

Interdisciplinary Life Science Graduate Program (PULSe)

Guide for Administering Faculty Responsibilities

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PULSe

THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY LIFE SCIENCE INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAM

GUIDE FOR FACULTY

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Administration and Financial Support: Administration of PULSe is the responsibility of the Graduate School, including supervision of the budget and administrative and clerical staff. The duties of the administrative and clerical staff will be organized by task and will serve all Training Groups (TGs). Financial support of PULSe will include:

- Initial stipend support for all students admitted to the program
- Support for recruitment efforts (materials, web development, etc.)
- Funds for a seminar series
- Support for a student recruitment visitation including a symposium and retreat
- Incidental supplies, etc.

Support for students in subsequent years of their study will be through training grants sought by TGs, from research grants secured by the major professor, or through research and/or teaching assistantships administered by the student's major professor's home department.

After the first year of study, PULSe students are to be paid no less than the stipend amount awarded at the time of entry into the program. It is recommended that PULSe students receive a stipend that is greater than or equal to the amount paid to the incoming PULSe students each fall. PULSe students with departmental TA positions are not to exceed 50.00 CUL for the TA appointment.

Committees: Committees for the management of PULSe are designed to optimize communication with departmental and school administrators and to provide an organizational structure for the management of the functions of the program.

Executive Committee: Administrative direction for the programs is under the control of the PULSe Executive Committee (PEC), which is composed of one faculty representative from each TG, each of which is elected by the members of that TG, and one additional faculty representative, who is elected as chair by the PEC. The role of the PEC is to provide a communication link between the TGs and the administrative entities involved (Liaison Committee, Graduate School, and the Provost), and to review the membership and establishment of new TGs.

The PEC oversees the PULSe curriculum, to ensure diversity of course offerings within PULSe, and to assist incoming students with course selections. The charge of this committee also is to communicate with prospective students and to provide appropriate communication to faculty regarding PULSe recruitment efforts. This committee will work with the Graduate Programs Specialist for PULSe to execute recruitment communication policies and to coordinate TG participation in recruitment events.

Admissions Committee: The PULSe Admissions Committee (PAC) is responsible for screening applications and selecting students for admission into PULSe. The committee consists of one member from each of the TGs. Each member will serve a three-year term. The responsibility of this committee is to ensure rapid consideration of applicants for admission by convening at regular intervals during critical periods of applicant processing.

Additional Organizational Committees: Additional committees will be required to manage PULSe, including committees on seminars and others.

Faculty Membership and Responsibilities

Training Group Membership: Membership in PULSe and its TGs is open to faculty of any department and school at Purdue University who are certified by the graduate school to chair Ph.D. committees and whose department heads have approved the PULSe policy document. Faculty are permitted to belong to no more than three TGs. Limited faculty membership ensures that members of each TG are committed to the success of the group. Membership is of two types, administrative membership and participatory membership. Administrative members of a TG are responsible for the teaching, committee work, and recruiting efforts on behalf of the TG. With limited TG membership, each TG should have at least five administrative members to support the workload of the various required committees. Faculty who are administrative members in one TG may be participatory members of two other TGs. Participatory TG members are not required to work on behalf of that TG, with the assumption that they are actively working on behalf of the TG in which they have administrative membership. Both administrative and participatory members are eligible to train graduate students with a TG. Every faculty member must hold administrative membership status in one TG.

The diversity of faculty in PULSe precludes the establishment of rigid rules by which faculty membership can be evaluated; however, the following can be considered to be guidelines for TG membership. TGs comprise only research-active faculty who publish regularly in peer-reviewed journals as assessed by the PEC, and whose research expertise aligns with that of a TG. Participation of non-traditional life sciences faculty (e.g., engineers, computer scientists, mathematicians) is to be particularly encouraged. TG membership is based upon factors including faculty participation in graduate training and contribution to graduate teaching. Funding status is also considered, although the committee recognizes that certain areas of life science research may be less dependent upon extramural funding than others. At a minimum, each TG member must have demonstrable means by which PULSe graduate students can be provided with their research needs and can be supported for sufficient time to complete their degree. The form of support provided to a student should avoid inhibiting student progress. Independent of funding status, all Assistant Professors are considered to be eligible for membership. The primary responsibility for evaluating faculty membership criteria is in the hands of the TG in which faculty wish to hold or seek to hold administrative membership. Thus, TGs are responsible for determining their own membership, subject to review by the PEC and PULSe Liaison Committees.

TG membership is subject to review every annually by each TG with oversight by the PEC. The membership of faculty who are not active participants in a TG will not be renewed or can be placed into probationary status (e.g. cannot host PULSe laboratory rotations for an amount of time TBD by the PEC).

Training Group Membership Application Procedure: Formal applications for new memberships in PULSe should be made to the PULSe administration. Applications will be forwarded to the appropriate TG or groups. Applications should include a cover letter indicating the level of membership that is being sought (Administrative or Participatory) and a description of research interests as they relate to the mission of the TG. The letter should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae that includes recent publications, sources of current extramural and/or intramural support for graduate student training, and a list of current and past graduate students.

Obligations of Training Group Membership: PULSe membership, and in particular, support of PULSe students in a faculty member's laboratory, brings with it the expectation of active and regular participation in PULSe and TG activities. These include:

1. Serving on TG and PULSe committees;
2. Serving on TG and PULSe student committees;
3. Training of PULSe graduate students;
4. Active participation in curriculum design;
5. Participation in training grant initiatives;
6. Attending PULSe seminars and retreats, and assisting in the invitation and hosting of invited speakers.
7. Participating in PULSe recruiting efforts;

Training Group Organization and Responsibilities

The basic organizational structure of the program involves formation of TGs within PULSe. The formation of these units is critical to the success of the program because they serve as the research and education arm of the program and, as such, are the primary outreach tool for recruitment of students to the program. As a result, the details of formation and duties of these groups need to be carefully considered.

Naming of Training Groups: Topic-oriented (TG) names are encouraged in order to avoid conflicts and confusion with existing departmental names and to make the names of TGs appear as current and topical as possible. Interdisciplinary TG names are encouraged. TG names of this type should be most attractive to potential students.

Training Group Size: An important objective of PULSe is to serve as an umbrella under which smaller, more cohesive groups of research-active faculty may train graduate students. The optimal size of a PULSe TG is 10-30 faculty members. TGs of over 30 faculty should be avoided to ensure active participation of all faculty in PULSe TGs, and to maintain faculty ownership in, and commitment to TGs.

Training Group Establishment: The establishment of TGs is regulated by PULSe to ensure that the pedagogical missions of the program are met, to make sure that the program best represents the opportunities available at Purdue University for graduate study in the life sciences, and to make sure that the financial resources of the program are used as wisely as possible. The oversight of TG establishment is the responsibility of the PEC.

To establish a PULSe TG, a group of faculty must identify a TG area and submit a TG proposal to the PEC. This proposal should include the following information:

1. a TG name,
2. a list of administrative members,
3. a list of potential participatory members, and
4. a mission statement that describes the group's graduate training objectives.

If the PEC gives a positive review to a TG proposal, the TG faculty will have 60 days to present a more detailed proposal, including the TG curriculum. A positive review of this full proposal will result in the TG becoming an official group with PULSe.

Obligations of Training Groups: The overall responsibility of the TGs is to provide a meaningful education and research experience for graduate students within their TG. The specific responsibilities of TGs include the following:

1. Offer a one-semester TG introductory course
2. Actively participate in graduate education including the development of a curriculum for students within the TG area
3. Participate in PULSe committees (TG members to serve each of the PEC, PAC, PCC and the PULSe Recruitment Committee)
4. Organize preliminary exams for TG students
5. Meet on an annual or semi-annual basis to review membership and course offerings
6. Participate in PULSe retreats
7. Participate in recruiting efforts.

TGs are encouraged to pursue extramural funding such as training grants, particularly if they are well established and/or represent a strength of the Purdue life sciences research community.

Training Group Introductory Course: Each TG is required to provide a one semester, two to four credit hour course that serves as a survey on the TG topic. The course will provide adequate background and depth for all PULSe students. In the short term, this course can be selected from among existing courses; however, in the long term, it is expected that, in consultation with the PULSe Curriculum Committee, each TG will carefully review the selected course and either initiate a new introductory course or work with the faculty member offering the existing course to modify its content to meet the needs of PULSe students.

Review of Training Groups: All TGs are subject to review by the PEC and the PULSe Liaison Committee. When reviewed, factors including faculty membership, graduate student training, success in obtaining research funding, participation in graduate teaching, and program attendance will be considered.

Participation of Training Groups: The obligation of each TG to participate in PULSe committees and other program activities (e.g., recruiting events) is critical for an effective interdisciplinary program. Attendance by the TG representative, or an alternate, is required and will be recorded at all PULSe committee meetings and events. Repeated absences from meetings of any PULSe committee, or failure to otherwise effectively participate in committee and program activities, will be reviewed by the PEC on a continuing basis. An initial failure, as determined by the PEC, to meet the committee obligation will be communicated by the Chair of the PEC to the entire TG.

Probationary Status of Training Groups: Continued failure to meet the committee obligation found by subsequent review by the PEC will cause the TG to be assigned probationary status. Placement of the TG on probationary status will be communicated to all TG administrative and participatory members. While the TG is in probationary status, administrative members of the TG will not be assigned new students, the research area of the TG will not be included in recruitment efforts, and new faculty will not be admitted into the TG. During the participation. The TG will be removed from probationary status when it has demonstrated the PULSe Admissions Committee (PAC) Policies and Procedures

PULSe Admissions Committee (PAC) Policies and Procedures

PULSe is focused on maximizing the flexibility of students in their selection of TG, rotations, and major professor. Most students will be admitted to the PULSe Program and not to individual groups and, as a result, will have the opportunity to do rotations among several TGs representing a broad range of research areas.

The PAC will have equal representation from all TGs. The committee will employ a “study section-like” review procedure in which applications are reviewed by a primary reviewer and one or two secondary reviewers who make a recommendation to the entire committee. Review of applications will proceed with the presentation of those applications by the primary and secondary reviewers, and discussion by the entire committee. The committee will determine the rank of applicants to be discussed in meetings.

The basic standards to be used in evaluating admission include, but are not limited to the following criteria: a strong emphasis will be given to previous research experience: three letters of recommendation of which at least one should be from a research advisor supporting the student’s research potential; transcripts showing adequate academic preparation for entry into a Life Science Ph.D. program; where appropriate Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Pearson Test of English (PTE) and GRE scores can be considered. All international applicants tentatively recommended for admission must also complete a final stage of approval in order to receive full recommendation status. This final stage is based on their performance in an interview that may be conducted in-person or online. All domestic applicants and international applicants living in the US tentatively recommended for admission will be invited to an on-campus interview. The outcome of this interview will be taken into account for making final recommendations to admit.

Policies:

1. Initial assignment of applications will be carried out by the Office of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs. Each committee member will survey an equal number of applications. Based on the interests expressed by the applicant, whenever possible, a primary reviewer will be selected from the applicant’s TG of choice and a secondary reviewer will be selected from outside of the TG. A representative of the TG will typically be primary reviewer for applicants to this particular TG, and the secondary reviewer will be from a related TG.
2. The PAC applies a holistic review model to the evaluation process. These standards and the method of evaluation used to triage applications in order to decrease the work load distributed to each member of the PAC is discussed at the first meeting of the PAC each fall semester.

3. Due to the volume of applications received and reviewed, if a certain PULSe faculty member's input is requested by the PAC, they must be notified separately with a response deadline by the Chair of the PAC.
4. Given that a large number of files will need to be reviewed and prioritized, applications will be ranked into one of the following categories:
 - a. Outstanding – Admit
 - b. Average – Program Fit Uncertain
 - c. Below Average – Do Not Admit
 - d. Hold (will be tabled and discussed in comparison with other tabled candidates in two later meetings: one in mid-January, one in mid-February). The number of these tabled candidates should be kept to a reasonable number. The same reviewers who reviewed and tabled candidate the first time will introduce the tabled candidate for review the second time. In addition to these initial reviewers, a third new reviewer from the PAC to be determined by the chair should review the tabled applicant as well.

Each application will be reviewed by two reviewers. All domestic applications will be discussed, strong applications first. International applications that receive two “do not admit” votes will be automatically rejected and not discussed at the meeting.

5. In exceptional circumstances and with the explicit approval of the PAC, a student may be accepted to PULSe without doing rotations and directly enter a faculty member's laboratory without financial support from PULSe. For example, this circumstance may arise if:
 - a. A student has done a previous research internship with a faculty member and wants to continue their research in their laboratory.
 - b. A faculty member has a funding source for a student to which a student must be named prior to admission in order to be able to activate the funding, or;
 - c. The number of well-qualified students exceeds the number of assistantships PULSe has to offer and a faculty member is willing to make a direct offer to one of these individuals.

The applications of all such students must be evaluated by the PAC and must meet the same standards as any other student admitted to PULSe. Students of this type will fulfill all the curricular requirements of PULSe. In agreeing to this arrangement, the faculty member must guarantee support for the student for the duration of study/until such time as s/he is no longer in good standing with the Graduate School.

6. If an applicant who is judged by the PAC to be admissible expresses an interest in a specific Training Group that has a training grant, the PAC will consult the Principal Investigator (PI) of the training grant to determine if an offer of support from the training grant is appropriate, with the expectation that most if not all of the student's rotations will be completed within the Training Group that provides support to the student.
7. The citizenship of applicants needs to be considered during the admissions process in order to comply with citizenship requirements of most training grants from the Federal Government.

Additional PULSe Admissions Regulations

1. Purdue's Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Certification Training Site states: “Applicants who are denied admission to the university by the Admissions Committee do not have the right to review their denied applications.” To take this one step further, no applicant, admitted or denied, will be provided with feedback regarding their application review made by the Admissions Committee.
2. Admissions decisions are based primarily on the required application materials submitted by the applicant. Purdue representatives are not permitted to contact applicants or recommenders for additional materials.
3. Admissions committee member reviews/rankings of applicants are confidential and will not be shared outside of the Admissions Committee by faculty members or staff with other faculty members, administrators, students, etc.

4. Admissions decisions made by the PULSe Admissions Committee are final. Should an applicant be of interest to a faculty member, the applicant is required to apply to the faculty member's home department and be reviewed through their departmental review process.

PULSE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

November 1	Student – Submits Prelim Topic to the Office of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs (OIGP)
November 20	Faculty – TG Chair provides Chair Assignment (if topic is approved) to OIGP
December 1	OIGP – Notifies students of prelim chair if topic is approved.
December 15	Faculty – TG Chair provides the prelim committee to OIGP.
January 15	OIGP – Notifies students of prelim committees and distributes instructions for submitting the online graduate School Form 8 “Request for Appointment of Examining Committee”
Beginning February 1	Student – Set examination date with the committee (exam date needs to be between March 1 st and April 15 th)
No Later than February 15	Student- Notifies the OIGP of Exam date for final approval.
Upon OIGP approval	Student – Submits the online Graduate School Form 8.
February 10	Student – Submits Written Research Proposal to the OIGP.
Upon receiving	Faculty – Committee members review written proposals to determine if defensible.
Two weeks after proposal is received	Faculty – Committee chair notifies the student and OIGP if the proposal is defensible. If defensible, proceed to oral exam date. If not, the revised document is due no later than March 15 th .
No Later than 5:00pm on April 15	Students - Orally defend Written Proposal

Prelim Topic Submission

Students submit a hard copy of the thesis and exam topic summaries, along with the “Request for Preliminary Examination” form, to the Office of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs.

The Graduate Programs Specialist forwards the exam topic and thesis summaries, “Request for Preliminary Examination” form to the respective TG Chair. Students may suggest up to two external faculty (faculty not on the student's advisory committee) for the exam committee on the “Request for Preliminary Examination” form. TG Chair evaluates the topic and provides the Graduate Programs Specialist with the results of the topic evaluation. Results are then shared with the student.

If the topic is approved by the TG Chair, the TG Chair assigns a committee.

If the topic is not approved, the TG Chair returns it to the student for revision.

Committee Assignments

The **TG Chair assign** a faculty exam committee consisting of two members of the student's Advisory Committee and two additional faculty. A minimum of two PULSe faculty members should serve on the exam committee. The **TG Chair** has the final decision; student nominated reviewers may or may not serve on the exam committee.

The OIGP notifies students of prelim committees and distributes instructions for submitting the online Graduate School Form 8 “Request for Appointment of Examining Committee”, and Prelim Committee Criteria.