and II, Filing Fee, etc.)

<https://grad.uci.edu/current-students/student-forms/>

SOM Graduate Studies <https://www.som.uci.edu/graduate-studies/>

## CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

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Leora Fellus, School of Medicine Graduate Studies

Director 949-824-1028; [lfellus@uci.edu](mailto:lfellus@uci.edu)

*Provides support and referrals services to graduate students and post-doctoral scholars in personal distress or in need of academic counseling*

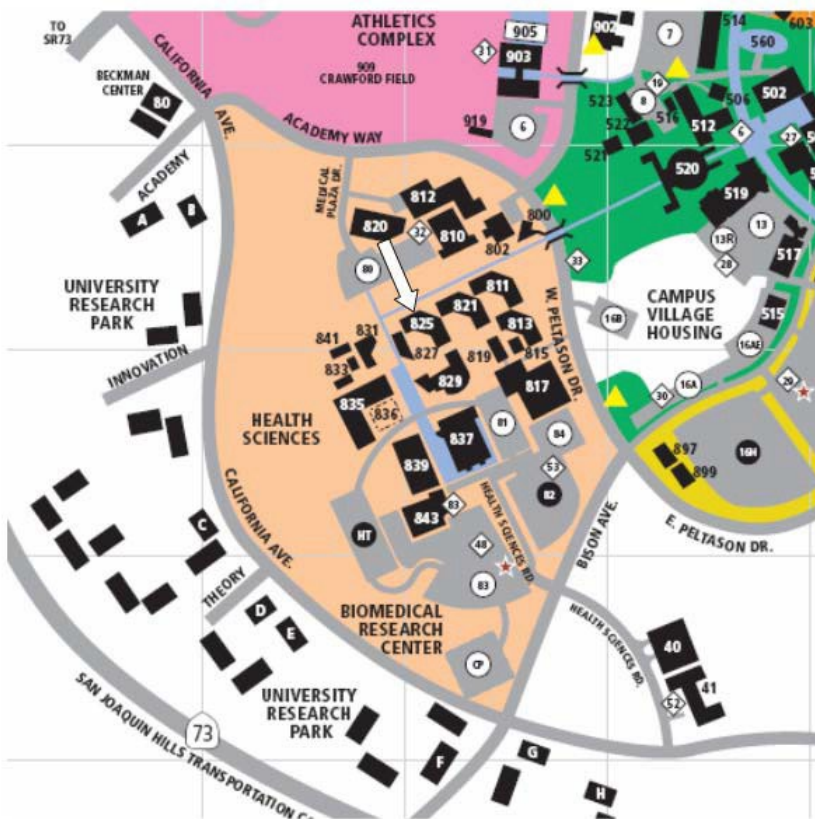
Campus Assault Resources & Education (CARE)	949-824-7273
Campus Recreation	949-824-5346
Child Care Services	949-824-2100
Clinical Social Worker	949-824-1418
Counseling Center	949-824-6457
Dean of Students	949-824-5590
Disability Services Center	949-824-7494
International Center	949-824-7249
Graduate Resource Center	949-824-2207
LGBTQ+ Resource Center	949-824-3277
Office of Ombudsmen	949-824-7256
UCI Police Department	949-824-5523
Student Health Center	949-824-5301
Wellness, Health & Counseling Services	949-824-4642

## HOW TO GET HERE

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### Administrative Office

Department of Physiology & Biophysics  
University of California, Irvine  
825 Health Sciences Road  
Medical Sciences I, Room D340  
Irvine, CA 92697-1700  
Phone: 949-824-5863  
Fax: 949-824-8540



Located in Building 825  
Medical Sciences 1, D Wing  
(William J. Cheney Hall)

GPS Coordinates	
<u>hdd°mm'mmm</u>	<u>hddd.ddddd</u>
N33°38.743'	N33.64569
W117°51.054'	W117.85091