



BROWN
Alpert Medical School

MD-PhD PROGRAM HANDBOOK

SECTION I: PROGRAM OF STUDY

The MD-PhD Program enables students to attain both the MD and PhD degrees over a period of six to nine years. The curriculum is flexible and students are encouraged to shape their own individualized course of study. However, the expectation is that students will complete the pre-clerkship medical curriculum during years 1 and 2, and then undertake graduate studies. Upon completion of the requirements for the PhD, students return to complete the requirements for the MD degree.

GRADUATE STUDIES

Students may obtain the PhD as a member of one of nine graduate programs within the Division of Biology and Medicine. They are:

- Biomedical Engineering
- Biostatistics
- Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
- Epidemiology
- Health Services Research
- Molecular Biology, Cell Biology and Biochemistry
- Molecular Pharmacology and Physiology
- Neuroscience
- Pathobiology

LAB ROTATIONS AND PhD TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Although you were asked to indicate the graduate program that you most identified with on your MD-PhD application, all students are encouraged to explore a wide range of research topics during their initial rotations. Thus, students may do rotations with faculty members in different graduate programs. Students are strongly encouraged to do a lab rotation during the summer before year 1 of Medical School and between years 1 and 2. Summer rotations begin anytime after May 31st and end anytime before the start of medical school classes. Specifics of a rotation should be worked out with the faculty member. **However, it should be noted that the expectation for summer rotations is that they will last 8 to 10 weeks and that the time commitment will be consistent with what would be generally considered "full time".** Some graduate programs allow shorter rotations, so that two lab rotations can be fit into the 8 to 10 week period. Check with the faculty director(s) of the specific graduate program(s) that interest you. Information about Graduate Programs and Faculty Directors can be found here: http://biomed.brown.edu/grad-postdoc/GS_GradPrograms.html.

When a student enters the graduate research years, a group of faculty advisors are assigned to meet with the student on a semiannual basis to offer advice on courses and to assess progress. This ad hoc faculty advisory group is replaced by the mentor and thesis advisory committee when the laboratory and research project have been selected by the student.

CHOOSING A RESEARCH PROJECT: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

You will choose a research area and faculty mentor aligned with one of our PhD programs. Programs provide opportunities for students to obtain detailed information about research options so that they may make informed choices about an advisor and a research area. For more information about the programs, course requirements, seminars or retreats, visit the program websites and view their handbooks available as links from the Graduate School web site: <http://gradschool.brown.edu/go/phdprograms>.

Consultation with graduate program directors and faculty members of interest is encouraged as early as possible.

REGISTRATION

All continuing graduate students must pre-register. Students should register via “Banner” the student information system. Pre-registration is in the preceding April for Sem I and in the preceding November for Sem II. Students are notified of the specific dates for registration but please consult the Registrar’s web site for complete and updated information:

<http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Registrar/guidelines/registration/index.html>.

If you have completed your course work and plan to only do a lab rotation you must register for *Independent Study*. If you fail to pre-register, the Registrar's Office will charge you a late fee of \$15. Additionally, there is the risk of your student status becoming inactive. If this happens you will lose your student aid and privileges until you register and your student status is reactivated.

If it is your first year of graduate school and you are transitioning from the medical school, you may register at the end of August/beginning of September. Before you register for classes you must set up an appointment with your advisor and/or the graduate program director of the graduate program you have chosen

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP REQUIREMENT:

During the second year of graduate school, you will be required to serve as teaching assistants for one semester. The goal of the teaching assistantship for MD-PhD students is to provide an important service to the institution while gaining valuable teaching experience that will contribute to your academic career development. Course assignments, whenever possible, will be based on your research interests and career goals. The course assignment will be made by Associate Dean for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies in consultation with the MD-PhD program.

DISSERTATION/ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Most students have selected a mentor by the beginning of their graduate years. The student and the thesis mentor select a thesis committee, which provides insight into the specific field of research.

For step by step instructions and what is required for your dissertation please log on to the Graduate School’s site, “Rules and Regulations”:

<http://gradschool.brown.edu/go/rulesandreg>

MEDICAL STUDIES

POLICIES ON THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MD DEGREE:

The requirements for the MD degree are identical to those for MD students.

However, the MD Curriculum Committee has approved several modifications to the medical curriculum for MD-PhD students. These are intended to expedite the completion of the combined degree while allowing the student to better integrate their medical and graduate studies.

The requirements for the MD degree may be found at:

<http://med.brown.edu/education/md.html>

Curriculum components specific to the MD-PhD program include the following:

- BIOL 5700 – Bridging the Bench and the Bedside: This seminar meets weekly. Student attendance is expected during the MD1, MD2 and PhD years. It is optional during the MD3 and MD4 years. Topics span science, career development and the nature of translational research. Dr. Joseph Bliss, MD, PhD – Department of Pediatrics – is the course leader.
- Modified Community Health Clerkship: Students are given the option of completing the requirements for the CH Clerkship during the PhD years. For MD-PhD students, the didactic components of the rotations will be modified so as to avoid redundancy. Students are encouraged to develop a CH Project that relates to their area of PhD study.
- Provision of MD3-MD4 credit for PhD research: MD-PhD students can be awarded up to 20 weeks of credit towards the required 80 weeks of credit during MD years 3 and 4. This assignment of “clinical credit” is made at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Further requirements for the awarding of the MD degree are as follows:

1. Every candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine must complete satisfactorily at least the last two years of the medical school as a full-time student at Brown University. ["Full-time" means as a matriculated medical student at Brown; this does not preclude away electives, reduced load options, or leaves of absence.]

2. A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine must complete all the requirements for that degree within six years of admission to the Medical School (nine years for MD-PhD candidates). Exceptions to this rule may be made only with the consent of the Biomedical Faculty Council of the Division of Biology and Medicine.
3. The Medical Committee on Academic Standing of the medical school shall recommend candidates who have fulfilled the academic requirements.
4. Finally, students will be allowed to receive their diploma only if all tuition and fees have been fully paid and other obligations fulfilled such as return of keys and library books, repayment of emergency short-term loans, and so forth.

OPTION TO UNDERTAKE A CLINICAL ROTATION PRIOR TO GRADUATE STUDIES:

MD-PhD students may elect to do a required clerkship or take a clinical selective during period immediately after the USMLE Step 1 preparation and examination period (March-April at the end of Year 2). Students who choose to do a required clerkship can pre-select before the "clerkship assignment process." Please submit your selection to Lori Avallone, the Clerkship Coordinator (ext. 3-1580), by the end of March. If you do not pre-select, you may choose among the slots that remain open after the clerkship assignment process.

During their graduate years, students are considered to be on a leave of absence from the medical school. However, this does not prevent them from registering for the medical courses/rotations described above.

SECTION II: TRANSITION PROCESSES

MEDICAL SCHOOL TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Students are not required to follow a prescribed sequence for the transition from the MD to the PhD years. However, the sequence of two M.D. years (pre-clinical sciences) followed by the PhD and then the last two MD years (clinical sciences) will be considered the norm and any deviation from this sequence will require the approval of

the MD-PhD program director. In order to ensure a smooth transition from the medical school to the graduate school, please take careful note of the following steps.

Step 1: At the beginning of the spring semester in the second year of the medical program, you should confirm with the MD-PhD program director your intention to pursue graduate studies

Step 2: Arrangements to change your status to “graduate student” will be made by the MD-PhD program director working in concert with the Division’s office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (<http://biomed.brown.edu/grad-postdoc/>). The contact person in that office is **Tracey Cronin, Graduate Program Manager (phone 863-3281)**. This process is essential in order for you to receive a graduate stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance.

Step 3: If you are doing graduate work *on campus*, your box number will remain the same. If you are doing graduate work *off campus*, you should leave a forwarding address with the Bio-Med Mailroom and you will be reassigned a new box number upon your return to the medical school.

Step 4: Once you transition to being a Graduate Student, you must fill out an I9 form with the Graduate School, located at 47 George Street (The Horace Mann building) and bring your passport or driver’s license and Social Security card. Even if you have filled out an I9 while doing summer rotations you will have to file one again with the graduate school before you can be paid a stipend while in graduate school.

Additional Information:

- A word of caution that during the transitional phase your student status may, for a short period, become inaccessible by computer. As a result you may encounter difficulties when trying to use various services on campus (library, etc.). If this happens, instruct the person in charge to call the Registrar's Office to verify your enrollment. Be aware that this can only be done during business hours.
- Check your bill right away to make sure you are being charged the tuition rate for graduate school rather than for medical school. If your bill is incorrect, call the Bursar's Office right away so they can correct the billing error and credit you the overcharge. If the Bursar's Office has no record of this, they should contact Nancy Keenan in the Registrar's Office who takes care of processing this paperwork.

RE-ENTERING THE MEDICAL SCHOOL AFTER COMPLETING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE

Step 1: As you begin planning for your thesis defense, contact the Program Director to discuss the transition. Requirements for returning to medical school are completion of all experimental work and scheduling the thesis defense. The thesis defense itself may take place after the return to medical studies.

Step 2: You will NOT receive a tuition fellowship for your third and fourth year unless these requirements are met. There are no exceptions!

Step 3: MD-PhD students are permitted to choose their order of clerkships on an individual basis. That is, they do not take part in the clerkship assignment process along with their medical student colleagues. Although they are permitted to choose the order of clerkships, they do not choose clerkship sites. These are assigned.

The MD-PhD Program Director will work with the student to identify a clerkship and elective schedule that is suited to their career goals. Once determined, the schedule is implemented by Lori Avallone in the Office of Student Affairs. The Program Director will expedite this process.

The exemption from the usual clerkship selection process was put in place to provide MD-PhD students with greater flexibility in scheduling research time at the start of their third year so that completion of all research and preparation for defense can take place before beginning the core clerkships. Exemption from the regular process is a privilege. It is critical that it not be abused. Therefore, plans for returning to the third year and scheduling core clerkships must be realistic. Should a student schedule clerkships then need to alter this schedule, (which must be done at least one month before clerkships begin), then the student's schedule will be subject to clerkship availability following the lottery (i.e., you get what is left over). This would be a distinct disadvantage, so you should be very careful in deciding on your schedule. Your PhD advisor should be involved in this process so that plans for completing the PhD are realistic.

Step 4: You should discuss your return to medical school with Linda Gillette, Director of Financial Aid for the medical school.

Additional Information:

- If you receive a fine for not being registered for graduate classes for the coming semester, please do not be alarmed. Contact the program Director and the fine will be removed.
- Please be aware that when you set up your clinical rotations, which occurs at the beginning of the spring semester before your third year of medical school, any elective research time **must be designated**. See Dean Gruppuso for advice on making these decisions.

SECTION III: FUNDING, FINANCIAL AID AND PAYMENT

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

AS A MEDICAL STUDENT: During years 1 and 2 of medical school, no funding is available from the MD-PhD Program. Students generally apply for financial aid. Eligibility is on the same terms as for other medical students. Since most of the funding comes from federally-backed sources, students who are neither U.S. citizens nor permanent U.S. residents should recognize that financial support to foreign students is extremely limited.

During MD years 3 and 4, we provide MD-PhD students with a full tuition scholarship. Students who have completed all experimental work needed for the thesis prior to re-entry into the third year of the Medical School qualify for a full tuition scholarship in the third year. Students who have successfully defended their thesis prior to entry into the fourth year qualify for a full tuition scholarship for the final year of medical school. **It is very important that you are sure all of your experimental work is completed, before you attempt to return to the Medical School.**

AS A GRADUATE STUDENT:

MD-PhD Fellowship: The MD-PhD Program provides full fellowship support during the graduate years, which includes full tuition, health fees, and a stipend for twelve months per year for up to **five years**. The Stipend for 2008-09 for PhD students is \$26,000 per year.

All students are encouraged to apply for fellowships from outside agencies. Grant applications must be supervised and filed through proper University channels. Please allow time for University Review and Acceptance which must be done PRIOR to the Agency Deadline. Please undertake discussions with the Program Director and your PhD advisor if you are interested in applying for an outside fellowship. Our US students have been highly successful in applying for National Research Service Awards (NRSAs). These federal grants can provide funding to cover the pre-clinical medical school years. In addition, they provide for an increased stipend. Finally, they bring with them prestige that will be a help in your future career development. To determine if you might qualify for a NRSA, go to: <http://grants2.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm>.

If your external fellowship award is less than the published Brown BioMed stipend, your award will be supplemented so that your stipend level is the same as other BioMed PhD students (as long as the terms of your award do not prohibit supplementation). Students who are awarded an NRSA as a Graduate Student will receive a supplemental reward of an additional \$150.00 per month during the time of their fellowship.

STIPEND PAYMENT INFORMATION

AS A MEDICAL STUDENT

As a medical student, you will receive a stipend only if you do a lab rotation in the summer or if you have obtained a NRSA. Your stipend payments are processed by the Program Director's office and issued through the Payroll Office for summer lab rotations.

New students who elect to start their research during the summer before entering medical school will receive a stipend to do so. Medical students will also receive a stipend for research conducted during the summer between years 1 and 2, and the summer following year 2. The MD-PhD Program Director's office processes the stipend payments for medical students, and payments are issued through the Payroll Office.

If you are currently a Medical student and are receiving any payment, you must have an I-9 form on file with the University in order to receive payment from the Payroll Office. To do this, contact Cynthia Fenner (ext. 3-1618) Arnold Labs, Student Affairs Area. You will need to present either (i) your passport or (ii) driver's license **and** social security card.

Please notify the MD-PhD Office (ext. 3-1618) right away if your plans concerning your graduate studies should change; i.e. if you decide to discontinue or extend your studies. If you plan to work in a research lab during the summer, you must inform the MD-PhD office **no later than May 1st** of the dates you will require a summer stipend, otherwise there may be a delay in receiving your check.

AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

Once you are a Graduate Student, you will need to complete an “I-9” form IN PERSON at the Graduate School (47 George Street / Horace Mann Bldg). Here is a link to the I-9 form and the necessary documentation you will need to have with you. This link is provided for your reference only – you will need to fill this out in person and have your compliance documented. <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf>

If you do not complete the I-9, you will not receive your paycheck.

Students may choose and, indeed, are encouraged to select Direct Deposit for their payroll. Here is the link to the information and forms required:

http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Controllers_Office/forms/formhelp10.html

The payroll office is in the Brown Office Building (on top of the Brown Bookstore) on the 2nd Floor.

As a graduate student, you will receive an appointment through the Graduate School for the academic year and for the Summer. These appointment letters will give the details of your support and provide valuable information. Your stipend award for the academic year is for a 9-month period, from September 1 through May 31. Your stipend award for the summer covers the period June 1 through August 31, or any part thereof, provided you remain on campus to carry out research for your PhD studies.

In most cases, MD-PhD students are appointed as Fellows. Typically, payroll taxes and income taxes are not withheld from students appointed as Fellows. Please keep in mind that **government regulations are quite complex and your tax withholdings may vary and, thus, your Net pay will vary depending upon your appointment.**

It is important to keep in mind that any money that you receive from Brown may be considered taxable income and it is your responsibility to file appropriate tax returns. *The impact of the appointment types dictate only whether taxes will be withheld from your check – NOT whether you owe taxes.* This can be a complicated process and you

are encouraged to consult the IRS and/or a tax specialist for specific information. We bring this to your attention only to make you aware of the situation.

Please review this site that is part of Brown's Medical School financial information –it has important information about TAXATION ISSUES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS as well as Medical Students: <http://med.brown.edu/financialaid/personal/planning.html>

SUMMER STIPEND: Stipends that are paid in the Summer are subject to ADDITIONAL payroll taxes (FICA, etc), therefore, your NET pay in the Summer may be lower than the academic year.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

The following is a list of key administrative staff should you need assistance.

	<u>Extension</u>
<u>MD-PhD Program:</u>	
Philip Gruppuso, Director (Assistant – Cynthia Fenner)	3-1618
<u>Office of the Bursar:</u> http://brown.edu/Administration/Financial_Services/Bursar/	
Salvatore Aiello, Bursar	3-2484
<u>Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (BioMed)</u> http://biomed.brown.edu/grad-postdoc/	
Nancy Thompson, Associate Dean	3-3281
Tracey Cronin, Graduate Program Mgr	3-3281
<u>Graduate School:</u> http://gradschool.brown.edu/	
David Lindstrom, Associate Dean	3-2600
Barbara Bennett – Academic Affairs Manager	3-2843
<u>Medical School Admissions Office:</u> http://med.brown.edu/admissions/	
Barbara Fuller – Admissions	3-6310
<u>Medical School Financial Aid Office:</u> http://med.brown.edu/financialaid/	
Linda Gillette – Financial Aid	3-1142
<u>Registrar's Office:</u> http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Registrar/	
Main Office	3-2500
Nancy Keenan – MD-PhD contact	3-1845
<u>Medical Student Affairs Office:</u> http://med.brown.edu/omsa/	
Cynthia Fenner, Assistant to Dean Gruppuso	3-1618
Alexandra Morang, Director	3-1616
Philip Gruppuso, Associate Dean	3-1618
<u>Payroll:</u>	
Medical students: MD-PhD Program Office	3-1953
Graduate students: Student Payroll Office	3-2944
<u>MD-PhD Students:</u>	
Listserv address for MD-PhD students: MD-PhD@listserv.brown.edu	