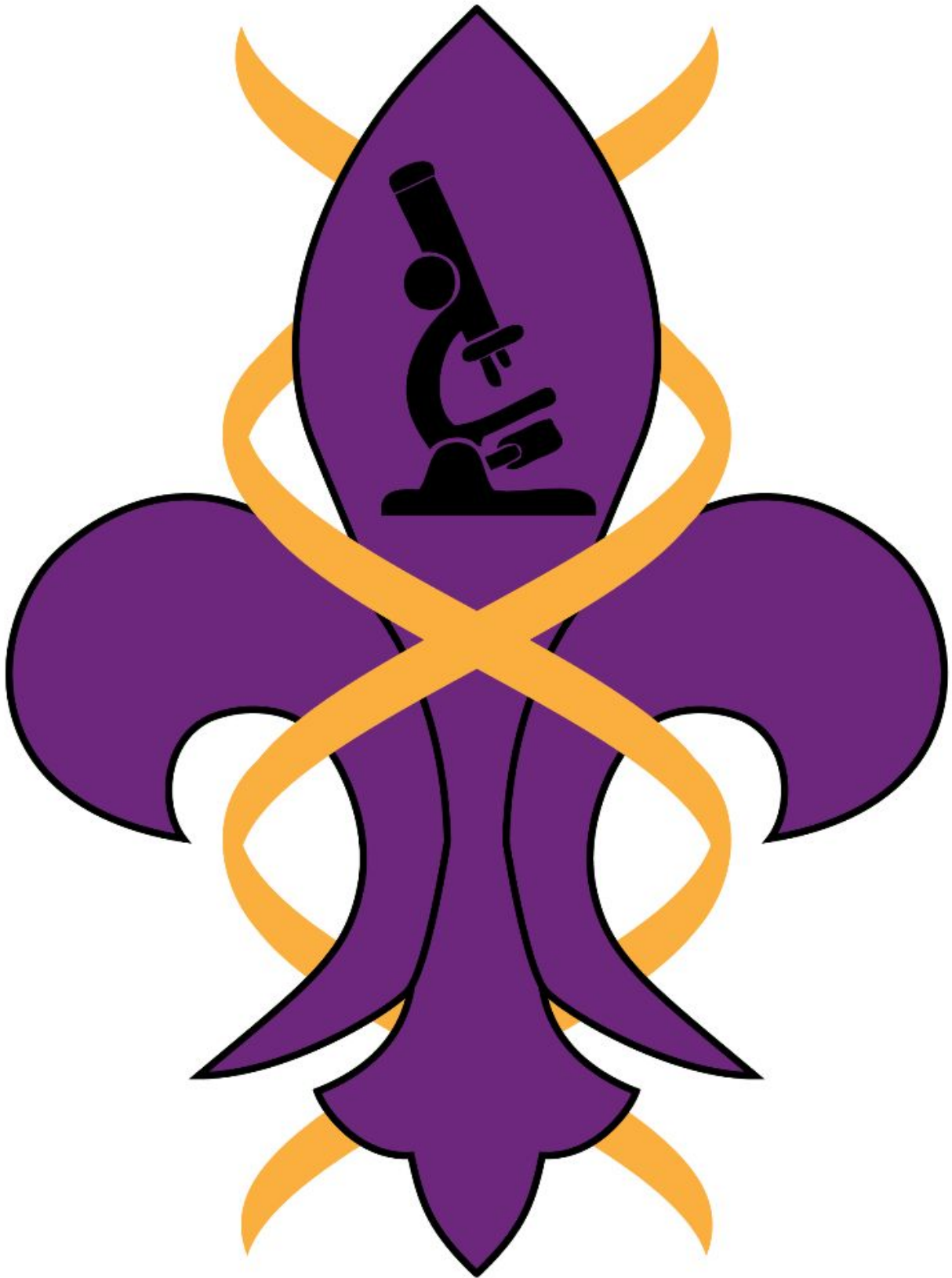


Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology Graduate  
Student Manual



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## DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY, IMMUNOLOGY, AND PARASITOLOGY

## Outline of Graduate Student Requirements

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4/5
<b>Coursework</b>	+	+		
<b>Rotations</b>	+			
<b>Seminar</b>	+	+	+	+
<b>Analysis of Res. Lit/ Journal Club</b>	+	+	+	+
<b>Dissertation Research</b>	+	+	+	+
<b>Dissertation Committee Selection</b>		+		
<b>Dissertation Committee Meetings</b>		+	+	+
<b>Qualifying Exam</b>		+		
<b>Preliminary Exam</b>			+	
<b>Final Examination</b>				+

**A. COURSE WORK****YEAR 1:****FALL**

INTER 111	Biochemistry
INTER 121	Cell Biology
INTER 122	Molecular Genetic Mechanisms
MICRO 224	Introduction to Microbial Pathogenesis
MICRO 228	Lab Rotations in Microbiology
MICRO 229	Analysis of Research Literature
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology

**SPRING**

INTER 123	Control of Gene Expression
MICRO 222	Medical Immunology
MICRO 225	Advanced Medical Bacteriology
MICRO 231	Mol Biol Eukaryotic Pathogens
MICRO 276	Gen & Molecular Virology
MICRO 296	Fundamentals in Immunology
MICRO 228	Lab Rotations in Microbiology
MICRO 229	Analysis of Research Literature
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology

**SUMMER**

MICRO 300	Thesis Research
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**YEAR 2****FALL**

MICRO 225	Advanced Microbial Pathogenesis
MICRO 229	Analysis of Research Literature
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology
INTER 220	Ethics in Biomedical Sciences

**SPRING**

MICRO 229	Analysis of Research Literature
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology
INTER 260	Responsible Conduct in Research (or in summer)

More detailed explanations of coursework requirements and sample curricula for registration are shown in **Appendices 1 and 2**.

Students must complete at least 60 credits; 30 credits graded. Students can receive a maximum of 15 credits for thesis research (MICRO 300/400) and 4 credits for Seminar in Microbiology (MICRO 298).

**B. ASSESSMENT**

**Coursework Assessment:** Students may be dismissed from the program if:

- Their grade point average is below 3.0 at the end of any semester
- They receive two grades below 'B'

**Additional Assessments:**

- In addition to coursework, students will be assessed during lab rotations, seminars, journal clubs, biannual committee meetings, and qualifying and preliminary examinations. These assessments will document research abilities, critical thinking and work ethic.
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in any of these areas, in the view of the mentor, may be grounds for dismissal. If this situation arises, it will be discussed first with the Department Head.

**C. LABORATORY ROTATIONS****Year 1**

During the first year students will participate in three lab rotations each of approximately 11 weeks duration:

- September – Mid-November
- Mid November – mid February
- Mid February - May
- Specific dates will be set each year

**Minimal Expectations of Students During Rotation**

- 20+ hours a week for rotation, including after hours and weekends as necessary
- Students must respect the schedule arranged for them by their rotation supervisor
- Written reports from the rotation supervisor will be required at the commencement and conclusion of each rotation on forms provided.
  - When the student enters the laboratory, the mentor and student will agree on and complete "Rotation Form I" describing reasonable goals for the rotation. (See **Appendix 5**). The form will then be submitted to mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu.

- At end of the rotation: the mentor and student will agree on accomplishments and techniques achieved by the student and to what level the goals were reached.
- At end of the rotation: the mentor will complete "Rotation Form II" and submit this to [mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu). The form will be placed in the student file.
- Students will receive grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory for each rotation.
- Students can be dismissed from the program due to unsatisfactory performance in lab rotations.
- Students will finalize a lab/mentor for their PhD study before June 1 in their first year.
- Students will work full time on their dissertation project during the summer between year 1 and 2.

## **D. COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **YEAR 2**

#### **DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

- At the beginning of the second year of graduate study, the student and mentor will select a Dissertation Committee.
- The membership of the committee must be approved by the Department Head.
- The Committee will comprise at least 5 members including:
  - LSUHSC-MIP Graduate Faculty including mentor ..... at least 3
  - Graduate faculty non-MIP and/or Graduate faculty external to LSUHSC ..... at least 1
- The completed dissertation committee form is submitted to [mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu) (see **Appendix 6**).

#### **Initial committee meeting**

- A good time to schedule the first meeting is for directly following the student's initial departmental seminar (this is not always possible).
- At this meeting, the committee will elect a chairperson (not the mentor but preferably a MIP faculty member), who is responsible for the conduct of committee meetings and oversees preparation of meeting reports.
- Meetings should occur, at a minimum, every 6 months.
- The student must provide a report to all committee members **at least 3 days before** the committee meeting.\*
- As soon as possible following the meeting, a report will be prepared by the committee.\*\* This will be submitted to [mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu) for student records and a copy will be sent to the student and the mentor.

#### **\* Written requirements of student prior to meeting:**

- "a 'specific aims-style' document of one page in length, including a short introduction of the subject area; the significance of project, and the specific aims of project. This document should be in NIH style, but can be less formal, e.g. bullet form.
- a 1 to 2-page progress report describing the work accomplished since the previous meeting. This must address each of the 6-month goals stated in the previous committee report and should NOT be replaced by a copy of any powerpoint/seminar presentation.
- goals for the next 6-month period.

#### **\*\* Written assessment by the committee after meeting** - as soon as possible **after each committee meeting**, a report will be prepared by the committee and should include assessment of:

- the level of understanding of the project and related methods as reflected by the ability of the student to present and discuss all aspects of the work.

- satisfactory completion of 6-month goals (or appropriate effort made).
- goals and expectations for the next 6-month period.
- the potential of the work for publication.

The preparation of the committee report is coordinated by the committee chair. The final content, which may be discussed with the student and mentor, is agreed to by committee members. The report should be completed as soon as possible after the committee meeting and emailed to the student, the mentor and to: [mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu)

## **YEARS 2 – 5**

- Committee meetings should occur at least every 6 months.
- Written requirements of the student prior to each meeting are as above.
- Written assessments by the committee are as above.

**If the committee believes that the student is not making appropriate effort towards the defined 6-month goals at two consecutive committee meetings, then this may represent sufficient reason for dismissal of the student from the program. If this situation arises, it will be discussed first with the Department Head.**

## **E. SEMINAR/JOURNAL CLUB**

### **ALL YEARS**

#### **Seminar**

- **Attendance at all MIP departmental seminars and dissertation defense seminars is mandatory for all MIP graduate students.**
- Each student is required to present work in progress at the departmental seminar series once during each calendar year of enrollment.
  - Year 1 students will present work from a rotation.
- Critiques of the seminar will be written by two grad students in MIP and given to the mentor. The mentor should discuss the critiques with the student.
- Dissertation committee meetings should ideally be scheduled for immediately after the seminar.
- The Dissertation committee meeting will include discussion of the seminar presentation with the student.

#### **Journal Club**

- All students are required to attend and participate in the *Analysis of Research Literature* course (MICRO 229) in every semester that it is offered throughout their PhD studies. This course comprises journal club presentations and discussion.
- Students are also encouraged to participate in a 'discipline-based' journal club within the department if not engaged in this activity during regular meetings of their own laboratory.
- Participation in Analysis of Research Literature course and Journal clubs will be discussed at dissertation committee meetings.

## **F. QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

### **YEAR 2**

- Students will take the qualifying exam before the end of year 2. The qualifying exam and instructions are described in detail in **Appendix 3**.



- At the completion of the oral examination, the Qualifying Examination Committee will discuss student performance and determine if the student passed or failed.
- If the student passes, they receive approval to continue with their Ph.D. research project.
- If the student fails, the committee may provide the option to retake the exam. If the committee does not provide the option to retake the exam, the student may continue in the program to obtain a MS degree (Masters in Biomedical Science). The option to re-take the exam after the completion of a MS degree may be provided after further discussion with the mentor, department head, and committee.

## **G. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**

### **YEAR 3**

- According to Graduate School policy, the student must pass the preliminary exam at least one academic year (3 consecutive semesters) before the final defense examination.
- Students are required to take the preliminary exam by the end of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- The preliminary exam and instructions are described in more detail in **Appendix 4**
- A completed, typed 'REQUEST FOR PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FORM' should be sent to the Graduate School at least 2 weeks prior to the examination date.
- A report of the outcome of the preliminary exam is written up by the Committee Chair, distributed to committee members for comment, and the final draft then sent to [mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu) and filed in the student records.
- A completed 'REPORT OF PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FORM' must be sent to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies following completion of the committee's recommendation.

### **YEAR 4**

- Register for MICRO 299 (Grant Proposal in Microbiology) in the semester after the preliminary examination is completed.

## **H. MANUSCRIPTS**

### **YEARS 3-5**

- Outlines of manuscripts to be submitted for publication should be discussed at committee meetings.
- It is desirable that a manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed journal and pertaining to dissertation work is in draft form (or submitted) by the time of the preliminary examination.
- Acceptance for publication of a minimum of one manuscript pertaining to the dissertation work in a peer-reviewed journal is required for graduation.
- Exceptions are possible with the permission of the Department Head. These include:
  - Manuscript submission delayed by patent application.
  - Article submitted and reviewed, but requires revision.
  - In such instances, the student must submit a draft manuscript to the dissertation committee.

## **I. FINAL EXAMINATION**

### **YEAR 4/5**

- Guidelines for writing the dissertation can be found at:  
<http://graduatestudies.lsuhs.edu/DissertationGuidelines.pdf>
- A completed 'REQUEST FOR DISSERTATION DEFENSE FORM' and a copy of the Dissertation Abstract must be received by the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense date.

- Copies of the Dissertation must also be circulated to the examination committee at least two weeks prior to the defense date.
- A seminar on the contents of the dissertation (public defense) will be presented at the time of the dissertation defense.
- The seminar must be publicized at least two weeks prior to the examination date with scheduled time and location.
- The committee will conduct the exam based on the contents of the dissertation and matters pertaining to the dissertation and will then decide by vote if the student passes or fails.

## MIP GRADUATE STUDENT CHECKLIST

### YEAR 1: SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- Complete course work and maintain  $\geq 3.0$  average
- Complete 3–4 lab rotations with satisfactory review from faculty
- Choose a laboratory for PhD research program
- Present a MIP seminar based on work in progress
- **FORM CHECKLIST for Student Record folders**
  - Lab rotation I Part I and Part II
  - Lab rotation II Part I and Part II
  - Lab rotation III Part I and Part II
  - Lab rotation IV Part I and Part II (optional)
  - Seminar critique
  - Selection of mentor

### YEAR 2: SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- Complete course work and maintain  $\geq 3.0$  average
- Finalize Dissertation committee
- Pass qualifying exam
- Presentation of seminar in MIP
- Presentation at MIP journal club
- Commence committee meetings
- **FORM CHECKLIST for Student Record folder**
  - Dissertation committee member list
  - Report/ summary of qualifying exam by qualifying committee chair
  - Report of 1<sup>st</sup> committee meeting
  - Seminar critique

### YEAR 3: SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- Dissertation Committee meeting at least once every 6 months
- Preliminary examination
- Presentation of seminar in MIP
- Presentation at MIP journal club
- **FORM CHECKLIST for Student Record Folder**
  - Summary report of result of preliminary exam by mentor for committee and student
  - Report of committee meeting year 3 (1)
  - Report of committee meeting year 3 (2)
  - Seminar critique
- **FORM CHECKLIST for School of Graduate Studies**
  - Request for exam form two weeks before exam
  - Report of Preliminary examination signed by committee

## YEARS 4/5: SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- Dissertation Committee meeting at least once every 6 months
- Presentation of seminar in MIP each year
- Presentation at MIP journal club each year
- Submission of at least one manuscript to peer reviewed journal
- **FORM CHECKLIST for Student's Record Folder**
  - Report of committee meeting year 4 (1)
  - Report of committee meeting year 4 (2)
  - Report of committee meeting year 5 (1)
  - Report of committee meeting year 5 (2)
  - Seminar critique year 4
  - Seminar critique year 5
- **FORM CHECKLIST for DISSERTATION DEFENSE**
  - Request for Dissertation Defense and Abstract to School of Graduate Studies two weeks prior to defense
  - Dissertation Seminar Title, location publicly advertized school-wide two weeks prior to defense
  - Dissertation distributed to committee two weeks prior to defense
  - Dissertation completion (pass) paperwork submitted to School of Graduate Studies;
  - Submit corrected dissertation to School of Graduate Studies

**APPENDIX 1: Course Requirements and Sample Curriculum – MIP PhD students**

Course Title	Course Number	Number of Credits	Graded	Additional Notes
Biochemistry	INTER 111	4	4	
Cell Biology	INTER 121	3	3	
Molecular Genetic Mechanisms	INTER 122	2	2	
Control of Gene Expression	INTER 123	2	2	
Ethics in Biomedical Sciences	INTER 220	1		
Responsible Conduct in Research	INTER 260	1		
Laboratory Rotations in Microbiology	MICRO 228	5		A minimum of 2 credits per first two semesters are required
Intro to Microbial Pathogenesis	MICRO 224	3	3	Minimum grade of B is required
Medical Immunology	MICRO 222	2	2	4 credits of Immunology are required; Minimum grade of B is required
Fundamentals in Immunology	MICRO 296	2	2	
Advanced Medical Bacteriology	MICRO 225	2	2	6 credits are required from any combination of these 3 courses; Minimum grade of B is required
Mol Biol Pathogenic Eukaryotes	MICRO 231	2	2	
General and Molecular Virology	MICRO 276	2	2	
Advanced Microbial Pathogenesis	MICRO 250	3	3	Minimum grade of B is required
Selected Topics in Microbiology†	MICRO 281	0-3	0-3	At least 3 <u>graded</u> credits from these are required.
Research Proposal in Microbiology†	MICRO 299	3	3	
Approved Electives		0-3	0-3	
Seminar in Microbiology	MICRO 298	4		Only 4 credits go toward graduation; students must attend every semester
Analysis of Research Literature	MICRO 229	4		Up to 4 credits are possible; students must attend every semester
Thesis and Dissertation Research	MICRO 300 and 400	15		Only 15 credits go toward graduation
		<b>60-66*</b>	<b>30-36†</b>	

\* In some years a Special Topics course may not be offered.

† Selected Topics and Research Proposal may be offered as graded or pass/fail.

## SAMPLE CURRICULUM FOR REGISTRATION FOR MIP GRADUATE PROGRAM (Ph.D.)

**Fall – year 1 (14 credits; 12 credits letter grade)**

INTER 111	Biochemistry	4 credits	Grade
INTER 121	Cell Biology	3 credits	Grade
INTER 122	Molecular Genetic Mechanisms	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 224	Introduction to Microbial Pathogenesis	3 credits	Grade
MICRO 228	Laboratory Rotations	2 credits	Pass/Fail

**Satisfactory progress:** GPA  $\geq$  3.0; >B in MICRO 224 and satisfactory review from laboratory rotation

**Spring – year 1 (14 credits; 12 credits letter grade)**

INTER 123	Control of Gene Expression	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 231	Mol Biol Eukaryotic Pathogens	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 225	Advanced Medical Bacteriology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 276	Gen & Molecular Virology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 222	Medical Immunology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 296	Fundamentals in Immunology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 228	Lab Rotations in Microbiology	2 credits	Pass/Fail

**Satisfactory progress:** GPA  $\geq$  3.0;  $\geq$  B in MICRO courses and satisfactory reviews from laboratory rotations

**Summer –year 1 (6 credits;)**

MICRO 300	Thesis research	6 credits	Pass/Fail
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**Fall – year 2 (9 credits; 3 credits letter grade)**

MICRO 225	Advanced Microbial Pathogenesis	3 credits	Grade
INTER 220	Ethics in Biomedical Sciences	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 299	Analysis of Research Literature	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 300	Thesis Research	4 credits	Pass/Fail

**Satisfactory progress:** GPA  $\geq$  3.0; and satisfactory progress in research laboratory

**Students must select a graduate research committee****Spring - year 2 (9 credits)**

INTER 260	Responsible Conduct in Research	1 credits	Pass/Fail
MICRO 229	Analysis of Research Literature	1 credit	Pass/ Fail
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 300	Thesis research	6 credits	Pass/Fail

**Summer- year 2 (6 credits)**

MICRO 300	Thesis research	1-6 credits	Pass/Fail
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Students must take the Qualifying Examination by the end of their second year of Graduate Studies.

Satisfactory progress: GPA  $\geq$  3.0; passing the Qualifying Examination, and demonstration of successful progress as determined at committee meetings.

In subsequent years, students will register for 9 credits / semester. They will be required to participate in MIP seminar and Analysis of Research Literature every semester.

**APPENDIX 2: Course Requirements and Sample Curriculum – IDP & MD/PhD students**

Course Title	Course Number	Number of Credits	Graded	Additional Notes
Ethics in Biomedical Sciences	INTER 220	1		
Responsible Conduct in Research	INTER 260	1		
Intro to Microbial Pathogenesis	MICRO 224	3	3	Minimum grade of B is required
Medical Immunology*	MICRO 222	2	2	4 credits of Immunology are required; Minimum grade of B is required
Fundamentals in Immunology	MICRO 296	2	2	
Advanced Medical Bacteriology	MICRO 225	2	2	
Mol Biol Pathogenic Eukaryotes	MICRO 231	2	2	6 credits are required from any combination of these 3 courses; Minimum grade of B is required
General and Molecular Virology	MICRO 276	2	2	
Advanced Microbial Pathogenesis	MICRO 250	3	3	Minimum grade of B is required
Selected Topics in Microbiology†	MICRO 281	0-3	0-3	At least 3 <u>graded</u> credits from these are required.
Research Proposal in Microbiology†	MICRO 299	3	3	
Approved Electives		0-3	0-3	
Seminar in Microbiology	MICRO 298	4		Only 4 credits go toward graduation; students must attend every semester
Analysis of Research Literature	MICRO 229	4		Up to 4 credits are possible; students must attend every semester
Thesis and Dissertation Research	MICRO 300 and 400	15		Only 15 credits go toward graduation (6 credits MICRO 300; 9 credits MICRO 400)
<b>IDP Students</b>		<b>41-47</b>	<b>19-25</b>	
<b>MD PhD Students</b>		<b>39-45</b>	<b>17-23</b>	

\* MD PhD students do not take Medical Immunology

† Selected Topics and Research Proposal may be offered as graded or pass/fail.

## SAMPLE CURRICULUM FOR REGISTRATION FOR MIP GRADUATE PROGRAM (M.D/Ph.D.)

**Summer –year 1 (6 credits;)**

MICRO 300	Thesis research	6 credits	Pass/Fail
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**Fall – year 1 (9 credits; 1 credits letter grade)**

I INTER 220	Ethics in Biomedical Sciences	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 224	Introduction to Microbial Pathogenesis	3 credits	Grade
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 300	Thesis Research	4 credits	Pass/Fail

**Satisfactory progress:** GPA  $\geq$  3.0; >B in MICRO 224 and satisfactory progress in research laboratory

**Spring – year 1 (9 credits; 8 credits letter grade)**

MICRO 231	Mol Biol Eukaryotic Pathogens	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 225	Advanced Medical Bacteriology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 276	Gen & Molecular Virology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 296	Fundamentals in Immunology	2 credits	Grade
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology	1 credit	Pass/Fail

**Satisfactory progress:** GPA  $\geq$  3.0;  $\geq$  B in MICRO courses and satisfactory progress in research laboratory

**Students must select a graduate research committee****Summer –year 2 (6 credits;)**

MICRO 300	Thesis research	6 credits	Pass/Fail
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**Fall – year 2 (9 credits; 3 credits letter grade)**

MICRO 225	Advanced Microbial Pathogenesis	3 credits	Grade
INTER 260	Responsible Conduct in Research	1 credits	Pass/Fail
MICRO 299	Analysis of Research Literature	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 298	Seminar in Microbiology	1 credit	Pass/Fail
MICRO 300	Thesis Research	3 credits	Pass/Fail

**Satisfactory progress:** GPA  $\geq$  3.0; and satisfactory progress in research laboratory

**Spring - year 2 (9 credits)**

INTER 260	Responsible Conduct in Research	1 credits	Pass/Fail
MICRO 229	Analysis of Research Literature	1 credit	Pass/ Fail
MICRO 400	Thesis research	7 credits	Pass/Fail

**Summer- year 3 (6 credits)**

MICRO 400	Thesis research	1-6 credits	Pass/Fail
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Students must take the Qualifying Examination by the end of their second year of Graduate Studies.

Satisfactory progress: GPA  $\geq$  3.0; passing the Qualifying Examination, and demonstration of successful progress as determined at committee meetings.

In subsequent years, students will register for 9 credits / semester. They will be required to participate in MIP seminar and Analysis of Research Literature every semester.



**APPENDIX 3: QUALIFYING EXAM INSTRUCTIONS**

The qualifying exam will consist of two parts. Part A will consist of 4 questions given over 4 half days. Part B will be an oral defense of the student's answers to Part A within 2 weeks of completion of Part A. The exam must be completed by the conclusion of the summer semester of the second year.

**Part A. The questions:**

1. The qualifying committee will prepare 4 questions per student. These will come from general areas covered in the required course work: Virology, Immunology, Medical Bacteriology, Molecular Biology/Eukaryotic Pathogens.
2. Over 4 days the student will be given one question each day and have 4 hours to respond to it. The student will have full access to books, journals and the internet. This portion of the exam is OPEN BOOK. However, students may not solicit help from elsewhere.

**PART A. Evaluation:**

1. Each response will be read by two committee members.
2. The qualifying committee member who wrote the question will read and critique the response. The critique can be written on a separate page or written legibly in the margins of the student's response.
3. The second committee member will act as a reader and will complete a separate shorter review.
4. Written critiques must be received no later than 1 week prior to oral examination.
5. No committee member will be responsible for the primary critique for more than one question per student.
6. A committee member will not be responsible for the critiques if they are the student's mentor.
7. The chair of the committee will be responsible for assigning primary and reader (unless he/she is the student's mentor; in which case another committee member will act as chair).

**PART B. Oral portion.**

1. This portion of the exam must be taken within 2 weeks of completion of Part A.
2. This portion of the exam will last no longer than 4 hours and will consist of the student's oral defense of their response and/or changes in their response based on critiques.
3. The mentor of the student will be present but cannot participate either verbally or otherwise.
4. The committee will ask questions in reference to the original question in which the student will have to orally defend their original response – or defend changes in response based on the critique.

**PART B. Evaluation:**

1. The qualifying committee members will evaluate the student's performance and determine if the student passed or failed via discussion.
  - a. The mentor does not generally participate in the final outcome but may clarify matters concerning the student.
  - b. In the unlikely event that the committee does not come to an agreement, the matter will be discussed with the Head of the Department.
2. If the student passes, they become a Ph.D. candidate.
  - a. The committee may ask the student to rewrite an answer to confirm that the student understands the nature of critiques raised during oral portion of exam.
3. If the student fails :
  - a. They may be given the option to retake the exam. This may occur if the committee feels the student for some reason did not perform to their best ability or there were extenuating circumstances.
  - b. If the student is not given the option to retake the exam, they may be given the option to obtain a MS degree.

## **APPENDIX 4: PRELIMINARY EXAM INSTRUCTIONS**

### LOGISTICS

- The preliminary examination should be taken before the end of the third year of graduate studies. The focus of the examination is on a proposal written by the student and based on his/her dissertation project (see format below).
- The student will arrange a time and date with the committee. A DOODLE poll is recommended and a reservation for at least three hours is suggested. Once the exam is scheduled, the student should reserve a conference room.
- Note also that the preliminary exam must be passed at least one academic year (ie. 3 consecutive semesters) before graduation.
- The research proposal must be circulated to the Dissertation Committee at least two weeks prior to the examination date.
- The completed, typed REQUEST FOR PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FORM should be sent to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the examination date.

### FORMAT

- The proposal is to be presented **in NIH RO1 grant format: Specific Aims; Abstract; Research Plan (no longer than 12 pages); Vertebrate Animals (if necessary), Human Subjects (if necessary) and References.**
  - Description of experiments and sub-aims already completed should be included, either as preliminary results within the description of an Aim in the Research Plan, or (if an Aim is essentially completed) as a progress report.
  - If the student already has a publication directly related to the proposed thesis work, this can be included as an addendum.
- The Specific Aims page can be viewed and edited by the mentor. The mentor can also view and provide feedback on an outline of the Research Plan. However, the mentor should not extensively edit drafts of the Research Plan, since this is a part of the preliminary exam that is graded.
- If the committee believes that the submitted proposal is incomplete or otherwise unsatisfactory, then the preliminary examination should be postponed. The committee chair must write a memo stating why the proposal is unsatisfactory and outline how it should be revised.
- Examples of RO1 format grants and suggestions for formulating can be found at the following website: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/researchfunding/grant/pages/appsamples.aspx>

### EXAM

- The student should prepare a Powerpoint presentation that includes Specific Aims, the major points of the proposal, and key data.
- The major focus of the exam will be the written proposal.
- The student may be questioned on any area of microbiology and related fields.
- The projected goals will normally be discussed.
- The results of the Preliminary Examination will be determined by a vote of the committee as follows:

- Pass - student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree.
- Fail - two dissenting votes constitutes a basis for failure. The committee will discuss the following options.
  - Failure – no re-examination. The student will have an option to complete a Masters Degree.
  - Failure – re-examination. This should generally take place within six months of the first Preliminary Exam. The committee will decide on the format:
    - The student may be asked to rewrite the entire proposal, or particular sections, prior to the oral examination.
    - The student may be asked to write a progress report prior to an oral examination.
- A FOLLOW UP REPORT OF PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FORM (typed) must be signed by all committee members and the Department Head and sent to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.
- The committee chair will write a summary of the preliminary examination and submit to mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu
- The student should register for course credit (Microbiology 299, 3 hours credit) for this proposal **in the semester after** passing the exam
  - The highest grade that the student can obtain for the course in the event of a re-write and/or re-examination is a 'B'.