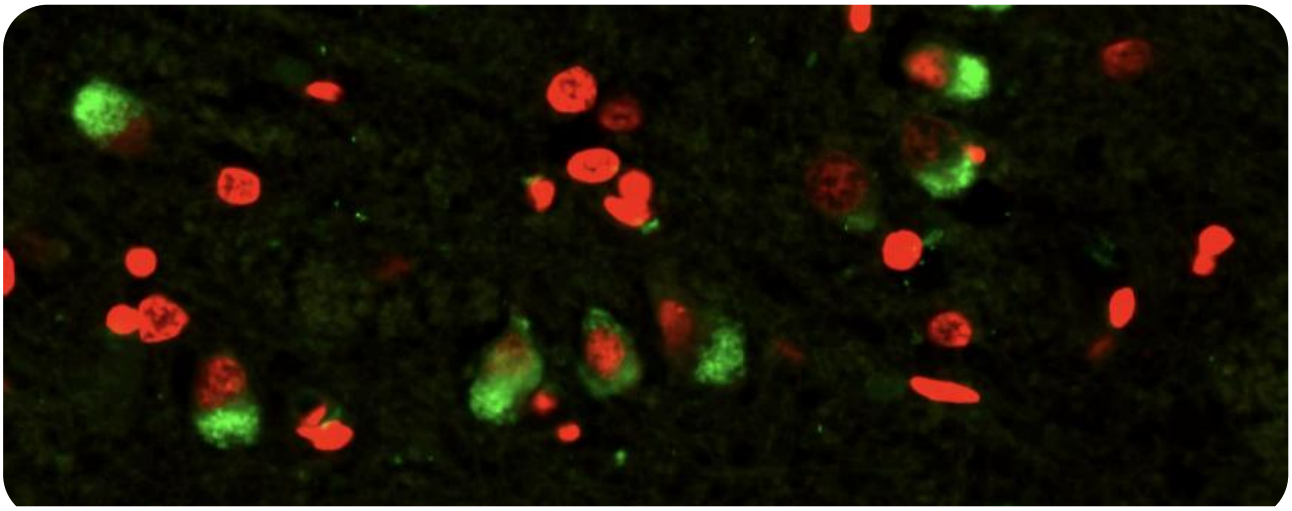
Graduate Student Handbook

Ph.D. Program in Experimental Pathology

Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Academic Year

August 1, 2026, to June 13, 2027



Human retrovirus is activated to express retroviral RNA (The green surrounding the red nuclei labels immunostimulatory dsRNA) in human Alzheimer's disease in a Down's Syndrome patient which is not seen in normal age-related brain and is implicated in neuroinflammation, activated microglia, impaired neuronal function, and possible accelerated neurodegeneration (courtesy of Dr. F. Rahmatpanah).

Foreword

This handbook is designed for graduate students who are performing their Ph.D. thesis research in the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program (EPGP), one of the educational opportunities in the Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine. The EPGP originated in 2004 and has successfully produced 29 graduates and currently has 24 students enrolled. Typically, students enter Experimental Pathology Graduate Program following the completion of one of two Charlie Dunlop School of Biological Sciences gateway programs, Cellular and Molecular Biosciences (CMB) or the Interdepartmental Neurosciences Program (INP). Another option is "Direct Admission," which is usually reserved for students who are nominated by a faculty mentor/advisor for the student to join their lab directly instead of following the completion of a gateway program first. MSTP students who select Experimental Pathology for their PhD training are automatically admitted to the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program. The Experimental Pathology mentors are comprised of faculty who hold a primary appointment in Pathology and faculty who hold primary appointments in other UCI departments with a joint appointment in Pathology (so-called joint appointees) (Pathology & Laboratory Medicine: Faculty | UC Irvine School of Medicine). Potential Mentors of direct-admit candidates can reach out to Dr. Elizabeth Head for more guidance.

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This handbook is intended to provide you with practical information to guide your research and academic endeavors. Our goal is to make the graduate program one that will have a long-term, formative, and positive impact on your scientific careers. For those of you just joining the Department, welcome and we wish you a rewarding scientific experience with us!

Contact Us!

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General Information – Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

The Experimental Pathology Graduate Program office is in room D-440 in the Medical Sciences D building on the western side of the SOM campus where you will find Zahra Daryaee, the Graduate Student Coordinator.

Please work with your PI to arrange mail delivery and to obtain keys to their building and your lab space. Your UCInet ID will allow you access to the California Digital Library, and with it, you will have online access to the majority of scientific journals you will need.

People that you may interact with and their responsibilities include:

Zahra Daryaee, Graduate Student Coordinator (Research Admin II)	zdaryaee@uci.edu
Rick Koser, HR Contact	rkoser@uci.edu
Theresa Tran, Sr. Financial Analyst	theret4@uci.edu
Annette Oh, Grants Administrator	annette.oh@uci.edu
Leif Thomas, Administrative Assistant	karllt@uci.edu

Parking and Transportation Services provides an escort service from 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. from one place to another on campus. After 1:00 a.m., the UCI Police will then provide the escort service. The number is ext. 4-7233 (949-824-7233). While crime on campus is low, the escort service should be used if you are leaving your laboratory late at night. Be safe and aware of your surroundings. UCI Health–Orange operates a free courtesy shuttle that runs from Gottschalk Medical Plaza (Lot 80) on the UCI campus and the UCI Health–Orange Medical Center, as well as other key medical center locations (also known as the Campus-to-Campus Shuttle). The shuttle operates on a direct loop between Lot 80 (Gottschalk Medical Plaza) and the UCI Health–Orange Medical Center, with a stop near the main campus administrative circle (Aldrich Hall). It runs continuously during operating hours, with no additional stops between these locations.

General Information – School of Medicine (SOM), PhD Program

The Experimental Pathology Graduate Program is one of five programs in the UCI School of Medicine offering a PhD degree in Biomedical Sciences. The Associate Dean who leads the SOM programs is Dr. Francesco Tombola (ftombola@uci.edu), and the SOM Graduate Studies Director is Leora Fellus (lfellus@uci.edu), whose office is located in the Medical Education Bldg., Room 3111.

Insurance, Travel Support and Emergency Loans

The Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) is a comprehensive healthcare package available for graduate students (GSHIP). Students are automatically enrolled in GSHIP; however, students have the option to waive coverage, i.e., they have coverage on a different health insurance. In addition to GSHIP, UCI offers various health and wellness programs (please see next section for Health and Wellness Information). For more information, go to: https://shc.uci.edu/insurance.

Support for Travel to Conferences. Currently, $500 per academic year per student is available to attend a relevant scientific conference. Students must have submitted an abstract and be scheduled for a poster or oral presentation to be eligible for the award. If you meet these criteria, submit a request to the SOM Graduate Studies Director (Leora Fellus – lfellus@uci.edu) or Associate Dean Tombola (ftombola@uci.edu).

Emergency loans are available through Financial Aid. The phone number for the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship is (949) 824-6261.

Health and Wellness

UCI is committed to supporting graduate student wellness through multiple programs and resources. The Graduate Division's Well-Being Program offers counseling services, wellness workshops, and support groups specifically designed for graduate students. The Student Wellness & Health Promotion office provides comprehensive health education, mental health support, and wellness programming including stress management workshops, nutrition counseling, and mindfulness sessions. Through the UCI Susan Samueli Integrative Health Institute, students can access evidence-based integrative health practices and educational resources to support their physical and mental well-being. For concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Graduate Division's Office of Inclusive Excellence offers various support services and programs designed to create an inclusive academic environment.

For a comprehensive overview of available resources, students can access UCI's electronic Resource Guide for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Well-Being. Please contact Dr. Hannah Lui Park, Pathology Wellbeing Officer, for more information (hlpark@hs.uci.edu).

Code of Conduct

UCI School of Medicine Statement of Professional Conduct: Graduate Students

Graduate students, as members of the scholarly community, are expected to uphold exemplary standards of professional conduct. Adherence to our principles of conduct, together with solid academic performance, are the pillars of a student's "good standing", which is paramount to student success.

As a community of scholars, we respect the dignity, individuality, and freedom of each member. We seek to enable all members of our community to pursue their educational, scholarly, and career interests in an environment that recognizes both the distinctiveness of each person's experience and the common humanity that unites us all and permits us to take full educational advantage of the variety of talents, backgrounds, and perspectives of those who live and work here. We are unwavering in our

commitment to a community inclusive of diversity, civility and tolerance in the context of academic excellence.

In all activities, each graduate student is expected to be respectful of the rights and interests of the community and to be personally honest. All students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution. Through professional conduct, graduate students are expected to contribute to a school climate in which all community members feel personally safe, heard, valued, fairly treated and respected.

The key principles of professional conduct include:

Professional Competence and Responsibility: Members of the UCI academic community are committed to engage in the highest levels of competence in teaching, learning, research, and community service and to assist one another nurturing a professional and collegial atmosphere. This includes communicating in a manner that in no way discriminates against or harasses others, and treats the ideas, scholarship, and interests of colleagues with respect.

Integrity: UCI is an institution of learning, research, and scholarship that stands on integrity. Students must subscribe to the practice of academic integrity and accept individual responsibility for their work and actions. Violations of academic integrity are unacceptable and will not be tolerated because they devalue the teaching and learning experience for the entire community. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a foundational and fundamental principle all members of the community must uphold.

Respect for Rights and Dignity of All: Essential to the spirit of our academic community is a campus atmosphere conducive to scholarly pursuits and respect for the rights of all individuals. Intimidating, threatening or hostile actions to individuals are therefore regarded as serious offenses. Free speech and peaceful assembly are basic requirements of the University as a center of free inquiry and the search of knowledge and insight. These rights involve a concurrent obligation on the part of all members of the University, guests, and visitors.

Respect for Diversity: UCI seeks to promote full inclusion of all members and groups in every aspect of university life. Diversity on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, ancestry, religion, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital or domestic partnership status, affective or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, and other protected characteristics is a source of strength for the school. We do not tolerate any discriminatory and/or harassing behavior, and will investigate and take immediate action to end, prevent recurrence, and remedy the effects of any hostile environment on affected members of our community.
Appropriate Sexual Conduct: UCI does not tolerate sex or gender discrimination, including sexual misconduct such as sexual harassment and sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence. Graduate students undergo mandatory sexual harassment compliance and VAWA training.
Appropriate Use of Electronic Media: When acting as representatives of the school or interacting on official UCI platforms, student responsibility extends to the use of personal computers and social media, which must not violate our professional and academic standards.

Accountability
The school acts on complaints involving professional conduct of graduate students through the Associate Dean or the Office of Graduate Studies.

Observance of University Policies
The School reserves the right to find that conduct not specified herein or in UCI policies constitutes a violation of good academic or professional standing. Department Faculty Graduate Advisors, Chairs, Office of Graduate Studies, or the Associate Dean should be consulted in such instances.

The UCI Student Code of Conduct defines behavior expected of all UCI students. It is each student's responsibility to know and comply. In addition, the violation of the laws of any jurisdiction, whether local, state, federal, or foreign, may subject an individual to disciplinary action.

On-Campus Housing

UC Irvine offers *guaranteed* on-campus housing to all new doctoral students who are admitted before the housing application deadline of March 1, 2026, for Fall 2026 entry. Eligibility for housing extends for a minimum of three years, with the possibility of lease renewal thereafter. In addition to PhD training for MSTP students, the on-campus housing guarantee covers clinical training periods. For more information, visit the UCI Housing website: https://www.housing.uci.edu/grad/ or contact MSTP administration for additional details.

Graduate & Postdoctoral Scholar Resource Center

The Graduate & Postdoctoral Scholar Resource Center (GPSCR), available at the following website (https://grad.uci.edu/services/gpsrc/index.php) exists to enrich the experiences of the UCI graduate and postdoc community by providing coordinated services, events, programs, information, and support. This includes workshops and tutorials on a wide variety of topics related to personal and professional development (e.g., scientific writing). The GPSRC also serves as a meeting place for students to relax, interact, plan events, share ideas, and network. The GPSRC is located on the third floor of the Gateway Study Center - in between the Langston Library and the Cross-Cultural Center, directly across from Aldrich Hall. The main entrance is located at the rear of the building (facing Aldrich Park). Hours of operation: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, during regular business hours. Phone: (949) 824-3849. Email: gpsrc@uci.edu.

UC Irvine GPS-STEM

Graduate Professional Success for STEM (GPS-STEM) supports PhDs and Postdocs is a career and professional development program for PhD students and Postdoctoral fellows in STEM. For more information see https://gps.bio.uci.edu/. We strongly encourage you to become a member of UCI-GPS as the program offers many seminars and workshops that will help you navigate and prepare for your future career goals.

Fellowship and Training Grant Information

Although applying for graduate fellowships is not formally required, you are highly encouraged to do so. Fellowship/grant writing is particularly valuable for focusing your ideas and research, and if successful, for providing financial support and building your resume/curriculum vita (CV). Information on several federal and private fellowships available to graduate students can be found via the Grad Division website at the following link: https://www.grad.uci.edu/funding/index.php. The School of Medicine offers a variety of Fellowships summarized at: https://medschool.uci.edu/education/graduate-

studies/graduate-studies-financial-support. Your PI/mentor may also know of private foundations that offer graduate fellowships in your research area. Also note that the *Research Insider* – shared weekly from the SOM Dean's office – also provides announcements for fellowships or trainee awards. We encourage you to sign up for and read these emails.

Your PI/mentor may also have access to training grants (e.g. NIH T32 grants), which can provide stipend and tuition/fee support. Because access to such training grants is very PI-specific, you should inquire with your PI/mentor about these. Be aware that most fellowships and training grants (but not all) require US citizenship or permanent residency (i.e., a green card). A current listing of training grant support can be found at: https://grad.uci.edu/funding/training-grants.php. Please note the information we provide about additional curriculum requirements if you are placed on a T32 grant. Training grants and other grants may have course requirements that overlap (see Section Students Awarded a T32 Training Grant Position) of the EPGP. Contact Dan Merola (dmercoal@uci.edu) or Elizabeth Head (heade@uci.edu) who will assist with a resolution.

Direct Admit Graduate Students – Your First Year

Candidates nominated for direct admission by an EPGP faculty member will first submit a graduate school application through the SOM, which will be transferred to the Experimental Pathology Program. Once received, the applicant will be invited by the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program Co-Director, Elizabeth Head, to meet with the EPGP Direct Admissions Committee (currently Hannah Park, Farah Rahmatpanah, and Dan Mercola, Chair). The Committee will provide a letter of support to the Associate Dean with a recommendation for further processing of the application within the department and within the School of Medicine.

For successful candidates, during the first year in the EPGP, direct admissions students are expected to take 3 courses from or courses equivalent to those required for first-year students in the CMB (https://cmb.uci.edu/cmb-curriculum/) or INP (https://inp.uci.edu/curriculum/core-courses/) Gateway Programs. In some cases, you may have taken these courses or an equivalent, please reach out to the EPGP Director, Graduate Advisor, or Dan Mercola if you have questions. Substitute courses you may take can be determined in discussion with your PI/mentor. Substitute graduate courses of other departments that are recommended are listed on page 12.

Registration and Enrollment

Each academic quarter you are required to register for classes and enroll in a minimum of 12 units for full-time study. Registration is through UCI WebReg (UCI University Registrar - Course Enrollment: WebReg).

You are responsible for enrolling in the required courses/units prior to the Registrar's deadline each quarter (see **Graduate Courses**, below). You must sign up for the following courses every quarter unless you are in the last year of your dissertation writing phase: PATH 200ABC, PATH203ABC, PATH204ABC, and PATH227. (See below for further description of these courses). Please note that T32 awardees do not need to enroll in PATH 227 (Journal Club) as these training grants require participation in their own journal review seminar series.

If you do not register on time, you:

- will have to pay late fees.
- will not meet the IRS FICA exemption and thus will be subject to federal deductions from your paycheck.
- must use the online Add/Drop/Change procedure for late registration, including justification for registering late.

IMPORTANT: You must be enrolled in classes and pay any late fees by the end of the 3rd week of the given quarter; otherwise, you will lose your student status and will need to reapply to the program! For US citizens and permanent residents who are non-residents of California during the first year, you should become legal California residents by the beginning of the second year. California residency will eliminate "Nonresident Supplement Tuition" of $5,034 per quarter ($15,102 per year) for the 2026-2027 academic year (Graduate Fees and Tuition for 2026-2027).

A petition for California Resident Classification must be submitted by the deadline prior to the quarter for which you will be enrolling. For more information regarding California residency, see the Office of the Registrar's Residency website: http://www.reg.uci.edu/navigation/residency.html.

For foreign or international students, non-resident tuition is waived for a period of nine academic quarters (3 years) and reduced to the California resident rate AFTER advancement to candidacy. This reduction in student expenses is substantial. Therefore, advancement to candidacy is recommended by the end of the third year, if not earlier, and completion of the dissertation within nine academic quarters. Fees increase to non-resident levels after the nine academic quarters (so-called "Doc2A" status). For more on the "Doc2A" status and international student requirements see https://grad.uci.edu/forms/academics/Graduate-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf.

When your address or phone number changes, please notify both the Registrar's Office and the grad coordinator in the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program Office.

Preliminary Exams

The EPGP does not require preliminary examinations. Students transferring from CMB Gateway Program, however, will have completed a preliminary examination at the end of this Program (usually June of the first year) and preceding entry into EPGP. Requirements for a preliminary examination for Direct Admissions students may change over time.

Required Graduate Courses

You must enroll in a minimum of 12 units per quarter for full-time study. Every student is required to enroll every quarter in the following courses:

PATH 200 A, B, C - Laboratory Research credit (Graded, based on performance). 2-12 units. Your PI will provide your letter grade online.

PATH 203 A, B, C - Organized Group Study credit based on readings, discussions, and presentations at lab meetings given within each lab group (S/U, 1 unit). Your PI will provide your grade.

PATH 204 A, B, C - Departmental Seminar Series credit for attending the departmental Seminar series given by graduate students (Research in Progress, RIP talks, organizer, Dan Mercola), postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and invited speakers (S/U, 1 unit). Student in-person attendance for the seminar series including the Q&A sessions with the invited speakers is mandatory. Guest speaker sessions are often followed by a lunchtime Q&A session with the students (Grading is based on the Q&A session attendance and the RIP presentation) (Invited speakers are organized by Dr. Elizabeth Head). If you cannot attend a seminar, please let Dr. Dan Mercola (dmercola@uci.edu) and/or Zahra Daryaee (zdaryaee@hs.uci.edu) know, and Zahra can provide the Zoom link to attend seminar remotely. (S/U), 1 unit. Missed RIP talks or missed invited speaker meetings may be made-up by reviewing the seminar recording on the *Canvas course website* (https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/) and providing to Dan Mercola a short paragraph stating the goal of the presentation. The instructor of record will collect the RIP grades from Dan Mercola and will combine these with the attendance record for the Invited Speaker Series to derive grades for the course overall.

PATH 227 - Journal Club, offered every fall, winter, and spring quarter (organized by Dan Mercola) (S/U, 1 unit) who will provide a grade. Enrollment in PATH 227 may be waived if the student is currently supported by a T32 grant, which requires attendance in a journal club component (please reach out to Dr. Mercola).

The instructions for choosing papers for presentation and the guidance for providing the presentation or for developing the required questions prior to attendance are summarized in **Appendix A)**.

The following course is available for students in their final year of study:

PATH 299 - Dissertation in Experimental Pathology. The instructor will provide a grade (2-12 units). This course is provided for the preparation and completion of the dissertation required for the Ph.D. degree.

Students that are in their final year should enroll in PATH 299. Students enrolled in PATH 299 do NOT have to continue with journal club PATH 227 or the research courses, PATH 200 & PATH 203. Participation in the seminar series is still required (PATH 204).

From your second through fourth years, you are required to take at least one didactic course per year. A partial list of approved elective courses is provided below. If you and/or your advisor identify a course not on this list, please get approval from Elizabeth Head or Dan Mercola.

Partial List of Elective and Required Courses

PATH 225/M&MG 225	Formerly Molecular Mechanisms of Human Disease, is to be replaced by a new course under development, "Advanced Technology for the Study of Human Disease" (Spring term, 2027. Organizer: Dan Mercola & Michael McClelland, M&MG).
PATH 240	Neuropathology (organizer, Dan Mercola), 3 units.
PATH 221/M&MG 221	Immunopathogenesis of Disease (Organizer, Dan Mercola & M. McClelland, M&MG), 3 units. Offered spring term of odd years, next offering spring 2027.
PATH 291	M.D. and Ph.D. Fundamentals. 2 Units. For MSTP students during their first or second year of graduate school. The goals are to help early graduate-phase MSTPs to get off to faster starts in their dissertations and better leverage their dual-degree training during their physician-scientist journeys. Grading Option: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory only. Repeatability: May be taken unlimited times (Organizer, Edmund Monuki).
PATH 298	Independent Study. 6-10 Units. Provided for Medical Science Training Program students to synthesize the basic science information learned during the basic science years of medical school and learn how to apply that knowledge toward graduate research directed at understanding the basis of human disease. Grading Option: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory only Repeatability: May be taken unlimited times (Organizer, Edmund Monuki).
DEV BIO 210	Developmental Genetics and Genomics.
DEV BIO 203B	Developmental and Cell Biology, Graduate tutorial, 4 units.
DEV BIO 231B	Cell Biology, 4 units.
DEV BIO 245	Stem Cell Biology, 5 units.
MOL BIO 205	Molecular Virology, 4 units.
MOL BIO 217A	Principles of Cancer Biology I
MOL BIO 217B	Principles of Cancer Biology II
MOL BIO 218	Clinical Cancer, 3 units.
MOL BIO 399/DC 399	University Teaching, 4 units. Limited to Teaching Assistants (TAs).
MBB 243	Stem Cell Topics, 4 units, (Organizer, Craig Walsh).
M&MG 206	Regulation of Gene Expression, 4 units.
M&MG 215	Integrative Immunology, 4 units.
M&MG 222	Molecular Pathogenesis of Microbial Infections, 4 units.

MMG 250	Responsible Conduct in Research Training (RCR). Optional course to meet the universal requirement for RCR training (see following section below).
NB 208A/AN 210A	Systems Neuroscience, 5 units.
NB 207	Cellular Neuroscience, 5 units.
NB 209	Behavioral Neuroscience, 5 units.
NB 232	Physiology of Ion Channels, 5 units.
NB 217	Foundations in Neuroimmunology II, 4 units.
NB 220	Neural Coding, Computation, and Dynamics, 4 units.
NB 227	Bioinformatics and Systems Biology, 4 units.
NEUROBIO 206	Molecular Neurosciences, 5 units.
PHYSIO 273	Practical structural biology. Focused on how to use the vast quantity of structural biology information available in publicly accessible databases including *AlphaFold.* (Organizer, Philip Kiser).
TAPDP	TA Professional Development Program (TAPDP). Not a course but mandatory multi-day workshop that covers TA roles, inclusive teaching practices, and lesson planning, (organizer, UCI TA Professional Development Program (TAPDP)). See the following section on TAPDP training)

Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) training

RCR training is mandatory for all trainees. All students must complete RCR training in their **first year of graduate school and every 4 years after this**. For students admitted from the INP or CMB programs, you may have already completed MMG 250 in your first year. Direct admissions students will need to register for and complete RCR (MMG 250) in their first year of the Experimental Pathology PhD program.

The MMG 250 ten week 2-unit course, and the ICTS 2-day version (only available to students who are refreshing their training) both satisfy RCR federal requirements for schools of medicine. NIH requires at least 8 contact hours, in person, and outlines topics to be covered, as outlined in the following guidance: (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-22-055.html).

If you are in the MD/PhD program you may use the option of the ICTS program (although we prefer that you take the MMG 250 course). ***Please note, MD/PhD students needing to meet the RCR requirement can take the ICTS option*** per MSTP Director Monuki (MSTP students receive some preparation in med school) unless the PI or department requires that they take MMG 250 for any reason (i.e., core course for degree, comprehensive content, etc.)

If after taking MMG 250, you may be interested in taking any of the ICTS training, you can do that.

Clinical-Pathological Correlations Sessions (*NEW!*)

Several students who had taken our Neuropath course (PATH 240) noted that experiences like attending Dr. William Yong's brain cutting at the UCI MC and Dr. Claire Henchcliffe's videos of movement disorders helped in the translation of the clinical impact of their experimental work and/or general neuroscience interests. We have arranged access to a variety of virtual ongoing clinical correlation sessions:

- The UCI MIND Institute's monthly **Clinical Pathological Conferences (CPCs)**. The CPC is the study of one brain donation case per session, focused on Alzheimer disease, other dementias and normal healthy aging The case is discussed in detail from clinical history, neuropsychological assessments, neuroimaging, fluid biomarkers and neuropathology. Throughout the CPC, there are opportunities to test your knowledge and ask you to consider a diagnosis of the case. The speakers are experts in their field of study and there is exciting discussion of each case. Currently, Brianna Gawronski with Elizabeth Head organize these virtual CPCs.

- Access to the UCI Pathology **didactic lectures for Pathology Residents**. Topics are wide ranging and are important for the boards (organizer, Sonia Portillo).

- Access to the UCI Pathology **Clinical Journal Club** for listening in on the presentation and discussion of 1-2 assigned current clinical Pathology publications per session (organizer, Sonia Portillo).

These presentations involve considerable preparation on the part of the presenters. These are not part of any EPGP course and so listening in is voluntary. All students will receive emails with the Schedule of the sessions from Brianna Garonski (CPC) and Sonia Portillo (resident's classes) and may attend just the sessions of choice.

Teaching Assistantships and TAPDP Training

Students in the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program are not required to be Teaching Assistants (TAs); however, TA training (TAPDP – Teaching Assistant Professional Development Program) is required once and offered every fall quarter. Although not required, a TA position can be a valuable component of your doctoral training, as many of you will go on to careers that involve teaching and public speaking. SOM Graduate Studies will inquire during the summer for students interested in TA positions for the upcoming academic year and share the names of interested students to the School of Biological Sciences. The School of Biological Sciences will not accept inquiries from students directly. For the fall training session, the Graduate Coordinator will provide the list of names of incoming students who have not participated in TAPDP training previously to either SOM Graduate Studies or the Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (DETI), who provide the TAPDP training workshop. (https://dtei.uci.edu/opportunities/grads-postdocs/ta-professional-development-program/).

If English is not your first language, you must demonstrate proficiency in spoken English before you can be appointed a TA position. For this purpose, you must take and pass the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the TOEP (https://grad.uci.edu/funding/teaching-assistantships/). Exceptions to this Specific requirement will not be granted. A minimum score of 50 is required for a TA appointment. The TSE is given six times per year at TOEFL test centers.

Once you have been appointed as a TA, you should enroll in either Mol Bio 399 or Dev Bio 399 - "University Teaching" and contact the Graduate Coordinator.

More intensive training experience in teaching are also available. If interested and acceptable to your PI, please contact SOM Graduate Studies (Leora Fellus) for additional information about these programs. Updated additional details of Teaching Assistantships at UCI and aligned with the current Collective Bargaining Agreement are at https://grad.uci.edu/funding/teaching-assistantships/.

Having Other Employment Appointments at UCI

Graduate students may have served as paid tutors or have had other jobs outside of UCI during their undergraduate tenure. We ask that you inform your PI/mentor and the Program Director (Elizabeth Head) of these external activities. If you are engaged in an additional employment activity (for example, tutoring) and you wish to continue in this activity, your PI/mentor will need to consider any impact this additional activity may have on your research studies. If your PI/mentor approves of this additional activity, the department will submit to Grad Division a request for exception to policy for your employment beyond 50% for their approval.

Updated additional details for academic student employees at UCI and aligned with the current Collective Bargaining Agreement are at https://ap.uci.edu/ase/.

Students Awarded a T32 Training Grant Position

The Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine supports training grant awardees and recognizes there are additional journal club requirements for most T32 training grants. Thus, if you are awarded a T32 training grant that requires participation in its own journal club component, you are not required to enroll in Path 227 (Journal Club) while receiving a T32 award. Please email Dan Mercola (course director) and cc the Graduate Student Coordinator with this information.

Pathology Seminar Series

The Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine sponsors an Experimental Pathology Research Conferences Series, course "**PATH 204,**" which is given by faculty (both invited UCI and non-UCI speakers). Additional sessions will be provided by graduate students, termed Research in Progress (RIP) talks. Currently, the presentations by invited speakers occur on the 4th Monday of every month from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. throughout the academic year. The RiP Talks are interspersed between the invited speakers' dates. Presentations are currently held in person in Plumwood House/Showa Denko, Room 166 (strongly encouraged) and via Zoom. The itinerary for invited speakers includes a one-hour Q&A session with the Experimental Pathology graduate students immediately following the seminar over lunch. Student in-person attendance for this seminar series including the Q&A sessions with the speakers is mandatory. Q&A sessions usually occur in a separate noon meeting over a box lunch with the speaker. Students should come prepared with a couple of questions they noted during the quest speaker presentation.

Note: grading for this course is based on seminar and Q&A attendance. Be sure to record your attendance on the seminar sign-in sheets. We solicit suggestions for speakers from graduate students, which serve as a wonderful networking opportunity for students to meet possible future postdoctoral mentors or collaborators.

A combined Rota of guest speakers and RIP talks for the academic year is distributed before fall quarter by Dan Mercola and Zahra Daryaee.

Attendance conflicts. Students in conflict with a given Rota date owing to TA responsibilities, illness or conferences, etc., will need to notify Dan Mercola. Absentee students will be asked to review the recording of the missed meeting(s) (in Canvas) and provide Dan Mercola with a paragraph describing the main point of the presentation.

Hosting. For each invited speaker, a graduate student will serve as a **student host** (determined by a Rota to be provided or hosted by the student who recommended the speaker). Each graduate student will be asked to provide 2-3 invited speaker names each year to Elizabeth Head, the instructor of record for PATH 204, along with several sentences about their research area and why the student would like this person to give a seminar. Speaker suggestions can include investigators in a similar area of study to that of the student (knowledge) and/or the student may have an interest in a postdoctoral training or employment opportunity with that speaker (networking). Dr. Head will send the official invitation to the speaker. When accepted, the student who nominated the speaker will become the student host for that speaker's visit. **Appendix B** provides further instructions on the expectations for a student host.

RIP talks. Graduate students in the program will present in the seminar series, course **PATH 204**, Research-in-Progress (RIP) talks, at least once a year as per the Rota organized by Dan Mercola. These oral presentations are an important part of graduate training. The senior students are expected to give longer talks than newly enrolled students. First year students typically give a 15-minute talk toward the end of the academic year often in shared sessions. Second- and third-year students typically give a 30-minute RIP talk. In the fourth year and beyond, students will present their research as formal one-hour seminars. Guidance for the preparation of an RIP talk is in **Appendix C.** Following advancement to candidacy (see below), students are encouraged to coordinate their required yearly meetings with their doctoral committee in conjunction with their yearly **PATH 204** RIP talk.

A current 2026-2027 Rota of student RIP presentations and the invited speakers of the Pathology Research Seminars will be available in September 2026 from Dan Mercola (dmercola@uci.edu) or Zahra Daryaee (zdaryaee@hs.usi.edu). Note that some speaker dates may change over the year if conflicts arise.

Independent Development Plans (IDPs)

Students are required to submit a completed IDP to the program director on an annual basis. These forms are to be filled out collaboratively with your PI to clearly establish career development goals as an overview of the previous year and for the upcoming year. An example of the form is attached to this handbook (**Appendix D**). Please note, the program director will use these forms to monitor your progress and aid in giving you opportunities to meet your training/independence goals. IDPs cover the previous year from fall to summer and are due at the end of the Fall quarter. To reduce duplication, students in the MSTP (MD/PhD dual degree) program are not required to complete an IDP for Experimental Pathology; however, a copy of the completed MSTP IDP should be sent to the Graduate Coordinator in place of their Experimental Pathology IDP.

Quarterly Research Units Work Expectation Document

Each quarter, the graduate student will need to establish expectations for the upcoming quarter with their mentor and complete the "Quarterly Research Unit Work Expectation Document". This is a relatively brief form that ensures that expectations for the student and the mentor remain aligned. The Graduate Coordinator will remind you by email and provide the form for you and your mentor to sign. Please see **Appendix E**. These are mandatory.

Annual Committee Meetings

Students are encouraged to discuss the membership of their advancement/dissertation committee with their PI near the end of second year or early in the third year of EPGP training. This committee will serve as your advancement committee and later, all or some of these committee members will serve as your dissertation committee. The initial/advancement committee will include five members – at least three from the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program (primary or joint-appointed faculty) and at least one "outside" member (i.e., NOT faculty in Pathology). Students select and invite the members of their committee (obtain and retain written acceptances such as emails). Your PI/mentor will serve as Chair of the committee and counts as one of the five members. All members must be Academic Senate faculty (Professor, Professor-in-Residence, or Clinical X Professor series). Academic Senate faculty from other UC campuses may serve as outside members. Exceptions that include non-Academic Senate members (e.g., faculty in the Adjunct Professor, Visiting Professor, Clinical Professor, and Researcher series) may be granted by the Graduate Division Interim Dean Jaymi Lee Smith. Larger committees are acceptable, but it is important to emphasize that the *majority* of committee members must be Experimental Pathology Graduate Program faculty. Once identified, graduate students are expected to meet with their committee annually.

Advancement to Candidacy Committee and Exam

The next step in progress towards the doctoral degree is Advancement to Candidacy (aka the "advancement"). The purpose of this process is to ensure that students have selected an appropriate topic for their dissertation and that completed and planned experimental work is scientifically rigorous and likely to be completed successfully within the "normative" period for graduate study (5 years).

The Advancement to Candidacy exam should be taken **by the end of the summer of the third year of graduate study** (i.e., by the end of the second year in the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program in most cases). Students are encouraged to advance even earlier, if ready. See **Appendix F** for guidelines in arranging your advancement meeting. Students or their PI/mentor may request the student's portfolio (includes grades) in advance to share with their committee members. Please reach out to the Graduate Coordinator for this information.

In the event that students cannot arrange to have all their faculty committee members present at an advancement meeting, students may set up two smaller meetings to accommodate scheduling challenges. For the final dissertation committee meeting, however, it will be critical that all of the committee members are present (preferably in person).

Prior to the exam, a written research proposal modeled after an NIH F31/F32 grant application must be submitted to the committee members at least one week before the oral presentation. It should include an introduction, specific aims, background and significance, progress to date (preliminary data), research plan, and literature cited. The general organization of such a proposal, including its required sections can be found on the NIH website: https://grants.nih.gov/funding/funding-categories/research-training-and-career-development/individual-fellowships. The proposal should be no more than 15 pages, excluding references and figures. Students will meet with their committee for an oral examination of their proposed thesis plans. We suggest scheduling a 2-hour meeting.

Please be sure to work with your mentor as you prepare your advancement presentation and establish the length of time that you should plan to present. During the exam, students should be aware that they will be asked to leave the room before the presentation, and that extensive questioning and interruptions will likely occur during the presentation. Following or during the presentation, the committee will discuss the proposal with the student. The committee will then excuse the student again from the room for an internal discussion. Immediately after this discussion, the committee will inform the student of their recommendations.

Upon completion of the exam, the committee chair should contact the Graduate Coordinator with the meeting outcome. A PhD Form I is required involving the grad student providing to the Graduate Coordinator the names and email addresses of their committee members, their expected quarter and year of degree completion, and the names of their Doctoral Committee members (note – this can be modified- see the next section). The Graduate Coordinator will submit the PhD Form I via DocuSign (https://grad.uci.edu/current-students/student-forms/) this form is not to be submitted by the grad student. Graduate Division will not accept paper forms. Effective July 1, 2025, the $90 Advancement to Candidacy fee was eliminated; students are no longer required to pay the fee or upload a payment receipt.

Doctoral Committee

After successfully advancing to candidacy, the student will form a Doctoral (or Dissertation) Committee. This committee is composed of at least three members. They may be members from your Advancement to Candidacy Committee (this includes your PI/mentor and two other members of your committee). Should the committee composition change, please let the Graduate Coordinator know and we will draft a letter on the student's behalf from the EPGP program director and addressed to the Dean of Graduate Division for their review. Associate Dean Tombola's team will send the letter to Graduate Division for review and approval. The doctoral committee chair and a majority of members must be Experimental Pathology faculty (either primary or joint appointees), but unlike your advancement committee, there is no requirement to include an outside faculty member. You can also retain more than three members for your Doctoral Committee if you so choose. The committee shall meet with the student no less than once a year to evaluate the student's progress and plans for future work. See **Appendix G** for a copy of Annual Committee Meeting Form. To document that the student has convened a yearly committee meeting, a form obtained from the Graduate Coordinator must be signed by all committee members using Docusign. This form is included in the student's file. A convenient time to have your yearly committee meeting is at the time of your yearly seminar in the RIP talks of the Pathology seminar series (PATH 204). Since RIP dates are fixed in the course Rota, associated meetings can be organized well in advance. Additional meetings may be called, as necessary, by request of the student or the advisor. For final dissertation, however, it will be critical that all of the committee members are present (preferably in person).

A "green light" or pre-defense meeting - i.e., a meeting with your doctoral committee **within six months** of your anticipated defense date - is strongly recommended to ensure a successful defense.

Dissertation (Thesis) Preparation and Defense

Written and oral presentations of a student's Dissertation are the criteria for receiving the Ph.D. degree. Prior to scheduling the oral presentation (aka thesis defense), the student should communicate with their Doctoral Committee members and receive approval to schedule the defense. Many graduate students benefit from an additional committee meeting prior to the final public defense (e.g. pre-defense meeting). For additional guidance, also go to https://grad.uci.edu/academics/degree-completion/electronic-submission.php. Among useful links is the UCI Thesis and Dissertation Manual: https://etd.lib.uci.edu/. The Archives at the Main Library also have dissertation packets listing all the requirements for your thesis preparation.

The written dissertation should be given to the doctoral committee members at least two weeks before your defense. You will present your dissertation as a public seminar – the oral thesis defense – followed by a question-and-answer period with the audience and then attend a closed-door session with your doctoral committee. After a final private question session, the defense committee will make their final decision on whether the PhD should be granted. Upon completion of the exam, the committee chair should contact the Graduate Coordinator with the meeting outcome. The Graduate Coordinator will submit the PhD Form II – Dissertation Checklist/final degree paperwork packet electronically via DocuSign for review, committee approval, and obtaining required signatures, and for committee review (https://grad.uci.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/PhD_Form_II_DocuSign_Policy.pdf).

The UCs allow for modifications to the dissertation as developed by the student with the committee prior to or soon after the final defense. Recommended modifications to the written Dissertation document may be extensive. Thus, the student should schedule ample time for revisions to the final Dissertation prior to its submission to the Library Archives. Once graduate requirements are completed, students may participate in the UCI graduation ceremony. Exceptions to this policy (i.e., attending the ceremony before completing all graduation requirements) require prior approval. Cap and gown may be rented in advance from the UCI Alumni Association (https://capandgown.uci.edu/).

The "normative time to degree" – i.e., the expected length of Ph.D. training – is five years. This period includes both the first year in the Gateway program and the time spent in the Experimental Pathology Graduate Program. The "maximum time to degree" is seven years. Both the mentor and the student should be vigilant regarding the maximum time to complete the degree. Any training beyond the seven-year maximum requires exceptions from Associate Dean Francesco Tombola and the Interim Dean of Graduate Division, Jaymi Lee Smith, and are not routinely approved. We note that the EPGP Director may reach out if there appears to be delays in your timeline to provide guidance and support.

Filing the Dissertation is expected to be submitted and approved by the deadline in the quarter in which the degree is to be conferred. It is required that students be enrolled and fees current at the time the Dissertation is submitted, including submissions during summer session. The regular degree deadlines are published on the Graduate Division website (https://grad.uci.edu/current-students/filing-deadlines/) for each quarter for the advancement to candidacy and final degree paperwork.

A detailed summary of the electronic submission process is the UCI Thesis and Dissertation Manual, Preparation and Procedures for Electronic (ETD) Submission, Master's Theses and Ph.D. Dissertations, 2024" (most recent) Prepared by: University Archives, the UC Irvine Libraries, University of California, Irvine (https://grad.uci.edu/current-students/thesisdissertationelectronicsubmission/).

Modifications for Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

Given the national and local expectations for shorter PhD training for MSTP trainees (four rather than five years), the following modifications of Experimental Pathology Graduate Program guidelines apply to MSTP trainees. All other graduate requirements are as described in this document:

1. Additional coverage of stipends and other training expenses during PhD training may be provided by the MSTP. Please contact MSTP administration for additional details.

2. In addition to PhD training, the on-campus housing guarantee covers clinical training periods; please contact MSTP administration for additional details.

3. There are additional expectations of PI/mentors of MSTP trainees. If your PI/mentor is unaware of these expectations, please refer them to MSTP administration.

4. The first-year PhD coursework requirement is waived. However, consultations with your PI, advancement committee, and/or individual committee members about coursework that would be beneficial to your thesis work are strongly advised.

5. The Experimental Pathology IDP requirement is waived (and covered by the annual MSTP IDP requirement).

6. Employment as a paid tutor for medical students or for other paid activities should be coordinated with MSTP administration.

7. To meet the four-year normative PhD goal for MSTP trainees, advancement to candidacy should occur **by the end of the summer of the second year of graduate study.**

8. Due to the "fixed" clinical re-entry requirements, MSTP trainees should plan on defending and submitting their thesis by the end of April of their re-entry year. If delayed, at a minimum, all *experimental* work for the thesis must be completed by the end of April of their re-entry year.

Year-by-Year Checklist of Requirements for Exp Path PhD

Year 2

- ❑ Sign up for PATH 200, 203, 204, and 227 every quarter
- ❑ Take at least one didactic course
- ❑ Attend seminars (PATH 204)
- ❑ Attend Journal Club (PATH 227)
- ❑ Present RIP Talk in PATH 204
- ❑ Complete TAPDAP training (one time only)
- ❑ Complete annual IDP form by end of Fall Quarter but no later than December 30
- ❑ Complete quarterly Faculty/Student Research Units Work Expectation Document due by end of the first week of every quarter – 4 times
- ❑ Set up Advancement to Candidacy Committee
- ❑ Consider applying for fellowships

Year 3

- ❑ Sign up for PATH 200, 203, 204, and 227 every quarter
- ❑ Take at least one didactic course
- ❑ Attend seminars (PATH 204)
- ❑ Attend Journal Club (PATH 227)
- ❑ Present research seminar in PATH 204
- ❑ Complete annual IDP form by end of Fall quarter but no later than December 30
- ❑ Complete quarterly Faculty/Student Research Units Work Expectation Document due by end of the first week of every quarter – 4 times
- ❑ Consider applying for fellowships
- ❑ Consider attending and presenting at a scientific meeting (in discussion with your PI)
- ❑ Take Advancement to Candidacy Exam (by end of 3rd year)
    - Submit proposal in NIH format (approx. 10-15 pages) to Committee members at least a week in advance
    - Meet with committee members
    - Contact Graduate Coordinator to initiate PhD Form I for committee signatures

Year 4

- ❑ Sign up for PATH 200, 203, 204, and 227 every quarter
- ❑ Take at least one didactic course
- ❑ Attend seminars (PATH 204)
- ❑ Attend Journal Club (PATH 227)
- ❑ Present research seminar in PATH 204
- ❑ Complete annual IDP form by end of Fall Quarter but no later than December 30
- ❑ Complete quarterly Faculty/Student Research Units Work Expectation Document due by end of the first week of every quarter – 4 times
- ❑ Consider attending and presenting at a relevant scientific meeting.
- ❑ Organize and meet with Doctoral Committee (ideally in conjunction with your PATH 204 seminar)
    - Contact Graduate Coordinator for Annual Committee Meeting form for signatures
- ❑ Consider postdoctoral plans

Year 5 and beyond

- ❑ Sign up for PATH 299 every quarter
- ❑ Attend seminars (PATH 204)
- ❑ Present research seminar in PATH 204
- ❑ Complete annual IDP form by end of Fall Quarter but no later than December 30
- ❑ Complete quarterly Faculty/Student Research Units Work Expectation Document due by end of the first week of every quarter
- ❑ Consider attending and presenting at a relevant scientific meeting
- ❑ Meet with Doctoral Committee
    - Get yearly meeting form signed
- ❑ Solidify postdoctoral plans
- ❑ Arrange for your thesis defense after 'green light' meeting
    - Submit written dissertation to Committee members at least two weeks prior to defense
    - Schedule dissertation defense and meet with Committee
    - Contact Graduate Coordinator to initiate PhD Form II for committee signatures
    - Celebrate
- ❑ Submit your dissertation
    - Attend graduation (optional)
    - Celebrate

Current Graduate Students

Daniella Bota
- Dahlia Ordaz

Dongbao Chen
- Alejandra Garcia Salmeron
- Olamide Fategbe
- Jane Zhang

Wendy Cozen
- Esther Lam

Elizabeth Head
- Justine Aiko Silva
- Zoe Julienne Treadwell
- Jillian Berry

Al La Spada
- Nima Shajarian
- Madhy Garcia Garcia
- David Luong
- Nolan Huck
- Sneha Menon
- Byeonggu Cha
- Kevin Sanchez
- Michael Colwin
- Brock Safi

Shahrdad Lotfipour
- Roshae Roberts

Haik Mkhikian
- Blake Willaim Krisko
- Luna Witchey

Ed Monuki
- Viky Espericueta

Matt Rose
- Sarai Santos
- Nimrah Ashfaq

Charles Limolli
- Allison Cartee

Alumni

EL FIKY, ASHRAF	2006
CORNFORTH, ANDREW NIMITZ	2006
GARCIA, ANGIE EVA	2008
FIGUEREDO, SHAREL MENEZES	2010
YANG, JIA-YING JOHN	2010
CROSBY, DAVID CHARLES	2010
KAMDAR, KARISHMA	2010
LLENADO, R. ALAN	2011
DAVIS, JENNIFER SARAH	2011
ESMAILPOUR, TARANEH (Angeloni)	2012
PIO, REBECCA LYNN	2012
BISWAS, MADHURIMA	2012
VERDE, SHAWN	2012
FUNG, ERNEST SIU YIN	2014
LECHUGA, THOMAS JOE	2015
SCHNEIDER, KEVIN	2016
HERNANDEZ, MICHAEL	2017
LOMELI, NAOMI	2019
DOLINKO, ANDREW	2021
DOUGLAS, CHRISTOPHER RYAN	2022
CALDWELL, THOMAS	2023
DEYELL, JACOB	2024
NEEL, MICHAEL	2024
ROUANET, JEREMY	2025
JAVIER LEPE	2025
NAZEK QUEDER	2025
CHERIE LEPE	2025
JACOB ROBERT DOHL	2026
ELIZABETH ANDREWS	2026

*Tara Jennings completed a UCI MS in Biomedical & Translational Science (not an EPGP degree) under the supervision of EPGP faculty member Farhanaz Rahmatpanah in 2026.

APPENDIX A. Guidance for Journal Paper Presentations.

Basics. All EPGP students enrolled in PATH 227 will provide at least one presentation of a paper from literature during the first 3 quarters of the year 2026-2027. A Rota of the presentation dates for each student will be provided. First-year students do not have to make any presentations during the fall quarter and are typically scheduled for the end of the spring term. Your assigned dates for presentation are determined by random draw, **and** the condition that first-year students are exempt from presentation during the first quarter and if possible scheduled at the end of the academic year. There are no presentations required on the first Wednesday of each term. The presenter for the second week should use time from the beginning of the quarter prior to submitting 3 candidate papers for their presentation to Dan Mercola who will select one for presentation. Presentation. The selected paper should be circulated to the class at least one week prior to the presentation, the selected paper for presentation on or before the first week in order to provide a week of term time for preparation by everyone.

Journal Club is mandatory except for the summer quarter hiatus. Those who seek an exemption from Journal Club to attend a Journal Club associated with a Training Grant, please let Dan Mercola know.

Participation. Participation by non-presenters is not passive. All students should read the assigned paper and prepare at least two questions based on their reading of the paper that will be brought up by you during the discussion of the presentation if not completely clarified by the presentation. Please send your 2 questions to Dan Mercola prior to the date of the presentation. The papers should be read by everyone "critically", that is logical mistakes by the authors, unjustified conclusions including overstatements, inadequate or omitted controls, etc. should be identified and used for question formation or, for presenter, be made clear in your presentation. Similar critical reading highlights constructive observations (novelty, methods and/or results of note that may impact the field) maybe formulated as questions. **The failure of detecting weaknesses or caveats of the paper by presenters or readers should be regarded as being as much their responsibility as for the authors**. Presenters should provide critiques within the presentation at the point where the weakness occurs and not just in a table at the end although summary tables are welcome. Please invite comments from the audience.

Paper selection. For your own presentation you may select papers of interest that relate to major areas of pathology research (e.g., Neoplasia; Inflammation; Hematopathology; Genetic Diseases, etc.). The selected papers should be of sufficient quality to have the potential to significantly advance the field. Selected papers may be in the area of your interest but not be hyper focused and should have clear general relevance to a broader area of pathology. Select three candidate papers and forward them to Dan Mercola for final selection at least two weeks before presentation or for presenters with a date in the second week of a quarter, forwarded on first or second day of the quarter.

If you have a conflict with an assigned date, let Dan Mercola know ASAP. You are free to organize trades of dates with other presenters.

"PowerPoint" is the most common mode of presentation of results material. Additional use of a black/white board is fine. A whiteboard is available in Plumwood auditorium, our venue.

Papers with potential significant impact on a field may suggest authors for invitation for our PATH 204 Research Seminar series. If so, let Drs. Elizabeth Head and Dan Mercola know.

APPENDIX B. Hosting a Seminar Speaker

Here are some suggestions to help you with your first time serving as a student host for an invited speaker (PATH 204A.B.C) or as a refresher if you have done this already. All of these activities will need to be coordinated with Dr. Elizabeth Head.

- As the student host, you are responsible for developing a short agenda or itinerary.
- If this is a zoom speaker, it is reasonable to ask our speaker to dedicate a minimum of 1.5 to 2 hours for the virtual visit. One hour will be for the seminar (Graduate Coordinator will help arrange, she will get the speaker title and have them fill out CEU paperwork) followed by one hour for each meeting. Make sure to save 30 minutes for a graduate student group meeting.
- If the speaker is in person, they will be invited to stay for a full day (arrive the day before and leave the day after). A full day agenda will be developed in collaboration with Dr. Head. A one hour seminar is priority followed by lunch with the graduate students. For the remainder of the visit, the speaker will meet with faculty or lab teams. Typically, a dinner is also provided the evening before or the evening prior to their departure. It can be helpful to ask the speaker if there are faculty they would like to meet, consult with your PI, or you can talk with Drs. Head, Monuki, or Mercola.

For arranging the itinerary, be mindful that UCI faculty have densely booked calendars, and it is important to contact faculty and inviting them to participate in the itinerary should be done as soon as a speaker has accepted the invitation from Elizabeth Head, usually several months before the actual presentation date.

- You are responsible for an introduction of the speaker – please stay within a 5-minute period (practice is a good idea) – highlighting their research area, accomplishments, and publications. Ask Elizabeth Head or the Graduate Coordinator for a copy of the speaker's C.V. (to be requested from the speaker upon their acceptance of the invitation).
    - Who are they, what position do they hold and where are they?
    - What is their educational background?
    - Any awards you can highlight?
    - Describe publication record (e.g., how many papers, examples of high impact journals) and mention funding (i.e., funded by the NIH, foundations etc.)
    - Why did you invite them to talk?
    - Read the talk title and thank them for giving the seminar.
    - Remind the audience that they can write questions in the chat or save them for the end.
- When the speaker finishes, you "take the floor" again and ask attendees if they have any questions. Sometimes that may include reading submitted questions from the Zoom chat if they are there. Also – be prepared to ask the speaker a question yourself in case no one else has questions to stimulate discussion. Although our group is pretty good at asking questions.
- When the time comes, close the presentation at the top of the hour (or 5 or so minutes past), you will thank the speaker and attendees and close the seminar.
- Usually at the end of the seminar, a noon meeting of the speaker with the EPGP graduate students takes place, commonly in the Hewitt Hall Conference Room and the remaining appointments of the itinerary follow. Dan Mercola will provide a sign-up sheet for the students at the meeting. The speaker will need to be escorted to the offices etc. of the itinerary meetings.

APPENDIX C. Guidance for Research-In-Progress (RIP).

There will be RIP (Research in Progress) talks planned and provided per Rota for the academic year 30 weeks of the three quarters. New students do not have to provide a RIP presentation in the first quarter and are scheduled at the end of the third Spring quarter. For new students these are abbreviated presentations and so shared with one other, i.e. two presentations per session.

Please provide draft titles to Dan Mercola ASAP after receiving the Rota dates, especially if you are scheduled for presentation in the fall quarter. These titles can be changed anytime up to about a week before your presentation when announcements are circulated.

The goal of the RIP is to **present a clear explanation of your experimental objective and methods so avoid jargon – shoot for the 5th grader and for clarity**. If you get questions, please repeat the question for the audience and the recording (the microphone for the recordings is very insensitive to audience remarks).

Grading (S/U) is based on providing a presentation and on attendance for the whole RIP Rota. A signup sheet will be provided. For 24 students there are about 22 presentation dates so over two quarters of the academic

There will be light refreshments for all sessions. RIP talks are an excellent and fun way to learn what colleagues are doing.

Participation in the RIP sessions is a required in-person activity of the EPGP. A Zoom link will be available for those who have a conflict, illness, or other issues and request the link from Dan Mercola.

Some RIP dates in some years occur in “final week” of a quarter, a time- usually reserved for preparation for final exams which are rare for graduate courses. If you are taking a course that actually has a final exam in finals week of any quarter where an RIP presentation is scheduled, please let Dan Merola know.

APPENDIX D. Independent Development Plan (IDP) Form

Academic Year	**Year in Program**	**Date**

Name	
Program	
NTTA (Normative Time to Advancement)	
NTTD (Normative Time to Degree)	
Advisor	
Mentor	

Instructions: The student should complete the IDP in preparation for a scheduled meeting with his/her mentor and advisor. The IDP is designed to foster communication in a variety of areas to ensure the student is receiving comprehensive feedback about both his/her progress to date and future expectations. Accomplishments, challenges, and goals should be addressed as well as any performance/progress issues so that both the student and the mentor/advisor have a clear understanding of the student's progress toward the degree.

Academic Course Planning
In order to fulfill my academic goals and maintain NTTD progress, I plan to enroll in these courses. **Annual Goals**:   **Long Term Plans**:   - - - -

Research Planning

I will make progress on my research agenda through the following: (include collaborations, research theories that you've developed, and studies/projects that you've been involved with.)

Annual Goals:

Long Term Plans:

- -

Mentor/Advisor Comments:

Conference/Publications Planning

I plan to attend the following conferences. The professional papers I plan to submit (include publications and submittal deadlines).

Annual Goals:

Long Term Plans:

- -

Mentor/Advisor Comments:

Career Planning

My long and short-term career goals. Skills and competencies I expect to develop and workshops I plan to attend.

Annual Goals:

Long Term Plans:

- -

Mentor/Advisor Comments:

Funding Planning

My plans for securing funding each year of my graduate program. (Include Dept. Funding, External Grants/Fellowships and Summer Internships)

Annual Goals:

Long Term Plans (including funding for dissertations and research projects):

- -

Mentor/Advisor Comments:

Health and Wellness Planning

This section highlights the importance of maintaining work-life balance to increase wellness and decrease risk for work burnout. Examples of health and wellness activities include participating in moderate to vigorous exercise 3 times a week, meditation, time management, eating balanced meals, getting appropriate hours of sleep, and having supportive social relationships.

I will prioritize my health and wellness by regularly engaging in the following personal and/or professional activities:

Weekly:

Monthly:

- - - -

Long Term Plans:

- -

Mentor/Advisor Comments:

Graduate Student Signature	Date
Mentor Signature	Date

D. Handbook appendices B and C are examples of Departmental forms which may vary in detail from current forms and are provided here for convenience. For UCI Graduate Division forms, note that Graduate Division has transitioned all their forms to online DocuSign forms (https://grad.uci.edu/academics/DocuSignForms.php). These forms are initiated by the grad coordinator, not the student, and electronically circulated to the required signatories for approval. Graduate Division will not accept paper forms.

APPENDIX E. Research Units Work Expectation Form

Quarter/Academic Year (units)	Year in Program	Date

Instructor Name	
Student Name	
Department/Program	
Thesis Advisor	

Instructions: Faculty must provide written expectations for all graduate research units. This may be a syllabus, or a brief outline of work expected to be completed within the quarter. Implementation of this new policy will ensure that both the faculty member and graduate student have a clear understanding of expectations of work to be completed within a given quarter. **Faculty and graduate students must hold individual meetings during the first instructional week of each quarter to discuss research work expectations. A signed outline of the work expectations must be submitted to the departmental graduate coordinator by the end of the first instructional week.**

Research Units Work Expectations
Quarterly Goals: - - - -

APPENDIX F. Preparing for Advancement to Candidacy

1. Your PI/mentor agrees that you are ready to advance.
2. You will need a five-member committee of which your PI/mentor is the committee chair. The majority of the members are from pathology, which includes primary and joint appointed faculty, and at least one from an external department, i.e. outside pathology. This will be a discussion with your PI/mentor to determine committee members.
3. Extend invitations to the committee members, offering them an opportunity to meet with you for 30 minutes to discuss your overall thesis concept (this helps them to orient).
4. Arrange a one-hour meeting with your advancement committee to update on your progress and for agreement to proceed with your advancement.
5. Prepare your advancement document in an NIH fellowship format (e.g., F31/F32). It should include an introduction, specific aims, background and significance, progress to date (preliminary data), research plan, and literature cited. The general organization of such a proposal can be found on the NIH Website: http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html. Arrange a two-hour meeting time with your committee. Remember – this may take several months to organize!
6. One week prior to advancement – share your advancement document with committee members.
7. Preparation of slides for your advancement should include:
    a. Two-three slides on the courses you have completed and then plan to complete.
    b. Describe achievements (abstracts, publications, awards, posters, outreach activities)
    c. Your overarching goal of the dissertation (i.e., overall hypothesis)
    d. Statement of Aims, rationale, design, methods, preliminary or completed data for each Aim.
    e. Provide opportunity for feedback (aim for a 45 min talk in total)
8. The advancement will follow the format of greeting your committee, leaving the room for 10 min so that your PI/mentor can discuss progress or concerns with your committee in private. You will return and give your talk. At the end, the committee will ask you to leave again for 10 minutes to discuss approval or suggestions for an update.
9. If requested, you may also arrange to meet privately with any member of the advancement committee (arranged in advance).
10. If your advancement is approved, either you or your PI/mentor will contact the Graduate Coordinator to initiate via DocuSign the PhD Form I - Advancement to Candidacy for your committee's signatures. Since SOM Graduate Studies requires this form to be submitted by the Graduate Coordinator, you will need to provide to the Graduate Coordinator the names of your Advancement to Candidacy committee members and their email addresses, expected quarter and year of degree completion, and the names of your Doctoral Committee members.
11. Sometimes it's nice to bring a small snack and/or beverages to your advancement – that is up to your discretion, and we encourage the PI/mentor to cover the costs.

APPENDIX G. Annual Committee Meeting Form

EXPERIMENTAL PATHOLOGY
ANNUAL THESIS COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

Quarter and year student entered graduate school _____

Date of advancement to candidacy _____

Projected quarter and year of thesis defense F W S S Year: _____

Date of previous committee meeting _____

Comments from Thesis Advisor:

Comments from committee members:

Comments from the student:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STUDENT SIGNATURES

	Name:	Signature:	Satisfactory Progress:
Thesis Advisor:	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Student signature: _____

APPENDIX H. Timelines for Exp Path PhD program

Yearly Summary of Requirements for Exp Path PhD Students (Table format for students to check off goals as they go)

	Year 1 (direct admits only)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 and beyond
Enroll in MMG 250 - RCR					
Enroll in PATH 200, 203, 204, and 227 every quarter					
Take at least one didactic course					
Attend seminars and RiP Talks every quarter (PATH 204)					
Attend Journal Club every quarter (PATH 227)					
Present RiP Talk in PATH 204					
Complete Annual IDP Form by end of Fall quarter					
Complete Quarterly Research Units Work Expectation every quarter					
Consider applying for fellowships					
Set-up Advancement to Candidacy Committee					
Annual Committee Meetings					
Consider attending and presenting at a scientific meeting					
Take Advancement to Candidacy Exam					
Organize and meet yearly with Doctoral Committee					
Enroll in PATH 299					
RCR training refresher					
Make post-doctoral plans					
Arrange for your thesis defense					
Submit your dissertation					