



# **PATHWAYS OF HUMAN DISEASE GRADUATE PROGRAM and Ph.D. in Pathology**

University of Rochester  
School of Medicine and Dentistry

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## PREFACE

This handbook is intended to outline the major features and policies of the Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program and Ph.D. in Pathology. The general policies for graduate study at the University of Rochester are contained in the *Official Bulletin of Graduate Studies*:

<http://www.rochester.edu/GradBulletin/>

as well as the *Student Handbook of the School of Medicine and Dentistry*. Copies can be obtained in the Offices for Graduate Studies of the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Policies continue to evolve in response to the changing needs of the graduate programs and the student body. It may be necessary to verify any important decisions or policies with the Co-Directors of the Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program, Dr. Richard Libby and Dr. Lianping Xing.

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## **I. PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program (PWD) and PhD in Pathology is a flexible, diverse program with multi-departmental character. It is designed for the student who is interested in applying the latest advances in cell biology, biochemistry and molecular biology to the understanding of human disease mechanisms. Students entering the Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program will be prepared for successful, independent careers in research and teaching. Through coursework, seminars, and research experiences, the student is well-prepared to address the complex and constructive problems in human disease in an academic, industrial or governmental setting.

The first year curriculum is designed to give trainees a strong foundation in biochemistry, cell biology, and molecular biology/genetics and in the fundamentals of pathobiology. The trainees will also have three laboratory rotations of their choosing. It is appreciated that some students would like to explore the many research areas available to them during the first year before making a final decision about the research area in which to pursue their thesis work.

## **II. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION**

The Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program and PhD in Pathology is a multidisciplinary program which is administered and supported by the Department of Pathology. However, the faculty of the PWD Program represent at least 16 departments within the University of Rochester Medical Center, including Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, Biomedical Genetics, Neuroscience, Medicine and Pediatrics to name a few. A primary or secondary faculty appointment in the Department of Pathology is not necessary to be an active PWD Graduate Program faculty member. Currently, 70% of the faculty in the PWD Graduate Program do not have academic appointments in the Department of Pathology. This illustrates the diversity and multi-departmental character of this program.

Faculty are accepted as Graduate Program faculty if they have the desire, experience, and time to train graduate students; have funding to support students; and have an active research lab that investigates human disease in its broadest sense.

### III. CURRICULUM

#### A. Academic Progression

After successful completion of the first year of study, PWD students will follow a disease-oriented curriculum in elective studies and in advanced coursework during the second year. Students who transfer into the PWD Program after the first year will enroll in PTH 509/510 and any other required Pathology courses in their second year. All students are also required to designate a thesis advisor after successful completion of three lab rotations. This usually occurs in June of the first year. The thesis advisor need not be a member of the PWD Graduate Program faculty, but must provide a strong training and educational environment

#### B. Courses

**The following courses are required for a PhD degree in Pathology:**

|         |   | Credits           |
|---------|---|-------------------|
| PTH 509 | Pathways of Human Disease I   | 4                 |
| PTH 510 | Pathways of Human Disease II  | 4                 |
| PTH 504 | Current Topics in Experimental Pathology<br>(Required every semester, except when | 1                 |
| IND 501 | Ethics in Research  | 1                 |
| IND 408 | Advanced Biochemistry   | 5                 |
| IND 409 | Cell Biology  | 4                 |
| IND 410 | Molecular Biology and Genetics  | 4                 |
|         |   | <b>23 Credits</b> |

***ELECTIVES (two elective courses are required: at least one PTH)***

Recommended Elective Courses

|         |                                  |   |
|---------|----------------------------------|---|
| PTH 507 | Cancer Biology                   | 4 |
| PTH 571 | Molecular Basis of Disease       | 3 |
| PHP 447 | Signal Transduction              | 4 |
| MBI 473 | Immunology                       | 3 |
| BST 463 | Introduction to Biostatistics    | 4 |
| CVS 401 | Cardiovascular Biology & Disease | 4 |

**Total Credits 29-31**

While two electives are required, students may take additional electives depending upon the student's background, areas of demonstrated competence, and research interests. At least one of the two electives must be a PTH course.

**C. Student Seminar Series**

Attendance in the Student Seminar Series (PTH 504, Wednesdays at 4:00 pm) is mandatory for all students. \*Only students registered for PTH 999 Doctoral Dissertation are exempt from PTH 509 during that semester.

**D. Minimum Course Performance**

Any student who receives a "C" or an "E" for a course or research is considered to be on probation. If the student receives a second "C" or "E", this grade is considered a failure and the student will be dismissed from the School of Medicine and Dentistry Graduate School. Therefore, students encountering difficulties in coursework should seek advice from the Program Director and/or their thesis advisor as early as possible.

**E. Course Waivers & Transfers**

A student may request a waiver from taking one of the core courses in the curriculum based on prior graduate level coursework. An official form can be obtained from the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA) office for this request: *Petition for Course Waiver*. Critical requirements for approval are 1) course must be parallel to UR course and therefore a syllabus describing the

course content must be provided by the student, 2) course must have been taken within 5 years of date of matriculation, and 3) grade of “B-” or higher must have been earned. An interview with and approval signature of the director of the course being waived is required. Note that course credit is not transferred. Student must earn the full credit requirements for a degree. The student is expected to substitute either an advanced course in the same field or a graduate level course in another area of study.

Under very special conditions, a student may request a transfer of credit for a course taken at the University of Rochester before matriculation or in another graduate program. The course must be an integral part of the proposed program of study. An official *Petition for Transfer* form can be obtained from the GEPA web site to request a course transfer. These transferred credits will appear on the student’s transcript.

#### **F. Pathology Research Day**

Pathology Research Day is a combined Clinical and Basic Science Research event which takes place each year in early June. This conference includes both Resident and Graduate Student speakers who give an overview of their research. All Pathology Graduate Students, Residents and Fellows are required to participate in a combined poster session. Competition for Graduate Student Travel Awards (see below) takes place during this poster session. Graduate Students alternate with Residents annually to host Pathology Research Day and choose a nationally known Researcher as a keynote speaker for the conference session. The day concludes with a celebratory end-of-year Awards Dinner.

#### **G. Pathology Graduate Student Awards**

The Awards presented to Pathology Graduate Students at the end-of-year Awards Dinner are: Five Department of Pathology Graduate Student Travel Awards, Outstanding Academic Achievement by a First Year Student, Outstanding Contribution to the PhD Program by a Graduate Student, and Outstanding (first author) Publication within the past academic year.

## Department of Pathology Graduate Student Travel Awards

### Rules and Eligibility

The Department of Pathology has established five (5) \$1000 travel awards for graduate students. These will be awarded annually as part of the Pathology Research Day Conference. Awardees will be chosen from all current Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program and PhD in Pathology students who present a poster at the Pathology Research Day poster session. A committee of program faculty, chosen by the directors, will judge the posters and select the winners.

All graduate students are eligible for travel awards with the following limitations:

- 1) Travel awards must be used for scientific meetings in which the student presents a poster or oral presentation as first author.
- 2) A student is ineligible in the year following the awarding of a travel award.
- 3) No student can win more than twice.
- 4) A student is ineligible if a previously awarded travel award has not yet been used.
- 5) Travel awards must be used while the student is a member of the graduate program.
- 6) If a student completes the program before using the travel award, a small token of recognition from Barnes and Noble Bookstore will be substituted (not to exceed \$75)

## IV. CHOICE OF RESEARCH ADVISOR

### Lab Rotations

Each student will complete a minimum of three laboratory rotations during the first year. These rotations provide the student the opportunity to work with a range of scientists in several research laboratories. The research scientist chosen for each rotation must be a tenure track faculty member with experience in training graduate students.

The duration for each rotation is as follows: October 1 – December 15, January 1- March 15, March 16 – May 31, and July 1 – August 31. Within 5 days of completing a rotation, both student and rotation advisor must submit a completed rotation evaluation form to the Graduate Coordinator who will submit to the Senior Associate Dean's Office. These on-line forms are available at the Graduate Office Website:

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/home/forms.cfm>.

### The First Year Writing Project

A written report from one of the 3 lab rotations is also required. The written report will be in the format of a research manuscript, including introduction, materials and methods, results, and discussion. The written report should be reviewed by the rotation advisor and an additional faculty member chosen by the rotation advisor. The student will then revise the report according to the critiques and resubmit to the rotation advisor. This First Year Writing Project is due by August 15<sup>th</sup> of the student's first year.

### Thesis Advisor

Students will select their thesis advisor after completion of lab rotations. The faculty member chosen as the thesis advisor must have sufficient funds to support the student and the student's thesis research. The faculty member must also have the time and commitment to the student's training and education. Exceptions can be made using the guidelines provided by the Graduate Education

and Postdoctoral Affairs office for mentor eligibility. (A non-tenure track faculty member can be an advisor only with the approval of the Program Co-Directors and the faculty member's chairperson, along with the appointment of a co-advisor).

## V. ORAL QUALIFYING EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

### A. General Procedures

The student is eligible to take the Oral Qualifying Exam upon completion of the coursework required by the PhD in Pathology (at least 24 credit hours of coursework and 6 credits of research). This includes the three research rotations, core courses (IND 408, 409, 410), PTH 509/510 and the two electives. The Oral Qualifying Exam evaluates the student's understanding of basic principles, critical thinking, and his or her ability to synthesize and develop testable hypotheses. The student's principal objective is to propose and defend the components of the thesis that he/she intends to pursue as the PhD dissertation. The student will be responsible, however, for all material relevant to the graduate curriculum. Most students should plan to take this exam at the end of their second year, which provides at least one year of experience in their chosen lab and an opportunity to generate sufficient preliminary data to propose and defend a thesis proposal. All students **must** take their qualifying exam by October 1st of the first semester of the third year. It is highly recommended by the Senior Associate Dean's office that the student meet with their advisory committee to discuss the development of their research project prior to writing their thesis proposal and prior to scheduling the qualifying exam. This meeting must be documented with an Annual PhD Student Evaluation/Progress Report.

Paperwork for the Qualifying Exam must be turned in by the Program Coordinator to the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office at least 15 working days before the exam date. *The student should notify the Program Coordinator as soon as he/she begins to plan for the Qualifying Exam so that paperwork, including the proposal's title page and abstract, and room reservation are completed within deadline.*

## B. Written Proposal

In preparation for the Oral Qualifying Exam, the student writes a hypothesis-based research proposal in NIH format (Specific Aims – 1 page; Research Strategy [12 pages] comprised of a) Significance, b) Innovation, c) Approach). Preliminary data and experimental approaches are based on the student's progress to date in his or her chosen laboratory. Students are expected to cite original key references in their research proposal, and to be familiar with them. *Copies of this document must be presented to each member of the Qualifying Exam Committee 2 weeks before the exam.* While the submitted proposal provides a valuable example of the student's comprehension of the scientific method and can be the basis for examination questions, the qualifying exam tests the full scope of the student's knowledge and reasoning skills.

## C. The Oral Qualifying Exam Committee

The Qualifying Exam Committee is composed of faculty chosen by the student with the assistance of their thesis advisor. A preliminary list of committee members must be approved by the Program Co-Directors **before** any faculty members are invited to participate on the committee. Once assembled, the committee must be formally approved by the Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program Co-Directors. The Qualifying Exam Committee must be composed of at least two faculty from within the Pathology Graduate Program and one faculty member from outside of the program, in addition to the thesis advisor. If an extra-departmental committee member from an institution other than the University of Rochester is desired, approval from the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education is required. The Committee membership must collectively provide both extensive experience with graduate student education and research expertise that complements an aspect of the thesis work. The committee must have more than one faculty member at the rank of Associate Professor or higher. If a clinical faculty member (with no graduate student mentoring experience) is included to provide a clinical perspective on the project, that faculty member should not be counted as one of the required three committee members. Faculty who have

frequent contact with the student's work and input into his or her progress are not an appropriate choice for this committee. The Qualifying Exam Committee provides an independent assessment of the student's performance and of the adequacy of the thesis proposal. The Qualifying Exam Committee subsequently becomes the student's official Thesis Committee that acts as an independent advisory committee for the student. The thesis advisor is required to attend the Qualifying Exam as an active, but non-voting participant. The advisor will not be present during the final deliberations of the QE Committee. In addition, a member of the Steering Committee of the Graduate Program in Pathology will be appointed to attend the Qualifying Exam as a voting member. The Program Coordinator will work with the student when scheduling the exam and submitting the composition of the committee to the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office. Paperwork must be filed at least 15 full working days before the exam.

#### **D. The Oral Qualifying Exam**

The exam will begin with a closed meeting of the Qualifying Exam Committee, without the student in the room, to review the student's academic record, research performance, and written proposal. The committee will also decide on the format of oral questioning of the student. The committee must agree that the student has the appropriate academic preparation and the written proposal meets the departmental requirements before proceeding.

The student will then join the committee in the closed session. The student will present a 20-30 minute summary of his or her proposal using appropriate media. A public student seminar can substitute for this oral summary. The committee may question the student during the presentation or hold questions until the presentation is complete. This is predetermined by the committee. The committee will question the student to determine his or her breadth and depth of knowledge related to the research proposal. While the proposal serves as a focus for the oral exam, questions in other areas may be raised and the student should be prepared to answer questions of a more general scientific nature related to the proposal. The committee will use the following Topics of Evaluation in

judging the student:

- Academic performance (courses; laboratory research)
- Quality of the written proposal
- Quality of the oral presentation
- Knowledge of scientific literature related to student's field of research
- Knowledge of the proposed methods
- Communication skills: a) written; b) oral
- Ability to address committee's questions
- Ability to identify anticipated problems and alternative approaches
- Professionalism
- Likelihood to develop into an independent investigator
- Overall impression of the student's performance

Following the oral exam, the Qualifying Exam Committee will meet in closed session to evaluate the student's overall performance (including the oral examination, academic record, and laboratory performance). The advisor is to leave the final closed session prior to the committee's deliberations and does not have a vote. The committee will vote on the following options: 1) the student passes; 2) the student fails; 3) the student may pass contingent upon meeting some further requirements set by the committee (e.g., rewriting a portion of the proposal and submitting it to the committee for approval; or take further coursework to correct a deficiency).

The Qualifying Exam Committee will notify the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office and the Pathology Graduate Program office in writing of the outcome of the exam. If the student has passed, the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education will advance the student to the official status of Candidate for the PhD degree. In most cases, the student will also be awarded a Master's Degree under Plan B on the way to earning the PhD. In the case of a contingent requirement, a second letter from the committee must be submitted when the student has accomplished the necessary requirements. For a student who has failed the exam, a second opportunity to sit for the Oral Qualifying Exam may be offered. This will be decided by the Pathways of Human Disease Graduate Program and PhD in Pathology Steering Committee after reviewing the student's performance, in consultation with the Student's Qualifying Exam Committee. If approved, this can be scheduled within 3 months, but no later than 6 months.

## VI. THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Once the Oral Qualifying Exam is passed, the Oral Qualifying Exam Committee assumes the role of Thesis Advisory Committee. In this capacity, the committee annually monitors the progress of the student relative to the research goals and specific aims detailed in the written thesis proposal or in subsequent revisions to the research goals that are presented to the committee. Students are expected to meet with their thesis advisory committee in the Spring semester each year and use the advice, comments and suggestions from the thesis committee as the basis of their annual academic progress review, which needs to be submitted by June 30, the end of the academic year.

### A. Yearly Student Evaluations

An *Annual PhD Student Evaluation/Progress Report* form is required from each student in all years except Year 1:

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/home/documents/evaluation-annual.pdf>

Year 1 students must have written evaluations from each of their three rotation advisors using the *Lab Rotation Evaluation* forms:

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/home/documents/evaluation-rotation-faculty.pdf>

and

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/home/documents/evaluation-rotation-student.pdf>

These progress reports will cover an academic year, the time period from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. All reports must be submitted to the Program Coordinator by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Students who have not yet formed a thesis committee will use the same *Annual PhD Student Evaluation/Progress Report* form initially cited above, ignoring sections that don't pertain. **All students beyond the Qualifying Exam must have an annual thesis committee meeting which is the basis for the written *Annual PhD Student Evaluation/Progress Report*.** Students are expected to convene their Thesis Advisory Committee again in approximately 6 months post Qualifying Exam for their Annual Committee meeting, completing the Annual

Student Evaluation/Progress Report form cited above by no later than June 30, the end of the academic year. It is the responsibility of the student to convene his or her Thesis Advisory Committee at least once per year. *The student should notify the Program Coordinator once their committee meeting date has been set up.*

The *Annual PhD Student Evaluation/Progress Report* form states that the committee has met, reviewed the student's progress, set future goals and directions, and agreed that the progress was acceptable. Any reservations or recommendations must also be included in this written evaluation. The report must be submitted by the student's advisor to the thesis committee which approves the report or requests amendments before the committee-approved report is sent on to the graduate coordinator who will submit the evaluation to the Senior Associate Dean and the Office of Graduate Education. If the thesis committee deems it necessary, it can meet with the student more frequently than once per year to monitor the student's progress and provide additional guidance to the student.

The Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office requires a copy of each student's Annual Progress Report. If a student does not submit a committee-approved Annual Progress Report during the July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> period, a letter of explanation, signed by the thesis advisor and student, must be provided to the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education and to our PWD Graduate Program Co-Directors explaining the reason for the delay and providing a date for the committee meeting.

All University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry graduate programs are strictly enforcing this student requirement. Some programs stop stipend payments on July 1<sup>st</sup> to any students who have not completed their yearly committee meeting and Progress Report. Everyone should take this requirement seriously.

## VII. THESIS PREPARATION AND DEFENSE

### A. Preparation

When the student's Thesis Advisory Committee and advisor have approved the completion of the thesis research, the student should inform the PWD Graduate Program Coordinator and obtain a copy of the booklet, *Formatting the Thesis and Preparing for Final Defense: A manual for Graduate Students* <http://www.rochester.edu/theses/ThesesManual.pdf> . This booklet provides detailed instructions for preparation of the written thesis. The student must work with their thesis advisor to determine the content of the thesis. The advisor has the ultimate responsibility and authority to determine the content and format of the thesis.

It is expected that students will endeavor to publish their research before the thesis has been written and submitted. Accordingly, the student may use *first-authored* manuscripts prepared for publication as individual chapters in the thesis, provided that the following criteria are met: a) the student performed most of the experiments; b) the student wrote the manuscript, with assistance of the advisor; c) contributions of co-authors are duly acknowledged in the Foreword of the thesis; d) approval is obtained from the PWD program director. *Note: if a published manuscript (or parts thereof) is reproduced in the thesis as it appears in the journal, the student must obtain permission from the journal publisher. The permission should include the right to make the article text publicly available through UR Research, the UR's institutional repository, and through ProQuest/UMI. The University requires that all theses be submitted to UR Research and ProQuest/UMI.*

Regardless of which thesis format is chosen, the data chapters should be preceded by a chapter titled "Introduction", which is a scholarly review of the

literature that presents the current state of knowledge in the thesis area. The data chapters will be followed by a “Discussion” chapter that presents the material from the individual chapters as a cohesive body of work and discusses the significance of the thesis relative to the research field.

## **B. Defense Process and Registration of the Thesis**

The Defense Registration Process is an Online Registration Process of timed intervals which will be maintained by the Graduate Coordinator. It is recommended that the Defense Process begin approximately 6 months prior to defense with a final committee meeting. The student should notify the Graduate Coordinator and meet to determine a defense timeline and discuss the requirements. The student will be provided a detailed process of expectations and a timeline.

Four months prior to the anticipated defense date the candidate and advisor will nominate 3 faculty to serve as Chair of the student’s committee. The Chair must be external to the Program faculty and the student’s advising department in order to provide an unbiased and impartial assessment of the defense. The nomination form along with copies of the Title page and Abstract in Manuscript form and Program of Study will be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean’s office 4 months prior to expected Defense date. Once the Chair has been selected by the Dean’s office the student will meet with the Graduate Coordinator to finalize a time-line of deadlines for the Registration process. At this time the coordinator will set up the student’s electronic defense file in the Online system and begin submitting the student’s academic records and registration paperwork.

The student’s Thesis will be submitted to his/her committee including the Chair and the Graduate Coordinator 4 weeks prior to the exam date. The Coordinator will upload the document to the student’s electronic file. There may be no changes to the Thesis once it has been uploaded. The Coordinator will then upload all other registration paperwork and activate the electronic file for the approval process 3

weeks prior to the Defense. The electronic file activation will initiate an email approval system which will be sent to advisor, committee members, Program Director and the Senior Associate Dean for the approval process for Registration.

After the completion of a successful defense the student will again meet with the Coordinator to go over the final process of uploading their thesis to ProQuest and complete any post-defense paperwork.

## **VII. GENERAL POLICIES & INFORMATION**

### **A. Student Vacation and Holiday Policy**

The School of Medicine and Dentistry recognizes that time away from school is important to the individual. Vacations should be taken at times that do not interfere with students' course work and their responsibilities in the lab and within the department. Students will abide by the following vacation policies:

Graduate students are permitted to take two weeks of vacation time (10 business days) each calendar year (January 1 through December 31). Vacation time does not automatically accrue.

Vacation time must be approved well in advance by the advisor except for first year students who are required to receive **written permission of the Program Director to ensure that the vacation period does not interfere with course work and laboratory rotations.**

Graduate students are expected to be in their labs or offices during breaks between semesters and during periods when no classes are held. See the SMD Graduate School Academic Calendar for exact dates.

Vacations must not interfere with teaching assistant duties, including meetings prior to the start of classes.

International students who plan to travel outside the United States must submit a Short Term Absence Notice:

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/graduate/home/forms.cfm>

The information provided on this form will allow the School to assist the student in the event he/she is subject to an extensive security clearance prior to receiving the necessary clearance and documentation required for re-entry into the United States.

*Unauthorized absences may result in a prorated withholding of a student's stipend.*

### **University Holidays**

Graduate students are entitled to paid time off for official University holidays: New year's Day, January 1; Memorial Day; Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day, December 25.

### **Observance of Religious Holidays**

As provided in New York Education Law Section 224-a, students who choose not to register for classes, attend classes or take exams on certain days because of their religious beliefs will be given an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or to make up the work requirements or exams they miss without penalties or additional fees.

## **B. Parental Leave**

The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD) provides accommodation for its graduate students for the birth or adoption of children, as outlined in this policy.

### **Parental Leave**

Graduate Students are provided up to 8 weeks of leave for the primary care giver following the birth or the adoption of a child.\* During this period students may postpone course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements

but remain active full-time students, with access to university facilities (including student health insurance, library privileges, and housing) and to university faculty and staff.

While students will continue to be fully funded with any existing funding sources (e.g., fellowship, assistantship) during the leave period, students will be excused from regular teaching or research duties. However, it is the student's professional responsibility to work with her/his advisor or faculty member to prepare for the absence in advance of the leave. This includes reviewing the status and continuation of research projects, adequately preparing those who will assume teaching responsibilities during the student's absence, and arranging for a smooth transition in any other responsibilities.

Eligible graduate students are required to notify their Advisor and the SMD Dean of Graduate Studies of the date of their intended time away at least 60 days prior (when possible) to the expected date of childbirth or adoption, using the [Parental Leave Request Form](#). While applications for parental leave are required, the benefit is automatic.

If extended time is needed beyond the 8 weeks leave, written approval for an unpaid Leave of Absence must be requested, and approval obtained from the student's Advisor, Program Director, and the Dean of Graduate Studies for SMD. Note that individual fellowships such as the NSF Graduate Fellowships, may require sponsor approval for extended leaves of absence. Specific guidelines should be consulted.

***\*Note: These guidelines are consistent with the NIH Grants Policy Statement – Parental Leave (10/10). For those on NIH training grants, the use of parental leave must be approved by the Training Grant PD/PI.***

#### [Interim Technical Support](#)

Institutions can use NIH grant funds to provide interim technical support to

researchers to accommodate family care needs. Information about this and other frequently asked questions regarding NIH policies related to parental leave and child care can be found on the NIH website: <http://www.nih.gov/>

### **Family Health Insurance**

All full-time graduate students have access to the University of Rochester Student Health Insurance Plan. Additionally, coverage can be purchased for spouses/partners and children. The University of Rochester plan is comparable to most high quality health insurance plans available in the US today. For more information about student health insurance, please visit the University Health Service website: [www.rochester.edu/uhs](http://www.rochester.edu/uhs)

### **Childcare Options**

The Children's School @ URMC is a Children's Creative Learning Center located on the University of Rochester Medical School campus. The Children's School @ URMC uses an exclusive educational program which provides unlimited opportunities for the development of the whole child. There's a unique curriculum for every age level, centered on developmentally appropriate and fun activities that help children develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

*The Children's School @ URMC*

*55 Castleman Road*

*Rochester, NY 14620*

*(585) 273-3677*

Additionally, the University of Rochester Office of Human Resources [Family Care Program](#) can provide a list of recommended day care centers in the area.

## **Lactation Rooms**

Three lactation rooms are available at the University of Rochester Medical Center for graduate students to use to express their milk or breastfeed their child. One room is available on the ground floor in the School of Medicine and Dentistry, room G-7815. This room requires a pass code that may be obtained from Student Services in room G-7644. A second room (the Pumping Place) can be used by calling 275-4058 to obtain swipe access to the room. This room, which is available 24/7, can accommodate four women at the same time. There are lounge chairs, breast pumps, lockers and a refrigerator for women to store their milk if they care to. The room is located near the green elevators, on the first floor, 1-2226. The third lactation room (The Pumping Place II) is available in Helen Wood Hall, room 1W.125. The Pumping Place II operates on a first-come, first-served basis.

Two lactation rooms are available on the University of Rochester River Campus for graduate students to use to express their milk or breastfeed their child. One room is on the fourth floor of Dewey Hall, room 4-311. The second room is on the second floor of Wallis Hall, room 255, and is available from 6:30AM to 6PM Monday-Friday. Both rooms operate on a first come, first served basis and are equipped with a chair with integral tablet and a cup holder.

## **Family Counseling**

The [University Counseling Center \(UCC\)](#) provides individual and couples therapy and yearlong group therapy to members of the University of Rochester community who pay the mandatory student health fee. Support is available for those looking to manage the changes in their lives that occur with the birth or adoption of a child.

### **C. Leave of Absence**

A student who has not completed all course and credit requirements for a degree may request a leave of absence from the program. Approval must be obtained from both the PWD Graduate program Co-Directors and the Graduate Education

and Postdoctoral Affairs office. The leave will ordinarily be limited to one year. Students must register for PTH 985--Leave of Absence--each semester and pay a small fee. Note that leave of absence does not count toward the degree time limit.

#### **D. International Students**

The International Services Office (ISO), 209 Morey Hall (585-275-2866) provides information and services for all international students. Advisors are available to answer questions. This should be the first place to contact if there are any questions about immigration regulations and available resources for international students. All international students on any type of visa are urged to subscribe to the ISO Newsletter <http://www.iso.rochester.edu/news.htm> for updates on Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) procedures.

#### **E. Stipends**

All PhD students receive full tuition benefits and a stipend. The stipend is set by the Office of Graduate Education and reviewed annually. Adjustment to the stipend level is considered on an annual basis to allow for inflation and maintain University of Rochester program competitiveness. The Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office funds student stipends for the first 12 months of a student's enrollment. At the end of this period, the student has chosen a PhD thesis research lab and the stipend is the responsibility of the mentor through extramural research funding or training grants.

#### **F. Health Insurance**

**Along with the stipend, full funding is provided for an individual or single health** insurance policy that is administered through University Health Services (UHS).