



Milestones Guide for Students and Their Mentors

This document serves as a guide for students as they begin the Biomedical Science Ph.D. program and complete their degree requirements. The guide also serves as a reference for major advisors and advisory committee members. However, the guide is not a substitute for the university's graduate catalog or Area of Concentration handbooks/UConn Health Graduate School webpages, which contain more detailed information about the PhD program.

FOR ALL YEARS:

Registration

Register for courses via the [Student Administration System](#) by logging in with your NetID and password. A list of courses for the current upcoming semester can be found on the [UCH Student page](#) under "For Biomedical Science Ph.D. Students."

To be considered a full-time student, you must be registered for at least 6 credits per semester as a GA, or 9 credits per semester if you are supported by an institutional/individual federal training grant.

Students registering for GRAD 6950 (Doctoral Dissertation Research): note that the section number of the course equals the number of credits you are registering for (for example, GRAD 6950 section 3 would be for 3 credits).

The Graduate Assistant (GA) **tuition waiver** covers registration for Fall and Spring semesters only. Do not register for Summer/Winter courses unless you plan on paying for them yourself.

Every year you must complete the SF (Student Financial) Agreement in Student Administration System. You will not be able to register for the fall semester without completing this agreement.

Check your transcript each semester. If any grades are missing, reach out to the course instructor. Note that MEDS 6950 Doctoral Dissertation Research must be graded each semester by your major advisor. If your grades for MEDS 6950 are missing, reach out to your major advisor.

Please register *no later than* the Friday before the semester begins. While you technically have until the 10th day of the semester to enroll in classes, course instructors need to know how many students are enrolled in their courses. If students are not registered by the start of the semester, a course instructor may decide to drop the class due to low enrollment. Additionally, if there is a hold on your account, you will need time to address the issue prior to the registration deadline.

If you are not enrolled as a full-time student by the 10th day of the semester, the university will automatically withdraw you from The Graduate School and you will be personally responsible for paying the reinstatement fee. Additionally, you may jeopardize your GA, your tuition waiver, and for international students, your visa status.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

To retain an appointment as a GA, a student must be enrolled as a full-time student and must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (B) in any coursework taken. In addition, they must be eligible to register (i.e., must not have more than three viable grades of Incomplete on their academic record), and must be making satisfactory progress in their dissertation work.

Year 1

Once you select a major advisor at the end of your first year, complete all three forms below asap, found on the [UCH Student page](#) under “For Biomedical Science Ph.D. Students”

-**Change of Advisor** -signed by the major advisor, emailed to degreeaudit@uconn.edu and copied to phdbiomed@uchc.edu

-**Biomedical Science Sponsorship Form**-signed by the major advisor, director of your Area of Concentration (AoC), and the major advisor’s department chair/center director, emailed to phdbiomed@uchc.edu only. [note: this new form replaces the Change of Major Advisor Part 2 form as of 4/29/26]

-**Student-Mentor Agreement**-signed by student and major advisor, emailed to phdbiomed@uchc.edu only.

Year 2

Select your **Advisory Committee** no later than the end of the fall semester. The Graduate School requires your committee to include at least 2 associate advisors in addition to your major advisor. At least one of the associate advisors must be a member of the same AoC as the student and major advisor. The advisory committee should meet with the student at least once per year, and ideally once per semester. Check with your AoC for any additional committee membership or meeting frequency requirements.

File your approved **Plan of Study** at The UConn Graduate School prior to taking your General Examination. The PhD requires at least 45 credits, including at least 30 credits of content coursework beyond the baccalaureate degree or at least 15 credits of content coursework beyond the master’s degree in the same or a closely related field (with approval of the advisory committee). Content coursework is usually fulfilled through MEDS courses but may be taken in other programs with permission of the advisory committee. In addition to content coursework, all students must earn at least 15 credits of GRAD 6950 (Doctoral Dissertation Research).

The **Plan of Study form** is found on [The Graduate School forms page](#) under “Forms for Enrolled Doctoral Students.” It is approved and signed by your major advisor and all advisory committee members, then emailed to degreeaudit@uconn.edu and copied to phdbiomed@uchc.edu. If changes are needed after submission of the Plan of Study, including changes to the advisory committee, email the changes to degreeaudit@uconn.edu.

The **General Examination** includes both a written and oral component. Both portions of the General Exam must be taken no later than June 30th of the second year. You must complete all steps of the General Exam, including any required remediation, no later than August 15th of the second year. Check with your AoC for their specific format and instructions for the General Exam. The General Exam Committee must consist of at least 5 faculty members, including your major advisor and all advisory committee members. Check with your AoC for any additional General Exam committee requirements.

Once completed, submit the **Report on General Exam** form, which is found on [The Graduate School forms page](#) under “Forms for Enrolled Doctoral Students.” This form is signed by your major advisor and all advisory committee members only. If additional examiners who are not on your advisory committee participate in your exam, there is a place to list them, but they do not sign the form.

Year 3 and Beyond

The **Doctoral Dissertation Proposal** is a brief description of your dissertation work. It must include the official approval documents for any work done with animal subjects, human subjects or human stem cells. It should be completed soon after the General Exam is passed. Guidelines for the Dissertation Proposal are found on the [Student page](#) under “For All Graduate Students>>Milestones/Completing Your Degree.”

The **Doctoral Dissertation Proposal** form, found on [The Graduate School forms page](#) under “Forms for Enrolled Doctoral Students,” is signed by your major advisor and all advisory committee members. Once signed, you email it along with any supporting documentation to phdbiomed@uchc.edu to be reviewed by the Chair of the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC), who will sign off on the “Department/Program Head or Review Committee Chairperson Approval” line.

Once approved by the GPC Chair, the signed form will be returned to you; email the form and supporting documents to degreeaudit@uconn.edu and copy phdbiomed@uchc.edu.

You are considered a **candidate for the Ph.D. degree** once all three criteria below have been met:

- 1) the Plan of Study is approved and on file at The Graduate School at Storrs,
- 2) the General Exam is completed and on file at The Graduate School at Storrs, and
- 3) the approved Doctoral Dissertation Proposal is on file at The Graduate School at Storrs (degreeaudit@uconn.edu).

Be sure to **check the status of your milestones in Student Admin as you approach your final semester** to ensure they have posted. If milestones are missing, contact Jen Horan jenn.horan@uconn.edu at Storrs.

Final Semester/Completion

During your final semester, complete your written dissertation and both a private and public defense (note that the private defense is a Biomedical Science Ph.D. program requirement, not a Graduate School requirement).

Review The Graduate School's [Steps for a Successful Graduation](#), which provides step-by-step guidance for completion of your degree (including dissertation formatting requirements).

Apply for graduation in the [Student Administration System](#) by the 4th week of the semester in which you intend to complete the degree requirements. Find detailed instructions on applying for graduation in the UConn Knowledge Base [here](#).

Attend the Completion Workshop held by the Associate Dean at UConn Health in January of each year or review the posted workshop online. The workshop will provide a review of key points specific to the Biomedical Science Ph.D. program regarding completing your degree and will allow time to answer any questions about the process. Students intending to complete within the upcoming year should plan to attend this in-person session. For reference, the most recent PhD degree completion workshop information is found on the [Student page](#) under "For All Graduate Students>>Milestones/Completing Your Degree."

Set dates for the private and public defenses in consultation with your major advisor and advisory committee. *Your AoC or departmental administrator* should assist you with room scheduling for the public defense.

Announce your public defense on the [UConn Events Calendar](#) on the *Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Defense* calendar. Instructions are in "Steps for a Successful Graduation" mentioned above. The event should by default be 'shareable' and can be picked up by the UConn Health Grad School calendar. Your defense must be announced at least 2 weeks prior to the event date. Additionally, many students submit an announcement to the [UConn Health Lifeline](#). Check the [Academic Calendar](#) for submission deadlines for each degree conferral date.

Notify the UConn Health Graduate School Bursar (currently Charles Rowland, chrowland@uchc.edu) in the UConn Health Graduate School Office once you have determined your defense date so he can work with you and your department administrator to coordinate your dissertation submission and end date of your GA. Notify the bursar ASAP if there is any change to your originally planned completion date and he will provide further instructions. Note that your *completion date* (when you submit your dissertation and end your GA), is not the same as your *degree conferral date*. The university confers degrees three times per year (December, May, and August).

International students should also coordinate their completion date with the [UCH International Office](#).

Upon successful defense of your dissertation, complete the online **Defense and Final Thesis/Dissertation Approval webform** found on [The Graduate School Forms page](#) under "Forms for Enrolled Doctoral Students."

The webform will be electronically routed to your major advisor and advisory committee members for approval. Please advise them that they will receive an email from UConn with a link to the form. Once all approvals have been collected, the form will automatically be routed to the UConn Registrar's Office for processing. You will **upload your final dissertation electronically** to the [Thesis and Dissertation Portal](#). Follow the instructions found in the [Doctoral Dissertation User Guide.pdf](#).

Commencement is held annually in May on the UConn Storrs campus for UConn Health Graduate School, SODM and SOM graduates. Students who have completed their degree requirements by the previous December or plan to complete them by May or August in the commencement year are invited to walk commencement ceremony. Doctoral students may be hooded by their major advisor or by both co-major advisors if applicable or by the designated UConn Health hooding marshal. Detailed information about commencement is sent out during the spring semester and can be found on the [UConn Health Commencement page](#). Regalia for students and faculty (for faculty who do not have their own regalia) is ordered through the **UConn Health** Bookstore link (*not* UConn Storrs); the ordering deadline is generally sometime in late February.

Contacts in the UConn Health Grad Office (AG-047/50)

Lana Angelo, Biomedical Science PhD Program Coordinator: langelo@uchc.edu

Stephanie Rauch, Student Affairs Officer-Graduate School at UConn Health: rauch@uchc.edu

Charles Rowland, Bursar Representative-UConn Health: chrowland@uchc.edu
Billing, tuition waiver, insurance, completion timeline for ending GA

Jane Tran Sills, Administrative Program Coordinator: transills@uchc.edu
Undergraduate summer research program, Biomed Sci certificate program, finance/bursar support

Tracy Dieli, M.D./Ph.D. Program Coordinator: dieli@uchc.edu

Dr. Barbara Kream, Associate Dean of The Graduate School-UConn Health: kream@uchc.edu

Resources for UConn Health Students

Student Behavioral Health Service

Free and confidential mental health services, counseling, and resources available at the UConn Health campus

Student Accommodations- MyAccess

The Center for Students with Disabilities engages in an interactive process with each student and reviews requests for accommodations on an individualized, case-by-case basis.

Ombuds Office, Jim Wohl: wohl@uchc.edu

Confidential, informal, independent, and impartial assistance to individuals through dispute resolution and problem-solving methods

UConn Health Registrar's Office

The Office of the Registrar at UConn Health acts as a liaison to the Whetten Graduate Center and the UConn Registrar's Office on the Storrs campus.

International Office at UConn Health

The International Office is a resource for immigration information, international tax, and human resource-related issues for the international population at UConn Health, which currently has 300 international students and scholars representing more than 60 countries.

Graduate Student Organization (GSO)

The GSO organizes social events for students in all Graduate School programs at UConn Health. The group assists with a variety of Biomedical Science program functions such as Orientation and Graduate Student Research Day, and serves as the student representative to the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC).

Contacts at UConn Storrs

Questions on doctoral student milestones: degreeaudit@uconn.edu or Jenn Horan: jenn.horan@uconn.edu

Important Online Resources

UConn Health Graduate School Student webpage: <https://health.uconn.edu/graduate-school/current/>

UConn Graduate Catalog: <https://catalog.uconn.edu/graduate/>

UConn Graduate Catalog (Biomedical Science program): <https://catalog.uconn.edu/graduate/degree-programs/biomedical-science-ms-phd/#text>

UConn Graduate School Forms: <https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>

Student Administration System (course registration and student record): <https://studentadmin.uconn.edu/>