

## Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine

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## Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine Policies and Procedures for PhD, Master's, and Certificate Programs

The following policies and procedures concern students enrolled in the PhD, Masters' or graduate certificate programs at the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine (School). Students are responsible for complying with these policies and procedures and also the requirements of the individual departments or programs, which may supplement these policies and procedures. Students are also responsible for complying with all University policies <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/>

### Table of Contents

|                                                                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1. ATTENDANCE.....</b>                                                            | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2. DISABILITY AND ACCESS ACCOMMODATIONS .....</b>                                 | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3. PARENTAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR FULL-TIME FUNDED PhD and MASTER'S STUDENTS....</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>4. PhD VACATION POLICY.....</b>                                                   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>5. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL.....</b>                                                  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>6. TRANSCRIPTS REQUEST CHANGE TOC.....</b>                                        | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>7. REGISTRATION.....</b>                                                          | <b>6</b>  |
| General Instructions.....                                                            | 6         |
| Full-time Students .....                                                             | 7         |
| Part-time Students .....                                                             | 8         |
| Compliance .....                                                                     | 8         |
| Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements .....                             | 8         |
| <b>8. CROSS-REGISTRATION.....</b>                                                    | <b>8</b>  |
| Within Boston University .....                                                       | 8         |
| With Other Universities .....                                                        | 9         |
| <b>9. ADDING OR DROPPING A COURSE.....</b>                                           | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>10. STUDENT WORK HOURS FOR EMPLOYMENT AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY.....</b>               | <b>10</b> |
| <b>11. GRADUATION CALENDAR .....</b>                                                 | <b>10</b> |

|                                                                 |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>12. SUMMER TERM.....</b>                                     | <b>10</b> |
| PhD Students.....                                               | 10        |
| MA and MS Students .....                                        | 11        |
| <b>13. STUDENT ACCOUNTS.....</b>                                | <b>11</b> |
| Official Withdrawal and Refund Policy .....                     | 11        |
| <b>14. SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL .....</b>                        | <b>11</b> |
| Petitions .....                                                 | 11        |
| <b>15. GENERAL PETITIONS.....</b>                               | <b>12</b> |
| <b>16. LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL, AND REINSTATEMENT.....</b> | <b>12</b> |
| Procedures .....                                                | 12        |
| Leaves of Absence for Medical Reasons .....                     | 13        |
| Withdrawal.....                                                 | 14        |
| Reinstatement.....                                              | 14        |
| <b>17. READMISSION TO A DEGREE PROGRAM .....</b>                | <b>14</b> |
| <b>18. DECLARING OR CHANGING A CONCENTRATION/MAJOR .....</b>    | <b>15</b> |
| <b>19. ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND GRADUATION .....</b>               | <b>15</b> |
| Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) .....                      | 15        |
| GPA Requirement and Probation .....                             | 15        |
| Pace of Academic Completion.....                                | 16        |
| Maximum Time of Completion.....                                 | 16        |
| Full-Time Certified Form.....                                   | 16        |
| Completion of Degree Requirement .....                          | 16        |
| <b>20. AUDITING COURSES .....</b>                               | <b>16</b> |
| <b>21. EXAMINATIONS .....</b>                                   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>22. GRADES AND COURSE UNITS .....</b>                        | <b>17</b> |
| Grade Changes .....                                             | 18        |
| Units from GMS Online Courses .....                             | 18        |
| <b>23. INCOMPLETE COURSEWORK AND FAILING GRADES .....</b>       | <b>18</b> |
| Incomplete Grades.....                                          | 18        |
| Missing Grades.....                                             | 18        |
| Conditions and Consequences of Repeating a Course .....         | 19        |
| Failing grades .....                                            | 19        |
| Dispute Resolution Process.....                                 | 19        |

|                                                                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>24. TRANSFER BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS/PROGRAMS .....</b>                                          | <b>19</b> |
| <b>25. TRANSFER OF UNITS.....</b>                                                               | <b>20</b> |
| General Requirements for Transfer Unit .....                                                    | 20        |
| General Requirements for Course Waiver.....                                                     | 20        |
| <b>26. Degree Requirements for Master’s and PhD Degrees .....</b>                               | <b>21</b> |
| General Requirement for MA and MS Degrees .....                                                 | 21        |
| Directed Study of Research.....                                                                 | 22        |
| General Requirements for the PhD Degree.....                                                    | 22        |
| General Requirements for a Post-bachelor’s PhD Degree .....                                     | 22        |
| General Requirements for a Post-MS PhD Degree .....                                             | 22        |
| Qualifying Examination .....                                                                    | 22        |
| Dissertation Prospectus Outline .....                                                           | 23        |
| Dissertation .....                                                                              | 23        |
| Dissertation Abstract .....                                                                     | 23        |
| Final Oral Examination .....                                                                    | 24        |
| Responsible Conduct of Research Training Requirement .....                                      | 24        |
| Faculty and Research Advisor .....                                                              | 24        |
| Faculty Advisor .....                                                                           | 24        |
| Research/Thesis Advisor .....                                                                   | 24        |
| <b>27. Intellectual Property Policy.....</b>                                                    | <b>25</b> |
| <b>28. FAIR EXPECTATIONS FOR Masters and PhD STUDENTS .....</b>                                 | <b>25</b> |
| <b>29. EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERNSHIPS FOR PhD STUDENTS.....</b>                  | <b>25</b> |
| <b>30. Graduate Programs CODE OF CONDUCT .....</b>                                              | <b>26</b> |
| <b>31. ACADEMIC CONDUCT CODE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES .....</b>                              | <b>26</b> |
| <b>32. PROFESSIONAL COMPORTMENT &amp; ACADEMIC STANDARDS.....</b>                               | <b>26</b> |
| <b>33. Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy .....</b>                                              | <b>26</b> |
| Resources for Title IX .....                                                                    | 26        |
| <b>34. Complaint Procedures in Cases of Alleged Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment .....</b> | <b>27</b> |
| Misconduct Reporting.....                                                                       | 27        |
| <b>35. Computing Policies.....</b>                                                              | <b>27</b> |
| Acceptable Use of Computing Services Policy .....                                               | 27        |
| Boston University Information Security Policy .....                                             | 27        |
| Boston University Data Protection Standards .....                                               | 27        |

|                                                     |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>36. EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES.....</b>        | <b>28</b> |
| <b>GUIDELINES .....</b>                             | <b>28</b> |
| IDENTIFICATION CARDS .....                          | 28        |
| NAME CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS.....                    | 28        |
| ADDRESS CHANGES.....                                | 29        |
| GENERATIVE AI GUIDELINES .....                      | 29        |
| Generative AI Guidelines for Students .....         | 29        |
| Generative AI Guidelines for Faculty and Staff..... | 29        |
| PLAGIARISM AND USE OF TURNITIN.....                 | 29        |
| ALCOHOL GUIDELINES .....                            | 30        |
| SHARED USAGE OF TESTING CENTER .....                | 30        |
| STUDY ROOM GUIDELINES.....                          | 30        |
| USAGE OF MEDITATION ROOMS .....                     | 30        |

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## 1. ATTENDANCE

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The [University's Attendance Policy](#) outlines all attendance requirements, including class attendance expectations, withdrawal for non-attendance, and accommodations for religious observance.

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## 2. DISABILITY AND ACCESS ACCOMMODATIONS

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In order to receive services and accommodation(s) for a disability, students must be evaluated and approved by the [Boston University Disabilities and Access Services](#) (BU DAS). Students are required to follow the outlined steps provided by DAS in order to receive accommodations. Students are encouraged to reach out to [GMSDAS@bu.edu](mailto:GMSDAS@bu.edu) with any specific questions about the process.

1. Begin by completing the DAS online application — the accommodations [intake form](#).
  - The application asks you to upload supporting documentation, so review the DAS [documentation guidelines](#) beforehand and have those materials ready when you submit.
2. Once the application is submitted and disability documentation received, students will call DAS at 617-353-3658 to schedule their registration appointment.
  - DAS can only book the appointment once the intake form is completed and disability documentation is received.
  - Please note: There may be a slight wait time for registration appointments. We recommend scheduling early to avoid 1-2 week wait.
  - During the registration appointment, DAS engages in an interactive process with the student and determines reasonable and appropriate accommodations.
3. DAS will then send the GMS Disability Liaison and the student a letter confirming the approved accommodations.
4. The GMS Disabilities Liaison shares the approved accommodations with the Course Directors/Instructors for the classes you're currently enrolled in.
5. Students are responsible for notifying the GMS Disabilities Liaison if they add/drop classes each semester.
6. To ensure that accommodations are sent to course instructors each semester, The GMS Disability Liaison will be in contact with the student.

NOTE: This process is confidential. At no time will DAS share any student health/disability information with GMS, your program director, or faculty.

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## 3. PARENTAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR FULL TIME FUNDED PhD and MASTER'S STUDENTS

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This section addresses attendance requirements for students. For complete details on attendance expectations, withdrawal for non-attendance, and accommodations for religious observance, refer to the [University's Parental Accommodation Policy](#). Students may also seek guidance from the [Boston University Graduate Workers](#) Union for policies on compensation and benefits related to parental accommodation.

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## **4. PHD VACATION POLICY**

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Boston University recognizes that all PhD students receiving stipend support are entitled to paid vacation time. The University's policy is that all salaried graduate workers are entitled to paid vacation time.

This vacation time is in addition to standard Boston University holidays and intersession days. For full details, please see the [full policy here](#).

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## **5. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

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PhD and Master's students who plan to travel internationally for research, fieldwork, conference attendance, or any other University-related activity are required to comply with Boston University's International Travel Policy. Students must register for their University-related international travel with the University's Global Programs office and are encouraged to do so well in advance of departure. The University's international travel resources include guidance on travel risk assessment, required insurance coverage, and country-specific safety information. For full details and registration requirements, please refer to the [Boston University International Travel Policy](#).

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## **6. TRANSCRIPTS REQUEST CHANGE TOC**

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All students must request official Boston University transcripts according to the [University policy](#) from the Office of the University Registrar and not the graduate office. Transcripts can only be requested by the student of record (requests from any third party will not be accepted). An unofficial transcript is available through MyBU student.

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## **7. REGISTRATION**

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### ***General Instruction***

An officially registered student is one who has registered online with MyBU Student Portal using Boston University login and password or by submitting an online Add/Drop form via Student Forms webpage. An officially registered student has also paid or settled all charges by the date set on the [Academic calendar](#). Students should make payments through MyBU student portal. Students are encouraged to contact [Student Financial Support](#) with any questions related to payments. Candidates for admission may not register until they receive a formal statement of

acceptance. Matriculated students should register under the direction of Graduate Programs Registrar, program directors and advisors.

Students should consult with the Registrar for PhD, Master's and graduate certifiical programs (referred to as Graduate Program Registrar) for detailed instructions concerning the procedures to be followed during the announced registration period. Students must be registered for any regular semester or summer term during which a degree requirement is completed or when University facilities are used.

Registration must be completed within the official registration period to avoid a late fee. All academic dates and deadlines are available on the [Academic calendar](#). Student account payment deadlines for students are available on [Student Financials](#).

All continuing students in good academic standing with an active Boston University email address may register online via [MyBU](#). Students are required to meet with their program advisor or program director prior to the start of registration each academic term, including summer registration.

Students are required to register each semester continually for the duration of their program. Failure to register for two consecutive semesters without having been granted an authorized leave of absence may result in termination of degree status, thus dismissal from graduate program. Students must be registered in the semester in which degree requirements are completed and the preceding semester.

### ***Full-time Students***

A graduate student can be a full-time student by enrollment or by certification.

#### **By enrollment:**

A student enrolled in 12 to 18 units per semester will be considered full-time and will be charged full tuition and fees. (Please note: Some programs only allow students to register for 12-16 units per academic year).

A student who is registered for a total of 18 units should consult with their program director. Additionally, a student may register for more than 18 units only with approval of their program director and the Graduate Programs Registrar. Tuition for each unit above 18 will be charged per unit hour.

#### **By certification:**

A student registered for fewer than 12 units but otherwise engaged in full-time study *e.g.*, by participating in research pertinent to the completion of degree requirements, or gaining competence in the field of study, may be certified as a full-time student.

Certified Full-Time (CFT) requirements can be [found here](#). Such students must submit the certified full-time form via [Student Forms webpage](#), prior to the official registration period. This form is only complete with the approval of the faculty advisor or program director.

A student enrolled in a PhD degree program must maintain full-time status by enrollment.

### ***Part-time Students***

All part-time students who are candidates for degrees must register each regular semester for up to 11 units until all departmental course requirements are completed. Continuing students (see below) must register for at least one 2-unit course or continuous study part-time approved by the program director each semester until all departmental course requirements are completed.

### ***Compliance***

Boston University requires all students to provide an emergency alert phone number. Students who are not in compliance will not be able to adjust their schedules or to register for future semesters. For additional compliance requirements, students should refer to [student financials](#), [student health](#), and [registration](#).

### ***Physical Examination and Immunization Requirements***

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that all full-time students submit proof of immunization. The graduate student “Health History and Physical Examination Report” or “Health Form,” is available on the [Student Health Services website](#)

In addition, clinical master’s students who will see patients at Boston Medical Center (and other hospitals/clinics/offices) are required to have additional documentation of immunity indicated on the appropriate clinical student “Health History and Physical Examination Report.”

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## **8. CROSS REGISTRATION**

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### ***Within Boston University***

While completing their degree, a graduate student in a MA or MS degree program may be eligible to take one (1) graduate-level semester course given by a School or College other than the graduate programs at the School of Medicine with approval of the student’s faculty advisor or program director (approval must be obtained prior to registration) and the course director of the course.

While completing their degree, a graduate student in a PhD degree program may be eligible to take one graduate-level semester course(s) outside of their required program of study given by a School or College other than graduate programs at the School of Medicine. If the student wishes enrolls in more than one course, exceptions can be made with prior approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Sciences.

Boston University policy prohibits students from being enrolled in more than one degree program simultaneously unless it is a formally approved dual degree program. While you can apply to, and be admitted to, multiple programs, you cannot matriculate in more than one program at a time.

If admitted to a new program, you must officially withdraw from your previous program to matriculate.

### ***With Other Universities***

PhD, Master's and students enrolled in the certificate programs who wish to cross-register for a graduate course at another academic institution should obtain a Cross Registration Petition for the Boston Area Consortium if the course is within the consortium. For courses at institutions outside of the consortium, students should obtain the following [petition form](#). Students must present this signed form to the graduate school registrar of the host institution.

During a given academic year, a student is permitted to cross-register at another university only once. Cross-registrants should expect to satisfy all prerequisites and requirements for courses as indicated by the host institution. Tuition for such courses is charged at Boston University tuition rates in the usual manner.

Please note: Students that did not take (or failed) a required course may NOT take a course at a non-BU institution or the consortium unless the student and the Program Director petition to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Sciences with the petition form listed above.

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## **9. ADDING OR DROPPING A COURSE**

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Students wishing to add or drop a course may do so through [MyBU Student Portal](#) or by completing the Add Drop Request Form available on the [Student Forms webpage](#). The Add Drop Request Form is submitted online and requires the signature of the student's faculty advisor and/or course director. Courses cannot be added through MyBU after the first week of class. No course may be added after the end of the second week of class. For specific add/drop dates please refer to [Academic Calendars/Semester Dates](#).

A standard course dropped during the first five (5) weeks of class will not appear on the student's permanent record. A standard course dropped after the first five (5) weeks of classes will appear on the student's record as a withdraw grade (W), and the student will be charged for the course. For the non-standard courses, check MyBU or the deadlines to drop a course with or without a W.

Students are held responsible for completion of any course registered for unless they officially withdraw by the deadline set by [Student Financials](#) described above or change to the status of auditor before the sixth week of class.

Standard courses may be dropped up to the end of the tenth week of class. After the tenth week, no course may be dropped. See important registration dates on the Academic Calendars. Students are responsible for understanding the financial aid implications of withdrawing from a class and are encouraged to consult with Student Financial Support (SFS). Financial aid will not

cover courses taken as audits or for no unit. For exceptions see Continuing Student Status under Registration.

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## 10. STUDENT WORK HOURS FOR EMPLOYMENT AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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The policy on student work hours for employment at Boston University can be found under Policies: [Student Work for Employment at Boston University](#). These policies apply to all student employees regardless of program, wage funding source, citizenship status, or method of payment, who are employed by Boston University. It does not apply to employment outside of Boston University. International students must also adhere to all limitations and requirements relating to on-campus student employment required by their particular immigration status and obtain ISSO work authorization if required.

PhD and Master's students who are a member of the Boston University Graduate Student Workers Union (BUGWU) should reference the following [link for information on policies](#) related to collective bargaining agreement, student work hours for employment, and vacation time. For PhD students working beyond the 20-hour work week policy, exceptions can be made using the 20-hour work week waiver form.

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## 11. GRADUATION CALENDAR

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PhD, MA and MS degrees are awarded in August, January, and May. Commencement exercises are held in May only. Students must submit diploma applications to the Graduate Programs Registrar by the appropriate graduation deadline. These deadlines are available on the Graduation Calendar on the [Academic Calendar Page](#). The diploma application is valid only for the graduation date specified; a new application must be submitted if the student does not graduate as planned. Diploma applications can be found on the student forms page and the regulations on the preparation of master's thesis and PhD dissertations are available on the website.

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## 12. SUMMER TERM

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### ***PhD Students***

Students enrolled in a PhD program who conduct full-time research during the summer as part of their degree requirements are eligible for Summer Research Registration Status. This is a no-cost registration that maintains student status for loan eligibility and tax purposes. To request this status, students must submit the PHD Summer Research Status Form through the [Student Forms webpage](#). The form includes certification of full-time study and must be approved by the program director, confirming that the student will conduct research full-time for the 12 weeks of Summer Sessions I and II. Once approved, Graduate Programs Registrar will record the

registration status, and no tuition will be charged. Forms should be submitted as soon as summer registration opens.

Summer Research Registration Status is available only for PhD students continuing their studies in the fall. This status does not satisfy the mandatory registration for the final two (2) semesters during which degree requirements are completed, thus a student planning to graduate on the August graduation date must register for the Summer II Term.

Please note: PhD students should not be registered for course work or as an audit over the summer unless special permission is received by the Associate Dean.

### ***MA and MS Students***

A student enrolled in an MA or MS program is not required to register for the summer terms. A student may choose to register for Summer 1 and/or Summer II depending on the planned completion of the degree.

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## **13. STUDENT ACCOUNTS**

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Student account payment deadlines are available on [Student Financials](#). A student with an outstanding balance with Student Accounting Services will not receive a transcript, diploma, or other student services until the outstanding balance has been settled.

### ***Official Withdrawal and Refund Policy***

Tuition will be canceled in accordance with the published refund schedule, based on the effective date of a student's official withdrawal or leave of absence. Here is the [Official Withdrawal and Refund Policy](#).

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## **14. SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL**

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The Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences reserves the right to academically withdraw, suspend, or dismiss a student at any time for reasons of scholarship or conduct as described below (section 19). Satisfactory academic standing will be assessed at both the program level by the standards set forth by the individual program and the School level by the academic standards set forth by School and the Graduate Programs as discussed under section 19.1. Failure to meet the academic standards at the program level and/or School level may result in suspension or dismissal.

### ***Petitions***

A student suspended or dismissed by a graduate program for academic performance reasons may petition for reinstatement. Such students must submit a letter to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Sciences requesting reinstatement within fourteen (14) days of receipt of notice of suspension or dismissal. The letter must be accompanied by the following documents:

- Explanation for unsatisfactory academic performances
- Clear outline of how to improve performance if reinstated
- Support letter from the faculty advisor or Program Director

Reinstatement of a suspended student is always subject to probationary status. In the event a student is reinstated, it is important for the student and faculty advisor or program director to review and assess the student's progress.

A student who has been reinstated following academic suspension must achieve satisfactory academic progress, as stated under section 18.

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## 15. PETITIONS

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Students enrolled in graduate programs who seek an exception to established academic policies may submit a general petition to request formal consideration of their circumstances.

### Grounds for Petition

A general petition may be submitted for reasons such as extenuating personal circumstances, grade changes, and policy exceptions requests. Petitions submitted without sufficient documented justification, or those seeking exceptions to requirements mandated by external accrediting bodies, will not be considered.

Students wishing to submit a general petition should adhere to the following procedure:

1. **Consult with an advisor.** Prior to submitting a petition, students are strongly encouraged to meet with their program director or academic advisor to discuss the nature of their request and determine whether a petition is the appropriate course of action.
2. **Complete the petition form.** Students must complete the official General Petition Form.
3. **Attach supporting documentation.** All petitions must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation (e.g., official institutional records, or other verifiable evidence) that substantiates the grounds for the petition.
4. **Submit to the appropriate office.** Completed petitions and all supporting materials must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Sciences. Submissions should be made in a timely manner; petitions regarding a specific term should be filed no later than the last day of the term.

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## 16. LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL AND REINSTATEMENT

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### *Procedures*

Normally, students must register for each regular (i.e., fall/spring) semester until completion of all degree requirements. Upon written petition to the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences and for appropriate cause, a student is allowed up to a total of two (2) semesters of

leaves [or for a total of one (1) academic year] of absence throughout degree completion without the necessity of reapplication and/or readmission.

Leaves of absence beyond two (2) semesters are granted only in exceptional cases, such as a substantiated illness, parental leave, or military service. The student should petition to the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences with the approval of the program director.

Procedure for requests for a leave of absence is:

- The student should meet with their advisor and Program Director for approval.
- Submit a written request explaining the reason for leave of absence along with the required forms, including the program director's signature, to the Graduate Programs Registrar.
- May be asked to meet with the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences.

If approved, a request for a leave of absence is effective on the day the written request is received by the Graduate Programs Registrar. A certificate of authorized leave of absence is issued, and a copy is included in the student's record. For a student who files for a leave of absence from the University, charges for tuition and fees are canceled in accordance with the University's published refund schedule.

A student who is on a leave of absence and who has borrowed federal and/or private loans may be required to begin repayment while on leave.

The period of an authorized leave of absence is counted as a part of the total time allowed for completion of the degree requirements.

Students may not complete any degree requirements in a semester for which they have been granted a leave of absence.

### ***Leaves of Absence for Medical Reasons***

Sometimes a student may need to interrupt their studies for medical reasons. The University can assist a student who is deciding whether to take a medical leave and advise them about the steps necessary for a successful return. A student's request for a leave of absence for medical reasons must be reviewed by Student Health Services or its designee. Boston University also reserves the right to require an involuntary medical leave of absence if it determines that a student's continued enrollment would create a significant risk to the health and safety of the student or others.

A student seeking to re-enroll after a medical leave must demonstrate to the University/Graduate Program that the student's health permits the successful completion of studies. Documentation needed to support this finding will be determined by [Student Health Services](#) or its designee but will generally include information from the student's clinician as well as an assessment by Student Health Services or its designee. The decision whether to permit a student to re-enroll is within

the sole discretion of the Graduate Program and the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Sciences.

### ***Withdrawal***

A student who wishes to withdraw from the University must submit a [withdrawal form](#) and follow below procedures:

- Meet with their advisor and program director for approval.
- PhD students must meet with the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences prior to submitting the withdrawal form.
- On a case-by-case basis, a Master's student may be required to meet with the Associate Dean, (per the Associate Dean's decision).
- Submit the withdrawal form to the Graduate Programs Registrar.

If approved, a withdrawal is effective on the day it is received by the Registrar and charges are canceled in accordance with the University's published refund schedule, based on the effective date of the student's withdrawal.

Absence from class without formal withdrawal does not reduce financial obligations or guarantee that final grades will not be recorded.

### ***Reinstatement***

A student who has voluntarily withdrawn from a graduate program will be subject to the regulations governing Readmission to a Degree Program under Section 17.

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## **17. READMISSION TO A DEGREE PROGRAM**

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Students applying for readmission to a graduate program will be subject to the following regulations:

- Readmission to the program will require the submission of a new application and will be subject to the admissions criteria at the time of application. Please note: a minimum of two years must elapse from the time of withdrawal before enrollment and reapplication must be accompanied by an application fee.
- If readmitted, the student may be asked to retake examinations, if required or demonstrate knowledge in current issues in the field of specialization.
- Readmitted students will be subject to the policies, rules and regulations set forth in the Graduate Programs Policies and Procedures and program specific handbook at the time of readmission.

- Students who have outstanding financial obligations to the University at the time of withdrawal or termination will be required to meet those obligations as a condition of readmission.
- At the time of readmission, the student must consult with the program director to outline a plan for completing the degree requirements.

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## **18. DECLARING OR CHANGING A CONCENTRATION/MAJOR**

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Students are enrolled directly into the department or program of their interest upon matriculation, with the exception of the PhD in Program in Biomedical Sciences (PiBS). Students in the Program in Biomedical Science program must complete a PiBS Transition Form (Students must contact the Graduate Programs Registrar to gain access to these forms). International students are encouraged to check with ISSO before changing a concentration or minor.

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## **19. ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND GRADUATION**

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### ***Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)***

In accordance with the Federal Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy 34 CFR 668.34, students enrolled in a graduate program are expected to adhere to the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy and guidelines from matriculation through graduation. All degree candidates' academic records will be reviewed at the end of each semester by the programs in which they are enrolled to ensure that they achieve SAP. A student who fails to achieve SAP may be subject to academic action, including academic probation and/or dismissal. Further, students who fail to maintain SAP may not be eligible for the University certification to apply for federal and private educational loans. Additionally, awarded scholarships may be at risk if students fail to meet SAP. A student receiving such grades in total of eight (8) unit hours will be dismissed from their graduate program.

Individual degree programs may have additional and/or varied academic standards that must also be met to remain in compliance. The criteria listed below will be used to determine SAP at the graduate level:

### **GPA Requirement and Probation**

- The minimum cumulative GPA requirement for graduation from a graduate program is 2.70. Some programs may require a higher GPA for graduation.
- Current students who have a GPA of 2.69 or below and/or have not met program-specific academic standards will require a specific learning plan and will be put on Academic Probation for the duration of one (1) semester. Learning plans must be developed in consultation with a student's faculty advisor and/or program director and should be monitored closely as the semester progresses. Students have the one (1) semester of academic probation to improve their GPA to meet the minimum GPA requirement and/or the academic standards set by the program. Failure to do so may result in loss of eligibility

for federal and private educational loans, loss of scholarship(s) and/or dismissal from the program.

#### **Pace of Academic Completion**

To complete the degree requirements within the recommended timeline for program completion, students must complete a minimum of 67% of all courses attempted per semester.

#### **Maximum Time of Completion**

MA and MS degree candidates have a maximum of five (5) academic years from matriculation to complete their degree unless otherwise specified in program requirements.

Doctorate degree candidates have a maximum of seven (7) from matriculation to complete their degree.

A student requiring additional time beyond the maximum time of completion must submit an extension of time petition form to the Graduate Programs Registrar with a support letter from their graduate program director or chair at least six (6) months prior to the deadline. The Graduate Programs Registrar will review and send the petition to the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences for review. An extension will only be allowed in extenuating circumstances.

#### **Full-Time Certified Form**

Students who submit the certified full-time form (CFT) must include study and /or research goals for the semester, including number of research hours per week. Failure to achieve the stated goals may result in denial of certified full-time status in subsequent semesters.

#### **Completion of Degree Requirement**

Students are required to register each semester continually for the duration of their program. Students must be registered in the semester in which the degree requirements are completed and in the preceding semester. Students should check with the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences for specific registration guidelines. Failure to register for two consecutive semesters without having been granted an authorized leave of absence may result in termination of degree status, thus dismissal from their graduate program.

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## **20. AUDITING COURSES**

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- **Master's Students:** Masters students are not permitted to audit courses.
- **PhD Students:** Auditors are admitted to a course on a space-available basis and with the approval of the course instructor. Auditors are subject to the full tuition and fees of the course.
- Students must complete and submit the [audit form](#) to the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences. (Students eligible to audit a course should confirm their eligibility with their department or program and obtain prior approval from the course director of the course)

they wish to audit. PhD students are allowed to audit courses excluding summer terms, without further tuition charges under the following conditions:

- Must be registered as a full-time student status with units.
- Have completed all departmental/programmatic/graduate course requirements

Note: A PhD students may not audit 900-level, language, studio, or laboratory courses, undergraduate classes, or courses offered by the School of Public Health.

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## 21. EXAMINATIONS

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Course examinations are given at the discretion of the course manager. Final examinations are generally administered in conjunction with the schedule published by the University Registrar's office. A student who is unable to attend an examination should contact the course manager as early as possible prior to the examination to discuss whether or not alternate arrangements can be made or if the student will fail the exam. A student who is absent from an examination may request a make-up examination only if the examination was missed for a serious reason (such as illness or family emergency). Special or make-up examinations will not be scheduled to accommodate a student's personal travel plans.

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## 22. GRADES AND COURSE UNITS

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### Courses with Pass/Fail grade assignment

If a student earns a grade of "Fail" in courses with Pass/Fail grade assignments, the course instructor has the option to use the range of grades from a C+ to an F for final grade assignment. Individual programs can determine the numerical values for each letter grade.

| <u>Grade</u> | <u>Explanation</u>                                                      |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A to B-      | Pass with credit                                                        |
| C+ or below  | Considered failure (graduate credit not granted)                        |
| P            | Pass with credit                                                        |
| F            | Fail                                                                    |
| I            | Incomplete, with additional work required                               |
| X            | Unresolved status                                                       |
| J            | Registration in a following semester necessary to complete requirements |
| A            | Audit                                                                   |
| N            | No credit granted toward graduate degree                                |
| W            | Withdrawal after five weeks                                             |

### ***Grade Changes***

Grades, including incompletes, may not be changed after a period of one (1) year from the time the original grade is recorded. Grade changes are intended to correct inaccuracies arising from miscalculations and grading errors, as well as for make-up exams completed after grades have been submitted due to extenuating circumstances. A student's grade cannot be changed after a student has officially graduated from Boston University.

### ***Units from GMS Online Courses***

Units earned from the Boston University's online courses can be counted towards the degree, if pre-approved by program director prior to taking the online course.

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## **23. INCOMPLETE COURSEWORK AND FAILING GRADES**

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### ***Incomplete Grades***

An incomplete grade (I) is granted when a student cannot complete course requirements on time due to extenuating circumstances. A student may be required to provide proof of the circumstances. Students and the course instructor must also complete the [Incomplete Form](#) and send to the Registrar for review and approval.

An incomplete grade may be granted with the condition that the student will complete the coursework on his or her own and within a specific and mutually agreed-upon time limit.

In no case can that time frame exceed more than one (1) year (twelve months) from the time the incomplete grade is assigned. Course managers may not grant an incomplete grade as an alternative to submitting a poor or failing grade. In the event that a student does not complete coursework or make a timely request for an incomplete grade, the course manager must assign a grade.

If the incomplete coursework is not completed by the required completion date, a final grade of "F" will be entered by the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences. Receipt of an "F" grade is preventable only if the student successfully presents evidence to the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences that further time is warranted. The evidence must be presented at least one (1) month prior to the required completion date.

### ***Missing Grades***

The designation of "MG" indicates an unresolved registration status. "MG" is assigned by faculty to students who never attended the course or who stopped attending the course before the last day to drop a standard class without a "W" grade ([Academic Calendar](#)). "MG" should be used rarely. Faculty members entering an "MG" must include in the "Comments" the reason for the

grade and give the last known date the student attended the course. Note: For students who stopped attending a course after the last day to drop a standard class without a “W,” faculty must submit a letter grade or an “I.” An “I” grade can only be used if the faculty member and student have discussed a plan for completing course requirements and filled out and submitted an “Incomplete Form.” Refer to the policy on “Incomplete” grades (Section 22.1). Further details can be found [here](#).

### ***Conditions and Consequences of Repeating a Course***

Grades for every course in which a student registers, including repeated courses, will appear on the student’s transcript. The units from courses in which the student fails to achieve the minimum grade of B- are not counted toward the unit requirement for graduation, but the grade is factored into the student’s overall grade point average.

Students repeating courses are strongly encouraged to contact Student Financial Support to verify their financial aid eligibility prior to the start of the semester.

### ***Failing grades***

Grades of C+ or lower are failing grades. A student receiving such grades in total of eight (8) units will be dismissed from their graduate program. Additionally, units for any class in which a student earn a grade of C+ or lower will not be counted towards total earned units. Programs must submit a dismissal letter to the School for failing students.

### ***Dispute Resolution Process***

A concern or complaint from a graduate student should be directed to the persons whose actions or inactions have given rise to the concern or complaint. Whenever possible, every effort should be made to resolve the problem promptly at the level at which it occurred. If a student feels he or she has been unfairly treated by a graduate course director, instructor, or teaching assistant, the student should contact the chair or director of the department or program in which the course is housed. If the department chair or program director is the course manager, the student should seek assistance from the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Sciences. Should the student need additional assistance, he or she may also see staff in the Boston University the Ombuds Office, <http://www.bu.edu/ombuds/>

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## **24. TRANSFER BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS/PROGRAMS**

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Students may not transfer between departments/programs (exceptions are made for the PIBS program upon completion of year 1 and in compliance with federal regulations for international students). Students must formally withdraw and re-apply to their new program of interest. Transfer of units from courses previously taken will be reviewed upon admission by the department chair and/or program director for consideration.

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## 25. TRANSFER OF UNITS

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Graduate-level courses in other graduate schools or in other schools or colleges of Boston University not used toward the awarding of any other degree, may be transferred on recommendation of the chair or program director. Students may not submit a [transfer of credit](#) form until they complete the first term and are in good academic standing.

Masters degree programs (without specific professional accreditation standards) allow no more than eight (8) units to be transferred from other universities or programs within Boston University with the approval of the program director.

Post-bachelor's PhD programs allow no more than sixteen (16) units to be transferred from other universities. If a department or program requires more than the minimum sixty-four (64) units, a student may transfer an additional number of courses corresponding to that number required in excess of the sixty-four (64) units.

Post-master's PhD programs allow no units to be transferred from other universities unless a department requires more than the minimum of thirty-two (32) units. A student may transfer the number of courses corresponding to that number required in excess of the thirty-two (32) units.

Units from a single course cannot be counted toward two different degree programs within a graduate program unless it is taken as part of a dual degree program. Dual-degree students must be verified by each school separately.

### ***General Requirements for Transfer Unit***

All courses for anticipated transfer unit must meet the following criteria:

- Must have been taken within the past five (5) years.
- Courses must be officially documented as graduate-level courses from an accredited institution.
- Transfer unit is contingent upon completion of the course with a grade of B (3.0) or better.
- The official transcripts documenting the final grade(s) must be sent directly from the degree granting institution to the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences. Students must submit the course syllabi to Registrar.
- Courses cannot have been used in the past or be used in the future towards another degree at Boston University.

### ***General Requirements for Course Waiver***

Students may petition to be waived from specific course requirements based on previous coursework. Requirements for the course waiver are:

- Relevant courses must have been taken within the past five (5) years.
- Students must have earned a grade of B (3.0) or better in the course.

- Students must complete a request for transfer unit/course waiver form ([credit transfer request form](#)) on the [Student Forms webpage](#)) and provide the requested documentation with the form to the Registrar.
- Students may be asked by the program chair/director to demonstrate their proficiency in the courses to be waived.
- The decision to grant a waiver is at the discretion of the department chair or program director.
- Such waivers will not reduce the overall number of course units required to be taken in their graduate studies to fulfill program requirements.

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## **26. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR PHD AND MASTER'S DEGREES**

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### ***General Requirement for MA and MS Degrees***

Master's degree candidates are typically required to complete minimum of 32 graduate-level units, though some may require 32–60 credits, depending on the program requirements. Students completing degree requirements in one year must register full-time (fall and spring) terms and two summer sessions.

Students must maintain continuous registration (at least one course (2 units) or continuing student status) every fall/spring semester until graduation, unless on an approved leave. If returning from a leave students are required to register for two consecutive terms prior to completion of all degree requirements including thesis submission.

Students completing degree requirements for August graduation are required to maintain active enrollment in their final summer term. This means registering for at least one course (2 units) or a continuing study course to be considered an active student, ensure compliance with registration requirements, and in some cases, to maintain visa status.

All master's students shall demonstrate mastery of their field by completion of the requirements of the student's department or program. A thesis, capstone, practicum, and/or a comprehensive examination may be required, as determined by the department or program of study. Guidelines for such requirements vary by program, and the Registrar is notified upon completion.

If a thesis is completed, students must follow the guidelines set forth by their program and by the Registrar. A master's thesis must receive approval by two faculty readers that are either Graduate Educators and Mentors members (GEMS) or who have received a special service appointment (see section 26). The final approved thesis and associated fees and documents must be submitted to the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences by the appropriate thesis due date set for each semester. All capstones and thesis documents must be scanned using Turnitin plagiarism detection software prior to final submission to the students' Program/Department and the Registrar. The Turnitin instructions can be found [here](#) and on the website.

### ***Directed Study of Research***

Students may register for directed study or research with the approval of faculty member. The minimum registration is a 2-unit course. A candidate for the MS in the basic sciences may register for no more than 8 units in directed study or research. MS in Medical Sciences candidates may register for no more than 8 units in directed study or research.

### ***General Requirements for the PhD Degree***

The requirements for post-bachelor's and post-master's doctoral degree programs are as follows:

#### **General Requirements for a Post-bachelor's PhD Degree**

Candidates without a master's degree or its equivalent are required to complete a minimum of 64 graduate level units. Specific requirements related to the selection of courses, seminars, and research or directed study will be determined by the student's department or graduate program. Normally, no more than four (4) courses may be taken concurrently. Each student must register for at least one (1) course each semester until completion of all departmental or programmatic course requirements unless granted an authorized leave of absence. The number of courses that may be transferred to a post-bachelor's program is explained in more detail in the Transfer of Units under Section 24. As stated under section 18.13, doctorate degree candidates admitted as a post-bachelors have maximum of seven (7) academic years from matriculation to complete their degree.

#### **General Requirements for a Post-master's PhD Degree**

In some cases, candidates with a master's degree may be accepted into a post-MA program. These students are required to complete a minimum of 32 graduate level units. In certain circumstances, the Admissions Committee of a department or program will require post-master's candidates to complete the equivalent of sixteen (16) graduate-level courses (64 units). Specific requirements relative to the selection of courses, seminars, and research or directed study will be determined by the student's department or program. Normally, no more than four (4) courses may be taken concurrently, and each student must register for at least one (1) course each semester until completion of all departmental or programmatic course requirements unless granted an authorized leave of absence. Regulations regarding transfer of unit to a post-master's program are explained in more detail in the Transfer of Units under Section 25. As stated under section 18.13, doctorate degree candidates admitted as a post-bachelors have maximum of five (5) academic years from matriculation to complete their degree.

#### **Qualifying Examination**

All PhD students shall demonstrate mastery of their field in special examinations set by the student's department or program. Each PhD qualifying exam has both a written and oral component. Both components of the qualifying examination must be passed. Each component of the PhD qualifying exam may be re-taken once. The number of members and the composition of the qualifying examination committee are dictated by the department or program. The

completed and signed PhD report of examination form must be submitted and approved by the Registrar before the dissertation prospectus outline form will be accepted.

### **Dissertation Prospectus Outline**

At a stage in the research prescribed by the student's department or program, the student develops a dissertation prospectus with the help of their readers and dissertation committee. The dissertation prospectus must be approved by the program director. The approved prospectus is submitted to the Registrar on or before the date specified under the [calendar and important dates](#) available on the website. The format of the prospectus and specific procedures for meeting the general guidelines vary among the departments and programs.

### **Dissertation**

Candidates shall demonstrate their ability for independent study in a dissertation that represents original research or creative scholarship. After completing coursework, and all other pre-dissertation requirements, including the qualifying examinations, a student develops a dissertation proposal. In some departments/programs, the presentation of the dissertation proposal is part of the qualifying examination. All dissertation documents must be scanned using Turnitin plagiarism detection software prior to final submission to the students' Program/Department and the Registrar. The Turnitin Instructions can be found [here](#) and on the website.

### **Dissertation Abstract**

A dissertation abstract that has been approved by the student's first reader, program director and/or department chair must be submitted to the Registrar at least three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation. Please keep abstracts concise and avoid any abbreviations in the title. Additional materials may be required by individual departments or programs.

**To complete, successfully defend, and submit the dissertation to the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences for timely graduation, a PhD candidate will:**

1. Submit the dissertation prospectus outline and diploma application to the Registrar for Graduate Medical Sciences at least three (3) months prior to the anticipated graduation date.
2. Submit a dissertation abstract, approved by the department or program, at least three (3) weeks prior to final oral exam.
3. The dissertation must be approved by the first (who is the research advisor) and the second reader. Subsequently, the dissertation must be distributed to the remaining committee members at least two (2) weeks prior to the final oral exam. All members generally are Graduate Educators and Mentors members. However, departments may have varying guidelines for using non-GEMS or non-BU faculty.
4. Submit a final oral exam schedule, approved by the department or program, at least two (2) weeks prior to final oral exam.

5. Defend the dissertation at the final oral exam. At least five committee members must be present in person and sign the form approving the dissertation. Additional committee members may attend remotely . Recommendations for corrections can be made at the final oral exam, and the student must make these corrections to the satisfaction of all committee members before final approval is granted.
6. Submit the final approved dissertation (and associated fees and documents) to the Registrar by the appropriate graduation due date.

Failure to meet any of these deadlines may result in rescheduling of dissertation defense and/or graduation.

### **Final Oral Examination**

PhD students must undergo a final oral examination in which they defend their dissertation as a valuable contribution to their field and to demonstrate a mastery of their field of specialization. The examining committee is composed of five (5) or more faculty members, including the First, Second and Third (optional) readers and a committee chair. A Special Service Appointment is required for those committee members who are visiting, adjunct, and *Emeritus* faculty, Boston University employees not of faculty rank and examiners from outside Boston University.

All committee members are required to attend the final oral examination. In special circumstances, additional members beyond the five faculty in-person for the examination can participate in the final oral examination via audio/video communication or through a proxy.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research Training Requirement**

Students must complete responsible conduct in research (RCR) training before they can graduate.

### ***Faculty and Research Advisor***

#### **Faculty Advisor**

The faculty advisor plays a central role in guiding the student's academic progress, assisting in course selection, monitoring progress, and providing guidance, mentoring, and counseling in academic matters. Upon entering their graduate program, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Students are required to meet regularly with their faculty advisor to discuss their academic progress and course selections.

#### **Research/Thesis Advisor**

A candidate for a PhD degree is required to have a research/dissertation advisor and mentor who is Graduate Educators & Mentors member (GEMS). The research advisor is always the first reader of the candidate's PhD dissertation. A PhD candidate will not be permitted to start their dissertation in a laboratory until it has been confirmed that the research advisor is a GEMS Member.

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## **27. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY**

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In the course of research, scholarship, education, and other activities, Boston University faculty, staff, and students create patentable inventions, copyrightable works, and other forms of intellectual property that merit legal protection and have financial as well as scientific and scholarly value. The University seeks purposeful translation of such intellectual property to societal good whenever possible. The University is committed to timely assessment of legal protection and potential societal benefit of University intellectual property and to sharing equitably the rights and royalties resulting from intellectual property licensing.

All graduate students must sign the Intellectual Property Agreement affirming they have received and read the Policy upon matriculation. The [policy](#) and [agreement](#) are available.

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## **28. FAIR EXPECTATIONS FOR PHD AND MASTERS STUDENTS**

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The PhD, Master's and graduate certificate Programs are committed to maintaining a mentoring environment built on mutual respect and clearly defined expectations. Students can expect to receive appropriate mentorship, timely feedback on their work, reasonable working hours consistent with applicable University policies, and a safe and inclusive training environment. In turn, students are expected to engage fully and professionally in their academic and research responsibilities.

Students and their advisors are encouraged to review the [Fair Expectations for Masters and PhD Students](#) document available on the website.

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## **29. EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERSHIPS FOR PHD STUDENTS**

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The PhD Programs recognizes the value of external professional development experiences, including internships, for PhD students. PhD students who wish to pursue an external internship or professional development opportunity must obtain prior written approval from their research advisor and program director. Such activities must not interfere with the student's academic progress or degree completion timeline. In accordance with applicable University and funding agency requirements, students on certain types of stipend support may have restrictions on external activities.

For full guidance and required forms, students should review the [Guide and Process for External Professional Development Internships for PhD Students](#) on the website.

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## **30. GRADUATE PROGRAMS CODE OF CONDUCT**

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Graduate Programs in the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine is committed to an environment that is professional, collegial, supportive of all personnel, and conducive to providing the best possible teaching, training, and research. The graduate programs places a very high priority on maintaining a work environment for staff, trainees, and faculty characterized by generosity, integrity, constructive interactions, mentoring, and respect for diversity and differences among members of our community. All faculty, staff, and students are expected to model the behavioral attributes of responsibility, empathy, service excellence, problem solving and continuous improvement, efficiency, cultural humility, and teamwork. Students are expected to embody these characteristics in the pursuit of continuous personal and professional growth and aspire to sustain the highest level of ethical, moral, and academic excellence. These standards include integrity, respect, communication, collegiality, inclusivity, and humility. The full [Master's and PhD Student Code of Conduct](#) is available on the Graduate Medical Sciences website.

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## **31. ACADEMIC CONDUCT CODE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

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There is an Academic Conduct Code and set of Disciplinary Procedures that apply to all graduate students. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of data, and other violations of academic integrity. Students found to be in violation of the Academic Conduct Code may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from your graduate program and revocation of awarded degrees. All students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these standards upon matriculation.

The full [document](#) is available on the website.

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## **32. PROFESSIONAL COMPORTMENT & ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

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All Masters and PhD students must comport themselves in a manner that is consistent with the mission and values of Boston University. Students must abide by the professional comportment and academic standards set by the Graduate Programs. [These standards](#) are found on the website.

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## **33. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/TITLE IX POLICY**

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### ***Resources for Title IX***

The Graduate Programs at the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine are committed to maintaining an environment that is professional, collegial, inclusive, and supportive of all community members, and conducive to providing the best possible teaching, training, and research. Boston University's [Equal Opportunity Office](#) aims to provide equal opportunities regardless of sex, covering areas such as sexual harassment, gender equity, and

protection against sexual violence. The following resources are available for all students in Graduate Programs.

- [Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy](#)
- [Deputy Title IX Coordinators](#)
- [Title IX Confidential Resources](#)
- [Survivor Advocacy, Response & Prevention Center \(SARP\)](#)

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## 34. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES IN CASES OF ALLEGED UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

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The Graduate Programs are committed to maintaining a community free from unlawful discrimination and harassment, and these [procedures](#) provide a clear path for any employee, student, or applicant to raise concerns and have them thoroughly and fairly investigated

### ***Misconduct Reporting***

The Graduate Programs are committed to maintaining an environment free from misconduct, harassment, and unprofessional behavior. Students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to report concerns through the following channels:

**Ethics Point:** An independent, anonymous reporting system available to all students, staff, and faculty. Reports can be submitted at [Ethics Point](#).

**Equal Opportunity Office (EOO):** The [BU Equal Opportunity Office](#) handles complaints related to discrimination, harassment, and equal opportunity in accordance with University policy.

**Appropriate Treatment in Graduate Education (ATGE):** The Graduate Programs supports a set of standards for the appropriate treatment of all members of the graduate community. Students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to review the [Appropriate Treatment in Graduate Education](#) resources and report concerns to the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Sciences.

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## 35. COMPUTING POLICIES

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Boston University provides computing services to support its education, research, and operational missions, and the following guidelines outline the standards and responsibilities that all users must follow to ensure these resources remain secure, ethical, and accessible to the entire University community.

[Acceptable Use of Computing Services Policy](#)  
[Boston University Information Security Policy](#)  
[Boston University Data Protection Standards](#)

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## 36. EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

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In the event of existing or projected conditions or other emergency/disaster situations, classes may be cancelled. Cancellation of graduate master's and PhD classes will be communicated by posting the cancellation announcement on the School website and/or by the individual course manager. This may be independent of other closings throughout the Medical Campus.

If the Medical Campus is closed for the day, then no in person graduate classes will be held.

Note that Boston University's Charles River Campus may be closed while the Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine remains open, in which case graduate classes will be held unless otherwise notified of the course cancellation by the course instructor/manager. Announcements and information regarding all Boston University closings or delayed openings will be made on local radio and television stations, as well as the School and Graduate Medical Sciences Website.

## GUIDELINES

### ***IDENTIFICATION CARDS***

Terrier Cards are issued by the Terrier Card Office. Students are assigned an ID number by the University. In order to enter the Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine, faculty, staff, and students must have their identification card visible. Persons without a card can only gain access with approval from Public Safety.

To obtain an ID card:

- Students: Students may upload their own photo to the ID Office and pick up the card from the BUMC ID Office upon arrival to campus. Information will be provided prior to arriving to campus for orientation. Contact the ID Office at [MEDID@bu.edu](mailto:MEDID@bu.edu) or 617-358-7603 for instructions as needed.
- Faculty/Staff: Faculty and staff will need to have their photos taken in the BUMC ID Office located on Albany Street.

The BUMC ID Office is located on the ground floor of 650 Albany St (X Building). Open Monday-Friday from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.; closed 9-9:15 a.m. and Noon-12:30 p.m. each day.

A student is entitled to a new card only when there are changes to the information on the card. A fee is charged for replacing a lost card. Replacement cards are issued at the Terrier Card Office.

### ***NAME CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS***

Misspelled names on official University documents can be corrected by presenting a current driver's license or other form of identification to the University Registrar.

Currently enrolled students who wish to change their names must present sufficient reason and identification to the University Registrar. Upon approval, the student will be asked to complete a [Name Change Form](#).

For students who are no longer registered or who have graduated, legal documentation (e.g., a marriage license or court order) must be submitted to the University Registrar along with the request for the change.

Boston University's full policy on Name Changes can be found [here](#).

### **ADDRESS CHANGES**

Students must notify the University of any local or home address changes. To do this, eligible students may update this information in MyBU Student on the Contact Info page. The full [policy is available here](#).

### **GENERATIVE AI GUIDELINES**

#### **Generative AI Guidelines for Students**

- Generative AI (GenAI) tools are now widely available, and students are using them for both coursework and research. Students are encouraged to refer to Boston University's Guidelines for students found [here](#). It is expected that if students plan to use GenAI tools in their academic work that they confirm with their program director and class instructor whether this is permissible. Assignments should also be

#### **Generative AI Guidelines for Faculty and Staff**

- Unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor, students are expected to complete all assignments independently and without the assistance of AI. The submission of work generated wholly or partially by AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or similar technologies) as one's own work constitutes academic misconduct.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that all submitted work accurately reflects their own understanding, analysis, interpretation, and writing.

### **PLAGIARISM AND USE OF TURNITIN**

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty in any form are serious violations of Boston University and the Graduate Programs academic standards and are strictly prohibited. All submitted work, including theses, dissertations, capstone projects, and course assignments, must be the student's own original work, with all sources properly cited and attributed.

The Graduate Programs requires that all capstone documents, theses, and dissertations be scanned using Turnitin plagiarism detection software prior to final submission to the student's Program/Department and the Registrar. Students are responsible for following the submission process as outlined by the Graduate Programs. For step-by-step instructions, students should refer to the [Guidelines for Using the Turnitin Plagiarism Tool](#) on the website.

### ***ALCOHOL GUIDELINES***

Master's and PhD students are expected to adhere to the Boston University Medical Campus (BUMC) Alcohol guidelines at all times, including at masters and PhD program-sponsored events and activities on campus. The consumption of alcohol at graduate or BUMC events is subject to applicable University policies, Massachusetts state law, and individual program standards. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with these guidelines. Violations may result in disciplinary action consistent with the Graduate Programs Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures described above

### ***SHARED USAGE OF TESTING CENTER***

The L11 Testing Center located on the 11th floor of the Instructional Building is shared by all schools on the medical campus as well as Graduate Programs. To ensure the comfort and security of all members of the community, students are expected to abide by the following [guidelines during exams](#).

### ***STUDY ROOM GUIDELINES***

Masters and PhD students follows the Boston University Medical Campus guidelines for use of study rooms. These [guidelines](#) are posted in each study room so that Medical Campus students may actively manage their spaces.

### ***USAGE OF MEDITATION ROOMS***

In recognition of the need for space dedicated to meditation, reflection, individual and group prayer, the Boston University Student Services Committee developed and adopted the following guidelines. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that space is utilized in a manner respectful of all Medical Campus students. Spaces are available for personal meditation, prayer, and quiet, designed to be welcoming to all regardless of faith.

Spaces available on campus are [posted here](#).