INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this document is to serve as a guide to the requirements of the School of Health Sciences for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees and the regulations and policies related to these. Graduate students must comply with all the requirements mandated by the Graduate School of Purdue University. The Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual for Administering Graduate Student Programs cover the university-wide policies. More detailed information can be found at https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/faculty. The Graduate School website also gives you immediate access to the various forms you will need during your graduate studies. The following School’s policies detail the specifics to all graduate students in the School of Health Sciences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All graduate students must register in HSCI69600, Seminars in Health Sciences, for a grade and one credit each semester. The thesis-based M.S. student may present one seminar on their thesis topic and indicate one credit on their plan of study. This is usually presented at or near the completion of the student’s research. Each Ph.D. student will give two seminars. The first will be presented on their research proposal, usually during the fourth semester in residence, or on another topic approved by the seminar coordinator. The second is presented in connection with their Ph.D. final examination. Ph.D. students will indicate two credits on the plan of study.

Students in the areas of health physics, radiobiology, occupational and environmental health sciences, medical physics, and toxicology, whether M.S. or Ph.D., are required to take the core courses, or their equivalents. The core courses will be updated on occasion and are posted on the School’s website: https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hsci/students/graduate/programs/index.html. Alternate courses that are considered equivalent will be determined first by the student’s primary advisor then by the student’s advisory committee. In some cases students will have already had the course material at other institutions either as undergraduate or graduate students. In such cases, the student will not have to take the course. This will be decided on a case by case basis during the original registration or at the time the plan of study is filed with the graduate school. There is no additional residency requirement beyond those defined by the Purdue graduate School.

PROCEDURE FOR THE SELECTION OF MAJOR PROFESSOR

Upon acceptance by the graduate school an incoming graduate student is assigned to a temporary faculty advisor who will handle registration and related matters until a major professor is assigned. This is an administrative procedure to assist in getting a graduate student started. There is no obligation on the part of either the graduate student or the temporary faculty member to make this a more permanent arrangement. All students enrolled in the Graduate Program at both MS and PhD levels must select their major advisor preferably at the end of the first semester, but no later than the middle of the second semester. Normally a student entering the School of Health Sciences will already know whether he/she is going into health physics, occupational and environmental health sciences, medical physics, imaging sciences, toxicology, or an interdisciplinary area of specialization. In some cases the student will have been directly recruited by a particular professor and it is mutually agreed that he/she immediately become the student’s major professor. Most often, the student will arrange during their first semester to meet with each professor working in their area of specialty to learn about their research interests and the potential for doing research with that professor as a major professor, or co-major professor.
In all cases, the student should submit a “Request for Assignment of Major Professor” form (GS-24) to the Head of the School indicating the student’s choice for major professor. A copy of this form can be found at https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/faculty/forms.html. The Head will then make the assignment, taking into consideration the student’s request, the concurrence of the professor involved, and other administrative factors. The request should be made as early as possible but in any case no later than the end of the second semester.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Graduate students enrolled in a Ph.D. or thesis-based M.S. program must establish their Graduate Advisory Committee no later than at the end of the first academic year. Non-thesis M.S. graduate students shall have their advisory committee appointed prior to their arrival. The Advisory Committee for a M.S. degree shall consist of a minimum of three members of the graduate faculty with at least two members from the School of Health Sciences. The Advisory Committee for a Ph.D. shall consist of a minimum of four members of the graduate faculty including the major professor and one member from outside the School of Health Sciences. It should be noted that a student’s committee must consist of more regularly certified members than special members. Special members are appointed for each individual student and include, for example, faculty from Indiana University or any other university, emeriti faculty of the School, and/or industrial scientists.

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to help the student determine the coursework needed as listed on the Plan of Study and to advise the student in his/her research endeavors throughout the entire graduate period.

The Advisory Committee must meet at least once per year for the thesis-based graduate students in addition to the meetings for examination. The student, in conjunction with the major professor, is responsible for scheduling committee meetings, providing the committee in advance with sufficient written information to be discussed at the meeting, and providing written minutes of the meeting to the Committee within one week after the meeting.

PLAN OF STUDY

For the thesis-based graduate student, the draft Plan of Study must be submitted within a month after selection of his or her major professor. This draft is sent to the Advisory Committee members for consideration and finalization before its final approval. It also serves to officially establish the Advisory Committee with the graduate school. For non-thesis M.S. students, the draft Plan of Study should be designed by the assigned temporary advisor prior to student’s arrival at Purdue campus. The finalized Plan of Study should be submitted and approved by the coursework-based student’s Advisory Committee during the first semester. The Form for the Plan of Study (GS-4 for Ph.D. and GS-6 for M.S.) can be found at https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/faculty/forms.html, and templates to each concentration in all available Graduate Programs can be found on the School of Health Sciences website, https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hsci/students/graduate/programs/index.html. Occasionally a student may want to change his/her plan of study, including the membership. A special form (GS-13) can be found at https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/faculty/forms.html. Students can also access the electronic plan of study form via MyPurdue. It should be noted that only 6 credits of courses at 300 and 400 levels are permitted on a graduate student’s plan of study but this does not restrict the Advisory Committee from recommending and requiring more courses at or below this level to round out the student’s knowledge base for the area of specialization.
The standard program of study for each graduate area of specialization is provided on the school web site https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hsci/students/graduate/programs/index.html. These requirements are subject to change and in addition each student’s needs are taken into consideration when designing the actual Plan of Study. Also, some restrictions may apply, e.g. students receiving financial support through the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health training grant must select the a thesis-based graduate degree option.

Typically, a standard Plan of Study requires a minimum of 30 coursework credit hours, which requires 6 credit hours of research if thesis-based. Ninety credit hours are required for the Ph.D. degree and these are a mixture of both course credits and research credits. There is no minimum number of coursework credit hours required for a Ph.D. plan of study and upon the recommendation of the student’s Advisory Committee up to 30 credits may be applied to the Ph.D. for a relevant M.S. degree. The Plan of Study must include GRAD61200 (1-credit course) or equivalent for all thesis- and non-thesis-based graduate students. GRAD61200 gives an overview of values, professional standards, and regulations that define responsible conduct in research. Students learn the values and standards of responsible research through readings and lecture/discussion and practice application of these values and standards to research situations through class discussion of case studies from life sciences research.

The Graduate School policies state that an overall average of B is required for all courses on the student’s transcript. The Graduate School does not allow D or F grades for any course on a Plan of Study. Such courses must be repeated with a passing grade and are not dropped from a plan of study. For both M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, a student whose grade point average (GPA) drops below 3.0 must maintain a “B” average in the subsequent semester and has one year in which to restore his/her cumulative GPA to 3.0 or better. The student who fails to meet the GPA requirements will be reviewed by the student’s Advisory Committee and then by the School faculty. Upon recommendation of these two groups, the student may be dismissed and dropped out of the program.

TRANSFER CREDITS ON PURDUE PLAN OF STUDY

All transfer of credit must be consistent with the policies of Purdue University Graduate School as stated in the Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual. Typically, transfer of credits will be considered under the following conditions:

(a) The student has completed at least one semester of satisfactory work in residence at Purdue;
(b) The student has obtained approval from his/her Advisory Committee for the transfer credits requested;
(c) The request from the student includes documentation about the content of the transfer courses and the level at which it was taught (undergraduate or graduate);
(d) Credits that were needed to complete an undergraduate degree may not be transferred to the plan of study; and
(e) The courses for which credit is transferred must be applicable to the student’s plan of study and taught at an appropriate level as determined by the students Advisory Committee. Certain courses, covering material normally considered prerequisite for admission to the graduate program, may not be eligible for transfer of credit.
Ph.D. CANDIDACY EXAMINATIONS

The doctoral candidacy examination consists of two portions, i.e., a written and an oral examination. Both parts are required by the School but it is the oral component that is formally recognized by the graduate school as the Ph.D. candidacy examination. The Ph.D. candidacy written examination is offered twice a year (August: the first Tuesday and Wednesday of the fall semester; and February: the first Tuesday and Wednesday of February). The written exam is typically eight hours in total length, and usually in two 4-hour segments over two days. The written preliminary examination precedes the oral examination and the candidate must take the written examination no later than the end of their second academic year in either of the two designated months. This examination is specifically designed to test the student’s analytical capability and examine the student’s academic competence in their chosen area of specialization. The Ph.D. student’s major professor(s) will have primary responsibility for preparing the written examination. Questions will be solicited from the student’s Advisory Committee and/or faculty members who have delivered courses listed on the plan of study. Student’s achieving an average of 70% score or above for the examination will be considered to have passed. If a student passes with an average score of 70% or above but has an abnormally low score (i.e., 50% or less) on any particular aspect of the exam, the student’s Advisory Committee will implement means to shore up the said weakness(s) through appropriate coursework and/or research. If a student fails to achieve this score for the written examination, the student’s Advisory Committee must have a meeting with/without the presence of the student to evaluate her/his academic competence for the Ph.D. degree. Upon the recommendation of the student’s Advisory Committee, the student will be allowed only one more chance to take the whole written test and this must be at the next available opportunity. If a student fails the second written candidacy examination he/she must leave the Ph.D. program but upon the recommendation of their Advisory Committee may still complete an M.S. degree. The written candidacy exam consists of 3-5 sections covering the student’s knowledge and understanding on the fundamental topics within his field of expertise. These questions are typically taken from the required courses of the academic track. Additional 1-3 sections are included to allow the student’s graduate committee members to ask questions to test the student’s understanding of her/his research area. These questions can be based on (given) manuscripts related to the field of study, laboratory experiences, or similar questions.

After passing the written part of the candidacy examination, the student must take the oral candidacy examination within the next six months. The student will write a detailed proposal on the research that the student wishes to pursue. The defense of that proposal will be the basis of the oral examination. This proposal is written using the NIH R21 (the National Institutes of Health) style format and forms, which includes 1 page of specific aims and 6 pages of research strategy. The research proposal must be sent to the committee members at least two weeks before the oral exam. One committee member other than major professor shall preside the candidate’s oral exam. The major professor will not be present in the room during candidate’s oral exam. Additional advisory member shall be added to the oral exam committee to have at least four faculty members present. The committee is free to ask questions on any aspect of the student’s area of specialization in addition to the proposal material itself. It is the student’s responsibility to file the form for permission to take the examination with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. An up-to-date copy of this form is available from the Graduate School website: https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/faculty/forms.html. Failure to complete the oral examination within the prescribed period will require that the graduate student formally apply to the School Head for a one semester extension. Exceptions to these rules can
only be granted by the Head of the School following a formal written request. This request must be signed by the graduate student and approved by the student’s major professor and a majority of the Advisory Committee.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GRADUATE DEGREE

Continuation in the graduate program toward a thesis–based degree requires satisfactory performance and progress in research. The School’s guideline is that M.S. students should publish or provide the evidence of submission of at least one peer-reviewed journal article from their thesis to their defense examination committee. It is strongly recommended that the Ph.D. students should publish at least one research journal article as the first author, and with two other manuscripts being submitted for peer-review as the first or co-author. All three manuscripts must be based on their own research. Copies of all three manuscripts should be provided to their advisory committee before graduation.

Two consecutive sessions of unsatisfactory (U) grades for research registration (HSCI 698 or 699) mandate that the School take formal action and inform the Graduate School with regard to discontinuation or conditions for continuation of the student’s graduate study. Recommendations for continuation in the program or for termination can be made by the major professor in consultation with the student’s Advisory Committee. This decision is reported to the School Head.

In addition to the research, the major professor and advisory committee will periodically review the progress of the student in adhering to the other requirements of the degree in accordance with the timeline described in this document. The milestones to be met by graduate students can be found at the School’s website: http://www.healthsciences.purdue.edu.

THESIS AND FINAL EXAMINATION

The final examination is a defense of the thesis. For the Ph.D. candidate, at least two academic sessions must elapse between the oral preliminary examination and the final doctoral examination. The Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual for Administering Graduate Student Programs and A Manual for the Preparation of Graduate Thesis should be consulted for details of formatting and deposition. These documents are available at the Graduate School website: https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/faculty/forms.html. Once the student has completed the thesis and reviewed by his/her major professor, copies are submitted to the examining committee at least two weeks prior to the examination. It is the student’s responsibility to file the form for permission to take the examination with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination. This is the same form used for preliminary examinations. Note that this examination may not be held the last week of classes.

LABORATORY SAFETY

All students whose research requires their working in a laboratory handling hazardous chemicals or biological materials must take CHEM 605 entitled “Safety in the Laboratory”. Additional information on laboratory safety is available from Purdue Radiological and Environmental Management program (REM) at the web site: https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/rem/. This includes important manuals such as Guidelines for Handling and Disposal of Chemicals, Radiation Safety Manual, and Biological Safety Manual.

Students whose research includes the use of radiation (including lasers) or radioactive chemicals or animals must receive special training and be certified prior to their use. The above
website presents information on the use of radioactivity. The use of animals is covered by the
Purdue University Animal and Care Committee, and details can be found at: https://www.purdue.edu/research/research-compliance/regulatory/care-use-of-animals/.
Similarly, those involved in research with human subjects must have prior approval for research
whose address is: https://www.irb.purdue.edu/.

SUPPORT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students are expected to complete their M.S. degree requirements within 2 years
and Ph.D. requirements within 5 years. M.S. graduate students are usually not supported by any
school source (TA, RA, fellowship, traineeship) after 2 years and similarly 5 years for the Ph.D.
graduate students. Exceptions must be requested in writing and approved by the Advisory
Committee and School Head. Normally graduate students in the School of Health Sciences are
appointed as Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants on fiscal year appointments.

VACATION AND LEAVE POLICIES

Detail information related to graduate student employment may be found in the document
“Graduate Student Employment Manual” available at the Graduate School web site. University
policy allows the school to determine vacation policies with certain limitations. The granting of a
vacation request should take into account the progress of the student towards his/her degree
objective. The vacation time taken must be mutually agreeable to the student and major professor
and must not conflict with the teaching responsibilities of students supported by teaching
assistantships.

Most graduate students in the School of Health Sciences are on fiscal year (12 month)
appointments. Fiscal year (12 month appointment) graduate staffs are eligible for the ten official
university holidays. Graduate students who are not classified as graduate staff (e.g. fellowship
and training grant appointees) are not subject to university vacation policies. Such students
should reach a mutually acceptable agreement with their major professors. Graduate students on
fiscal (12 month) appointments accrue vacation time each month – 2 days per month except for
March and September (1 day/month). Vacation days may not be taken which have not accrued.
Fiscal year graduate staff may be granted a maximum of 22 days per year subject to the
conditions of the preceding paragraph. Vacation days accrued in excess of 22 working days are
forfeited. Students must submit an absence from campus duty form prior to taking the vacation.

In the unusual circumstance that a student is appointed as an academic year graduate staff
member, then they are considered to have vacation status when classes are not in session. The
seven-day period prior to the start of classes and the period between the end of classes and date
for submission of final grades are not considered vacation days.

If students are absent due to travel to meetings or on trips related to their research projects
and are to receive reimbursement, they must file a form 17 “request for authority to travel on
university business” prior to the trip. Upon return, an accounting form 0025 “travel
reimbursement request” must be completed.

Graduate students are eligible for two weeks (10 working days) per year of paid sick leave
for illness. “Illness” is defined as a staff member’s own illness, disabling injury, or pregnancy.
This includes childbirth and complications of pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, and confined
recovery there from, for the period during which the employee is unable to perform normal
duties as determined by a physician.
Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provides provision for time off for an employee’s own serious health condition, to take care of a family member with a serious health condition, to give birth, to adopt, or to place a child in the employee’s home for foster care. FMLA states that up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year is available. If the leave is taken for an employee’s own health condition or disability due to childbirth, all sick leave with pay must be exhausted prior to FMLA taking effect. In order to be eligible for leave under FMLA, graduate student staff must have been employed at Purdue for a year or longer and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months. “Family member” is defined as the employee’s own spouse, son, daughter, or parent. Further information on FMLA is available by contacting Personnel Services. Refer to Executive Memorandum No. C-30 for the University’s policy on family leave. Graduate student staffs are eligible for three working days per year paid leave for immediate family illness. “Immediate family” is defined as spouse, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, sisters, brothers, and corresponding in-laws and step-relatives. Family members not included here, but who reside in the employee’s home, are considered immediate family.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Graduate students should recognize that the pursuit of a graduate research degree is a full-time activity that may require significant personal sacrifices for a time but which will hopefully pay off in a more rewarding life’s work and greater earning potential. Therefore, students are strongly discouraged from engaging in work outside of the School to supplement their University income. However, occasions do occur in which the question of outside work arises.

Any student wishing to engage in outside work to supplement his or her income is encouraged to discuss this matter with his or her major professor or advisor. The overriding issue is whether the student is making satisfactory progress towards his/her degree objective, and if the proposed outside work will jeopardize that progress. A student on appointment who is working outside the department will be held to the same standards as one who is not.

A student needs no formal School approval for any activity conducted on his/her own time. However, students on appointment who wish to engage in outside work during regular working hours must take personal vacation for this purpose, and, like any vacation, this must be approved in advance. The major professor, school head, and TA supervisor (if applicable) must sign the approval.

PURCHASING

Items for research can be purchased from the various university stockrooms by using a form 100. A valid account number and signature of the major professor are necessary. Other items may be ordered from outside the university by filling out a form, obtaining the signature of the major professor, and submitting it to the secretaries. On some occasions it may be necessary to purchase items from local merchants. Some of these stores will take a form 100. For others you may pay cash and be reimbursed by the business office upon submitting a receipt and an account number. Since you will not be reimbursed for sales tax, you need to obtain the state sales tax exemption number prior to shopping.