EMORY | LANEY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Graduate Program

Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (MMG)

Graduate Program Requirements and Guidelines

2026-2027

Revised: Sum. 2026

Status of this Handbook

This Handbook provides an official statement of the academic policies and processes associated with the MMG PhD program. Students in the program are also subject to the policies and procedures of the Laney Graduate School Student Handbook and the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences Handbook. When there is a conflict between the MMG Handbook or the GDBBS Handbook and the LGS Handbook, the LGS policy will prevail, unless the LGS Handbook allows for an exception at the level of the MMG program. In addition, MMG students are subject to Emory University policies that apply to all Emory University students or to all Emory University community members (e.g., the Open Expression Policy). Should there be a conflict between the MMG Handbook or the LGS Handbook and a University policy, the University policy will prevail unless the University policy provides an exception at the level of the Laney Graduate School or the program.

Consistent with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between Emory University and SEIU/EmoryUnite! MMG program students are generally members of the bargaining unit when they are enrolled in LGS. As members of the bargaining unit, and consistent with all other provisions of the CBA, AAS students are available to be assigned to bargaining unit positions. These positions involve work in the form of teaching or research service. Bargaining unit members are also eligible for all benefits provided to them by the CBA, limited by any exceptions provided in the CBA itself.

Should there be a conflict between this Handbook and the CBA regarding the terms and conditions of work, the CBA shall prevail. The CBA itself is the authoritative source for relevant terms and conditions of employment. A non-inclusive list of the employment topics covered by the CBA include stipend amounts and conditions; all benefits including health insurance, hardship and other funds, professional development funds, vacation and leave policies; the process for appointment a bargaining unit member to a bargaining unit position; workload and work hour rules; workplace safety and workspace provisions; and the grievance and arbitration procedure, again among other issues.

If you have any questions about which policy applies, please contact Senior Associate Dean Jeffrey Staton at jeffrey.staton@emory.edu, and copy the director of your program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MMG Leadership **4**

Goal of the Program **5**

Organization **5**

Election Procedures for Faculty **6**

Election Procedures for Students **6**

Course Requirements **6**

Fall Semester Year 1 6

Spring Semester Year 1 7

Summer Semester Year 1 7

Elective Courses 9

Summer Semester Year 2 9

Directed Study 9

Elective Options 9

MD/PhD Requirements **10**

Fall of G1 Year 10

Spring of G1 Year 10

Seminars, Journal Clubs, and Research Clubs **10**

Laboratory Rotations **11**

Rotation/Advisors 12

Advisors **12**

Choosing an Advisor **13**

Forming Your Dissertation Committee **14**

Qualifying Examination **14**

MMG Dissertation Research Proposal **16**

Admission to Candidacy **17**

Dissertation Committee Meetings **17**

Navigating Graduate School **19**

Dissertation and Final Defense **20**

Master's Thesis **22**

Review of Student Progress **22**

GDBBS Policy 13. Students in Academic Difficulty **23**

Transferring Programs **24**

Attendance at Scientific Meetings **24**

Student Support Services **24**

Accessibility Services **25**
Faculty-Specific Program Policies **25**
Appeals and Grievance Policy **25**
Student Honor Code and Conduct Code **27**

MMG Leadership

Director:	Chris LaRock
Director of Graduate Studies:	Marcin Grabowicz
Head Recruiter:	Chris Neufeldt
Executive Committee:	Rachel Kinsella – Curriculum Chair Bo Liang – At-Large Member Anice Lowen – At-Large Member Lefteris Michailidis – Seminar Director Erin Scherer – At-Large Member Ammar Zafar – Web Advisor Rep
Program Administrator:	Rathan L. Kersey

Goal of the Program

The Program in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (MMG) provides training in the study of microorganisms and the use of microbial models to investigate basic problems in molecular genetics, cell biology, and evolution. Students will take a common curriculum during the first two years. For more advanced training, students will choose among elective courses. In addition to completing this course work, students will undertake an original research project which will form the basis of their dissertation. Research training is offered in bacterial genetics and physiology, microbial development, molecular biology of viruses and bacterial pathogens, mechanisms of bacterial and viral pathogenesis, molecular biology of gene regulation, antimicrobial resistance, and antimicrobial and vaccine development. The program will offer the Ph.D. degree in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics through the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (GDBBS) of the James T. Laney Graduate School (LGS).

Organization

The MMG program is led by a Program Director. The Director is responsible for the overall administration of the program and will assure student performance to the University in the conferring of degrees achieved within the program. The Director will serve with the assistance of an Executive Committee. The Director shall chair the Executive Committee, which includes presenting and overseeing subsequent votes on any program decisions or changes under consideration by the committee. The Program Director may advise the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in student matters, if asked, and may advise the Head Recruiter in recruitment decisions, if asked. S/he shall oversee the appointments of any new faculty members, ensure faculty compliance with program expectations, and oversee the program budget. Finally, the Program Director is the program's liaison to the GDBBS.

The Executive Committee:

- Evaluates the credentials of prospective faculty members and decides on offers of positions.
- Makes recommendations to the Director regarding the operation of the program and the development of policies within the program.
- Makes recommendations to the Director concerning the curriculum of the program, including the development of new courses for the program.
- Makes recommendations on student issues and needs that arise.

The Executive Committee will meet as often as necessary to handle programmatic issues.

Each position in the Executive Committee will be held for 3 years, except student members who will serve 2-year terms. Members' positions will be up for election on a rotating basis such that multiple positions are up for election each year.

Election Procedures for Faculty

Open positions will be announced on the faculty listserv each spring/summer. Faculty will have one week to nominate themselves or others. At the close of one week, the Program Administrator will announce nominations and share a hidden electronic ballot. Voting will be open for one week. Following section II.C.6 of the GDBBS Handbook, candidates for the positions of Program Director and DGS must be approved by the GDBBS Director and the LGS prior to the opening of balloting. The Program Administrator will oversee the vote, and report results to the Program Director. The Program Director will announce results following the close of the voting week.

Election Procedures for Students

The current Student Representative will solicit candidates from the post-candidacy students at least one month prior to the end of the term. If more than one student is interested, the current student rep will conduct a vote of the current student body using a hidden poll and announce the outcome to the students and Program Administrator following the vote.

The Program Administrator is the point of contact to assist all faculty and students within the program. For more information regarding the specific roles and responsibilities of each Executive Committee position, please contact the Program Administrator.

Course Requirements

The following (or their equivalents) are required of all PhD students in the MMG Program, to be taken in the prescribed order unless otherwise approved by the DGS:

Fall Semester Year 1

IBS 504	Intro Prokaryotic Molecular Genetics	6 credit hours
IBS 590	Becoming a Successful Scientist	3 credit hours
IBS 519R	Statistical Rigor, Reproducibility, and Experimental Design for Biomedical Data Analysis	3 credit hours
MMG 790R	Advanced Graduate Seminar	1 credit hour
MMG 597R	Laboratory Rotations	3 credit hours
****JPE 600**	Jones Program in Ethics	0 credit

****The Jones Program in Ethics (JPE)** is a comprehensive program to educate doctoral students in all disciplines in the ethical pursuit of scholarly research. Training will take place both within interdisciplinary forums and also within the student's graduate program. There are three elements to the program:

1. JPE 600, a one-day core course in scholarly integrity, supported by the Laney Graduate School in collaboration with the Emory Center for Ethics, *will be required of all incoming graduate students.*
2. Program-based training in ethics and the responsible conduct of research takes place within

existing courses. Additionally, MMG and Immunology and Molecular Pathogenesis (IMP) students will attend faculty-led ethics seminars arranged by the MMG and IMP Directors. Six seminars will be presented according to the schedule announced by the Program Administrator. All first- year students are required to attend. This initial series is required for Candidacy eligibility. All fifth-year students are required to attend post- candidacy. Second- and sixth-year students must attend any lectures they missed in the previous year.

3. Students must attend a minimum of four JPE 610 topical public workshops, training sessions, or lectures offered by the graduate school before they graduate. These are not required to reach Candidacy, but students are encouraged to attend them early in their graduate school career. These are announced on the LGS listserv and will appear on the student's transcript as a JPE 610 course.

For more information visit the JPE website.

Spring Semester Year 1

IBS 513	Virology	6 credit hours
MMG 790R	Advanced Graduate Seminar	1 credit hour
MMG 597R	Laboratory Rotations	3 credit hours

Summer Semester Year 1

MMG 699r	Advanced Grad Research	9 credit hours

OR (if additional rotations are required that extend beyond the Spring term; requires DGS approval)

MMG 597r	Laboratory Rotations	9 credit hours

Fall Semester Year 2

MMG 790R	Advanced Graduate Seminar	1 credit hour
IBS 522R	Hypothesis Design and Scientific Writing	4 credit hours
MMG 699R	Advanced Grad Research	8 credit hours
****TATT 600**	Teaching Graduate School Workshop	1 credit hour
****TATT 605**	Teaching Assistantship	2 credit hours

****Teaching Assistant Training and Teaching Opportunity (TATTO)** is an academic degree requirement for all Ph.D. students and is administered by Emory University's Laney Graduate School. The TATTO program provides graduate students with training and teaching experience. It introduces graduate students to teaching in a graduated manner.

The Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences requires students to complete two TATTO Stages (TATTO 600 and 605) within their first and second year in the program:

1. TATTO 600 is a one-credit foundational pedagogy course, taken immediately prior to a student's first teaching experience. The course covers topics such as pedagogical foundations, teaching support resources, teaching tools, the Clery Act and Title IX training,

and Emory's undergraduate Honor. It is offered online in the fall and spring semesters. It must be taken before or currently with TATTO 605.

2. TATTO 605 requires students to serve as a Teaching Assistant (TATTO 605) for at least one semester during their graduate career as part of their academic requirements, usually during the second year. Students must receive feedback from the faculty instructor of record on some aspect of the student's contribution to pedagogy (i.e., content development, classroom teaching, etc.).

    a. A teaching assistantship placement completed without submission of the GDBBS TA Request form may not count towards TATTO 605 credit.

    b. After the deadline to complete the GDBBS TA Request form has passed, PAs will register their students for TATT 605.

    c. At the end of the term, the faculty instructor will complete an evaluation survey noting the quality of the work the Teaching Assistant performed that term. The faculty instructor will note a satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) grade. A grade of U will result in academic probation, and the student will likely have to repeat TATTO 605 and earn a satisfactory grade.

3. TATTO 606 and 610 are **optional,** advanced teaching opportunities. These are not required by GDBBS.

    a. TATTO 606 ('Teaching science: pedagogy & practice') is a science pedagogy course to which students must apply and be accepted. This course provides training in the use of evidence-based practices to teach science. Students first learn about how to design, implement, and assess curriculum and classroom activities through discussion of texts and primary literature. In the second portion of the course, students practice experiential learning by designing and teaching a course to each other. As they are taking this course, students are matched with a Teaching Mentor and serve as a teaching assistant for that teaching mentor.

    b. TATTO 610 is an advanced teaching experience. The course provides structure around an individual mentored teaching experience. The course supports students who are taking on leadership roles in the classroom (for example, by co-teaching a course or leading a discussion section) through scaffolded activities, peer feedback, and observations. After completing this course, students will have experience leading a classroom, designing and implementing undergraduate curriculum, and assessing classroom activities. Additionally, students will have additional materials for their teaching portfolios. This course is designed for PhD students who have completed TATT 605 and TATT 606 and who have a strong interest in teaching. Permission of the Instructor is required for enrollment and dependent upon identification of a mentored teaching experience. In rare circumstances, students can take TATT 610 without having completed TATT 606. To request an exemption for the TATT 606 prerequisite, reach out to the GDBBS Director.

Additional information about the Laney Graduate School's TATTO program is available on the LGS website.

Spring Semester Year 2 **(Please note, this term includes the Qualifying exam.)**

MMG 790R	Advanced Graduate Seminar	1 credit hour
***MMG 699R**	Advanced Grad Research	8 credit hours

*Between course work and Advanced Grad Research a minimum of 9 credit hours are required per semester to remain a full-time student. Register for Advanced Grad Research last to determine how many credit hours will remain in order to fulfill the 9- credit hour requirement.

*****One elective is required, which can be taken in any semester**

Elective Courses

IBS 515	Current Topics in Molecular Genetics	2 credit hours
IBS 542	Concepts of Immunology	4 credit hours
IBS 560	Model Genetic Systems	4 credit hours
MMG 797R	Directed Study (see requirements below)	credit hours vary
IBS 538	Statistical Design and Analysis of Experiments	4 credit hours
IBS 727	Microbial Pathogenesis	3 credit hours
IBS 568	Principles of Anti-Infectives	4 credit hours
IBS 539	Population Dynamics and Community Ecology of the Microbiome	3 credit hours
IBS 777R	Annual Reviews of Immunology	2 credit hours
MMG 797R	Directed Study (see requirements below)	credit hours vary

Summer Semester Year 2

MMG 699r	Advanced Grad Research	9 credit hours

Directed Study

The purpose of Directed Study (MMG 797R) is to allow advanced students, already into their research projects, the opportunity of specialized training in areas not represented by the current courses offered by either our program or other programs. An outline of the directed study must be submitted to the DGS or the curriculum committee for approval prior to registration.

Elective Options

Many MMG students take advantage of courses offered in the LGS public health sciences graduate programs such as Epidemiology and Biostatistics. There are also opportunities to take elective courses at Georgia Tech. For more information, contact the DGS or the Program Administrator. Please note that any courses taken outside of GDBBS ***must*** be approved by the course instructor and the program DGS before a student can enroll. Students must also discuss elective courses

with their advisor to ensure the course will benefit their research and training trajectory.

MD/PhD Requirements

MD-PhD students should email a copy of their Dissertation Advisor Assignment Agreement form to the MMG Program Administrator as soon as they affiliate with a lab but no later than September 1 of their G1 Year. Potential MD/PhD students will discuss joining the program prior to this time and in accordance with the MD/PhD program requirements.

Fall of G1 Year

IBS 504	Intro Prokaryotic Genetics	6 credit hours
IBS 590	Becoming a Successful Scientist	1 credit hours
IBS 790R	Advanced Graduate Seminar	1 credit hours
***MMG 699R**	Advanced Grad Research	5 credit hours
****JPE 600**	Jones Program in Ethics	0 credit hours
*****TATT 600**	Teaching Graduate School Workshop	1 credit hour
*****TATT 605**	Teaching Assistantship	2 credit hours

Spring of G1 Year

IBS 513	Virology	6 credit hours
MMG 790R	Advanced Graduate Seminar	1 credit hours
***MMG 699R**	Advanced Grad Research	credit hours vary
IBS 538	Statistical Design & Analysis of Experiments	4 credit hours

*Between course work and Advanced Grad Research a minimum of 9 credit hours are required per semester to remain a full-time student. Register for Advanced Grad Research last to determine how many credit hours will remain in order to fulfill the 9-credit hour requirement.

See information about the Jones Program in Ethics on page 5.**

See information about TATTO on page 6. While TATT 600 is a Fall class, the Teaching Assistantship (TATT 605) requirement can be completed ***either in Fall ***or*** Spring of your second year.

Seminars, Journal Clubs, and Research Clubs

All students will attend the weekly MMG seminar series (MMG 790R). Each MMG student will present annually in the seminar series. The Seminar Directors and Program Administrator will assist in organizing when students are due to present.

Both attendance and a presentation will be required for a passing grade in MMG 790R. Refer to the MMG 790r syllabus for the attendance policy.

In addition to the MMG seminar series, there are weekly programs of invited speakers for the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, the Emory Vaccine Center, the Graduate Program in Immunology and Molecular Pathogenesis, the Graduate Program in Genetics and Molecular

Biology, the Divisions of Infectious Diseases and Pediatric Infectious Diseases and Grand Rounds at the CDC, all of which often include topics of interest to MMG students. In addition to these seminar series, MMG students typically have access to multiple less formal research/journal clubs.

Laboratory Rotations

There are two major reasons for the rotations: familiarization with a diversity of research topics, techniques and scientific approaches and the selection of the lab in which to perform your dissertation research. A *Laboratory Rotation Agreement Form* must be completed for each rotation.

At the start of the first semester, students attend an Introduction to Faculty Research series in which Program faculty briefly describe their research and lab. These presentations allow students to begin thinking about where they would like to rotate and who they may want on their dissertation committee.

Students are required to perform at least three rotations during the first year and the rotations should follow the dates indicated on the *Laboratory Rotation Agreement Form*. (All forms are available on the MMG website.) Some students may decide to do an additional rotation during the summer after their second semester. If a student is not ready to affiliate with a lab after three rotations, the student should confer with the DGS prior to organizing any summer rotations and dates. Then, they should submit a *Laboratory Rotation Agreement Form* and promptly begin a summer rotation. Dates for the summer rotation should be worked out in consultation with the DGS. Students who are doing exploratory rotations or additional first year rotations are expected to perform continuous research during the semester (including summer). Students should arrange exploratory rotations prior to the conclusion of their current rotation or lab affiliation. If this does not occur, a two-week period (maximum) to initiate the new rotation may be allowed. Students who would like to end a rotation early may do so with the permission of the DGS.

At the conclusion of each rotation, the student submits a brief written report of the research they performed, to their rotation mentor, the DGS, and the Program Administrator. This report should be no more than four pages in length and should include the following components:

1. A brief introduction to the research area
2. A statement of the goal of the rotation project (e.g. to test a given hypothesis, develop a given assay, etc.)
3. A description of the work undertaken toward reaching that goal
4. A report of the results obtained (including figures or tables as appropriate)
5. Conclusions and future directions (future work may outline what work is still needed to fulfill the original goal or what new research directions would follow from the original goal).

In addition to the student reports, the DGS will collect statements from faculty rotation mentors. These statements will indicate how the student met or did not meet expectations and will include a suggested grade. If the grade is less than an “A”, the mentor will need to document where the student was deficient and what steps were made **prior** to the end of the rotation to address the

needed changes. The combination of the student's written report and the mentor's statement will provide the foundation for the rotation grade. Rotations span the full academic year. The first rotation will be during the Fall term, the remaining two will be in the Spring. For the Spring semester, the DGS will average the two rotation grades together to issue a grade.

Rotation/Advisors

Students have the option of doing laboratory rotations with any GDBBS faculty member. With approval from their DGS, they may do a lab rotation with a faculty member who is not a GDBBS faculty member, though the faculty member would need to become a member of a GDBBS program before finalizing an advisor-advisee agreement form. If a student elects to join the lab of a GDBBS faculty member who is not a member of the program in which the student originally enrolled, three options are available to accommodate the student's wishes.

1. The student's proposed advisor can apply to join the student's Program. The application must be approved prior to finalizing the advisor-advisee agreement but does not need to be completed before they do a rotation.
2. A student not on probation can transfer to a graduate program where their proposed advisor holds a training appointment. This can result in changes in required coursework or exam scheduling to meet the requirements of the new Program. See the section (2.11) on transferring to a new program for further information on this process.
3. Upon approval of their Program Director, a student may select a faculty member in a different GDBBS program as their advisor.

Problems concerning issues related to program affiliation and Division status will be resolved on an individual basis at the Division level. Decisions will be based on what is best for the student.

Advisors

During the first-year lab rotation period the DGS serves as the official advisor for all students until the student chooses a dissertation advisor. The DGS meets with the students at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss coursework, rotations, and other first year issues and obligations, and will be available, along with the MMG Student Rep, to help guide students and assist with any problems that might arise.

Within two weeks of completing the 3rd rotation, the student must complete the process of choosing a faculty advisor and proceed to enroll in MMG 699r for the Summer semester. This faculty member becomes the major advisor for the student. A fourth rotation, if needed, may be structured differently (e.g. shorter duration) and can only be undertaken after consultation with the DGS about enrolling in MMG 597r for the Summer semester. Students must choose an advisor by the end of the Summer semester. More than four rotations are not allowed except in extenuating circumstances. Failure to identify a faculty advisor by the end of the Summer semester will result in dismissal from the Program, except under extenuating circumstances. The DGS remains a resource for all MMG students throughout their time in the Program.

The *GDBBS Advisor-Advisee Agreement Form* must be completed and submitted to formalize your advisor agreement. Students should submit a completed form as soon as they are able but not later than one month after the end of their last rotation.

In most cases, a student will complete their dissertation with the advisor they originally selected following rotations. In extenuating circumstances, it may be necessary for a student to switch advisors. Should a student need to change advisors, they should immediately contact their DGS, PA, and the GDBBS Associate Director of Student Affairs for guidance on their options and to form a plan of action.

Note: Students who choose an advisor who holds the status of Affiliate or Adjunct (e.g. CDC, GA Tech) must have a co-advisor who has an Emory University faculty appointment and is a full member of MMG.

Choosing an Advisor

The most important decision a student will make in graduate school is the selection of a research advisor. This relationship will be the foundation of the student's training and future career endeavors and should not be entered into lightly. The Program encourages students and faculty to consider the following before making these agreements:

Is this a positive and enjoyable interpersonal match?
Do we have a clear understanding of how we will communicate? (frequency of one- on-one meetings and lab meetings, expectations at meetings, shared understanding of how lab notebooks are kept, preferred method of communication outside of regularly scheduled meetings i.e.: phone, text, email, pop-in vs. schedule, etc.)
Do we share an enthusiasm for the area of research and proposed project?
For students: Does this faculty member have a positive record of student training?
For faculty: Does this student's mode of and response to learning match my training style?
For students: Do I feel supported by this faculty member?
For faculty: Has this student shown respect for my lab and decisions?
Do I feel confident we can resolve conflicts that will arise?

The LGS Mentoring Guide for students is also a valuable resource in thinking about the type of mentoring relationship you would like.

The laboratory rotations provide the obvious opportunity to consider many of these questions. Additionally, students are encouraged to:

- Read all recent papers from the lab they are considering
- Talk with current students
- Talk with the DGS
- Schedule meetings with potential advisors to discuss questions important to each of you before establishing the relationship

Forming Your Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee (DC) consists of five faculty members, including the advisor; at least three of the faculty members must be members of MMG (Adjunct faculty do not count towards this requirement). The constitution of this committee must be approved by the DGS. To formalize the committee selection, students must submit the *LGS Dissertation Committee Form* following the on-line submission instructions no later than March 15 of Year 2 in conjunction with the Abstract Submission Date (see "Qualifying Examination" info below for more on the Abstract.)

In addition to overseeing the student's general progress on their dissertation work, this committee will oversee the student's qualifying examination. The committee is assembled on behalf of the student. The composition of the DC is determined by the student in consultation with his/her advisor in order to ensure it includes faculty with appropriate research and training backgrounds.

Each committee will have a Committee Lead that is chosen by the student at the time that the committee is assembled. The student should ask the chosen faculty member if they are willing to take on the role of Lead. The Lead is someone other than the advisor or co-advisor and should be above the rank of Assistant Professor. The Committee Lead moderates the DC meeting and is a designated contact for the student to consult should issues between the student and advisor arise. This role is a unique designation for MMG dissertation committee membership and not recognized by the Laney Graduate School. For the LGS Dissertation Committee Form, you should assign your advisor as your committee chair and, if applicable, your co-advisor as your committee co-chair. All other committee members, including your Committee Lead, should be designated as regular Committee Members for LGS purposes.

Qualifying Examination

By the **end of March** in the second year (G1 Year for MD-PhDs), students are expected to have submitted a research proposal to their committee and passed an oral examination based on this research proposal. Any delay in the timing of the exam will require DGS approval. The proposal should be related to their dissertation work and may be the same proposal that the student prepared in IBS 522R Hypothesis Design and Scientific Writing. The research proposal should follow the NIH proposal guidelines (See MMG Dissertation Research Proposal section below for more details). The primary purpose of this examination is to give the students the opportunity to develop an original and significant written scientific proposal and to defend it before a group of scientists who have relevant expertise. Detailed evaluation criteria for each Qualifying Exam grade can be found in the MMG Qualifying Examination Form.

The examination is used as a teaching device and is one of the methods used to follow a student's academic progress. Recommendations for improving a student's progress are expected to result from each examination. In preparation for this milestone:

1) As noted above, students must formalize their dissertation committee by submitting the LGS Dissertation Committee Form by **January 15**. This committee will also be their examining committee.

2) By **February 1** of the second year (G1 Year for MD-PhDs), students must submit to their committee a 200-300 word written abstract that concisely states the problem, an original

testable hypothesis, and an outline of experiments to test the hypothesis. A specific goal of this exercise is to train students to think concisely and to write meaningful short abstracts. The student should also send a copy of the abstract to the DGS.

3) The Examining Committee will consist of the student's Dissertation Committee, minus the advisor. The DGS, or a qualified alternate, will proctor the exam. (Students in the lab of the DGS or for whom the DGS is a member of their committee, will have an alternate DGS, typically a past DGS or the Director.) The advisor will be present for the exam but cannot participate in the examination. Students are responsible for organizing the examination date with the Examining Committee, advisor and DGS (**generally February or March**). The full research proposal **(see section below regarding the Research Proposal)** should be submitted to the Examining Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the oral examination date, along with a copy of the Qualifying Exam Form. Students should contact the Program Administrator for assistance in obtaining a room for the exam, if needed.

4) The day of the exam, the Examining Committee will question the student on the proposal during the oral examination with three rounds of discussion. The first round of questions is aimed at the technical details of the student's proposed research. The second round pursues more fundamental and quantitative areas concerned with the proposition and is oriented toward challenging the student's intellect. The third-round concerns more peripheral areas that test the student's knowledge of big-picture concepts within their field of research. Third round questions may also draw on the content of required MMG courses such as IBS 513 and IBS 504. The student is expected to use the whiteboard/blackboard effectively to present a hypothetical working model and address questions; PowerPoint presentations are not permitted.

5) Immediately after the oral exam, the committee evaluates the student's performance, determines whether a need exists to retake an additional exam and makes written recommendations pertaining to future training on their copy of the *MMG Qualifying Examination Form*. Students are also encouraged to speak with the faculty examiners after receiving their written comments.

6) The final step in the qualifying exam process is for the student to write a summary of specific action items and committee feedback in conjunction with their advisor. This summary statement of the feedback is then approved by signatures from each committee member on the second page of the *Qualifying Exam Form*. Students must submit all pages of the *Qualifying Exam Form* to the Program Administrator **within one week** of the exam to document this Program milestone.

7) Students may receive a "Pass", "Conditional Pass" or "Fail" grade from their examining committee. This determination is based off of a comprehensive assessment of their abstract, written proposal, and oral defense; students should refer to the "*MMG Qualifying Examination*" form on MMG's website for detailed grading criteria. The decision for Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail for each exam component will be decided by a majority vote of the committee. In the event of a tied vote, the student will receive the lower of the voted grades since a significant concern has been noted by half the committee.

a) If a student receives a Conditional Pass the committee will require the student to complete additional work documenting that they have acquired the knowledge necessary for a portion of their exam deemed insufficient. The committee will list a due

date, and the student should ensure they submit the requested materials to the Examining Committee for review and to the Program Administrator for their file. In most cases, with a Conditional Pass, a student will not need to meet with the Examining Committee again as long as they submit what is requested by the due date.

b) If a student receives a Fail on their exam, they will have until the **end of May** to prepare the project, technical, and/or background knowledge the examining committee has identified as insufficient and complete a Qualifying Exam re- take. The committee should clearly note the areas of concern on the *Qualifying Exam Form* and the student should use this to guide their preparations for a re-take exam. The student should arrange a re-take exam date with their examining committee, and submit any written edits needed for their proposal to the committee two weeks prior to the re- take exam date. At the re-take, the student will work through three rounds of questioning just as before. The re-take exam should be documented on a new *MMG Qualifying Exam Form* in the same manner it was for the original exam. The student should submit both sets of *Qualifying Exam Forms* to the Program Administrator within one week of their re-take exam.

A student may receive a Conditional Pass on a re-take, but the committee will need to list a specific remedy for a specific area of deficiency and give a very clear due date for completion of the remedy. In such a situation, the DGS will need to review and approve any Conditional Pass plans given by the committee before they become part of the student's permanent file. If a student does not complete the remedy in the time allowed by the committee, the Conditional Pass will revert to a Fail. If the student completes the remedy in the allotted time, the student may proceed in the Program and will be considered to have a Pass on their re-take. Examples of remedies include re-taking a particular course or reading, discussions with their advisor, writing a review of a particular set of papers, etc.

A student receiving a Fail grade in a re-take exam will be dismissed from the MMG Program.

MMG Dissertation Research Proposal

The proposal should follow standard NIH guidelines for an F31 Proposal and contain a title page (title of your proposal and your name), abstract/summary (no more than 30 lines of text), Specific Aims page, Research Strategy section, and Bibliography/Literature Cited section. Students may use the proposal they prepared in IBS 522r, or they may choose to prepare a new proposal. Either way, the proposal should reflect the work the student and advisor have agreed on as the framework for their dissertation.

The body of the proposal will consist of a Specific Aims page and the Research Strategy.

Specific Aims - ideally two or three major goals of the research project. This should be a brief introduction and hypothesis of the project and two or three explicit aims of the proposal - do not to exceed one page!

Research Strategy – consists of the following sections, not to exceed six pages total.

1. Significance (1-2 pages suggested) – Why is the research important and why should it be funded.
2. Preliminary Results (about 1 page suggested) – This section outlines experimental data that provide the basis for the proposed experiments. Ideally, the students should have some results of their own to present here; however, it is not unusual for students to have little or no solid data at this stage. Therefore, this section can include results from others in the PI's lab, or results from other labs that may be directly relevant to the proposed experiments.
3. Approach – (about 4 pages suggested) This section describes experimental design and methods. It should restate each Specific Aim individually and address rationale and design for the proposed experiments, techniques to be utilized, anticipated or possible results, and pitfalls and alternatives for the proposed studies. The examining committee is likely to focus their oral discussion primarily on this section.

Despite the page limits, the use of models, figures, graphs, tables, or flowcharts is encouraged when appropriate to support, supplement, summarize, or clarify specific topics that are addressed in the text.

There is no page limit to the Literature Cited section.

Admission to Candidacy

All students are required to follow Laney Graduate School requirements for candidacy. Most MMG students will reach candidacy by the end of their second year once they have passed their Qualifying Exam.

To be eligible for candidacy, the student must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete all program requirements for candidacy: coursework and other training required by the degree program, including program required JPE training
2. Complete qualifying examinations required by the degree program
3. Select Dissertation Committee, submit LGS Dissertation Committee Form, and receive approval from LGS
4. Complete TATTO 600, TATTO 605, and JPE 600
5. Resolve any Incomplete (I) or In Progress (IP) grades
6. Be in good standing with a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA
7. Have earned at least 54 credit hours at the 500 level or above

Further details, including penalties for not meeting the LGS deadline, can be found here.

Dissertation Committee Meetings

Committee meetings be held within 6 months of passing the qualifying examination, and at least every 6 months thereafter. All meetings should be held “in-person” (i.e. not remotely), but if necessary to meet then scheduling, one committee member can attend remotely. DGS permission must be obtained in advance for any additional remote attendees. Starting in their seventh year, students must meet with their Dissertation Committee at least every four months. Continuation beyond this will require a detailed timeline for completion within the next year, and approval from the MMG EC, in addition to meeting LGS approval requirements. A special emphasis committee may separately be appointed the MMG EC to review student progress and

adherence to this required timeline.

Failure of a student to hold committee meetings within these required time frames without prior approval from the DGS will result in the student's research grade being penalized to a minimum of C for the current term; the final research grade assigned will reflect the student's work in the research advisor's lab and their compliance in holding their committee meetings within the required time frames. Assignment of a C triggers academic probation. In recognition that extenuating circumstances may delay meetings, students are responsible for notifying their Program DGS before the end of a term of any circumstances that have prevented them from holding their committee meeting within the required time frame. The DGS may grant an exception and not penalize the research grade. The DGS should notify the Division Director of the reason for the exception in writing.

At least one week prior to the committee meeting the student must send all committee members the location of the committee meeting, a pre-filled MMG Dissertation Committee Meeting Form, and a two-page maximum progress report. This report should briefly remind the committee of the aims of the project, summarize the progress made since the last meeting, and summarize the next steps the student intends to take. The objectives of the meeting are:

1. Discuss career development
2. Evaluate the progress of the student
3. Review short-term goals accomplished
4. Evaluate next short-term goals
5. Determine whether student is on track to graduate in a timely manner

At the first meeting of the committee the faculty and student will elect a Committee Lead. At all DC meetings, the student must incorporate the *MMG Dissertation Committee Meeting Slides*. These slides can be inserted wherever the student feels is most appropriate and are designed to ensure discussion about the student's career goals and objectives. Each DC meeting will include a few minutes of focus on IDP-related concepts, i.e., some time to focus on the student's career plans. Each DC meeting report will include a list of succinct goals for the student to accomplish before the next DC meeting. (Students propose the goals and the DC approves or modifies them.) Each DC meeting will include time for the whole DC, including the PI, to meet without the student, in order to discuss progress. Each DC meeting will include a few minutes for the committee minus the PI to meet with the student, to discuss the student-advisor relationship. (NOTE: This is not optional. **Students must confirm on the DC meeting form that the conversation without PI happened.**)

On the *MMG Dissertation Committee Meeting Form*, after each meeting, the student will summarize the comments and feedback given by the committee and develop an action plan in conjunction with their advisor. **Within one week of the meeting**, all committee members must sign off on this summary and action plan on the *MMG Dissertation Committee Meeting Form.*

Within 1 week of the meeting, students must submit their progress report (2 page maximum), presentation slides, and *MMG Dissertation Committee Meeting Form* to the Program Administrator to be maintained in their file. This packet is the documentation of the student's meeting as well as confirmation of the student's adequate progress in the Program.

Please note that students should not provide refreshments for committee meetings.

Navigating Graduate School

MMG provides an environment for scientific training and the development of professional skills, including clear communication, collaboration, and conflict management. When professionals are working closely together on projects, disagreements will arise from time to time. When such disagreements occur, MMG hopes to create a framework for students and their advisors to find a path to work together towards an outcome that is mutually beneficial. MMG recommends faculty and students follow these steps to resolve conflict:

Step 1: Always begin by attempting to resolve the issue amongst yourselves
*Think about the environment, timing, and communication style to set up the conversation for the best possible outcome.

*Use communication that is clear and calm. See the two articles below for some great insight and practical tips on effective communication.

http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2008/06/mastering-your-phd-better-communication- your-supervisor

https://sharepoint.washington.edu/phys/grad/Forms/phd_MentorCommunicationCWD.pdf

Steps 2-4 can happen in any order or concurrently as needed for your situation.

Step 2: Talk to your MMG support team

DGS: The MMG DGS will give you the program perspective on the matter - what the program expects of a faculty member and a graduate student in your specific situation. The DGS can be a sounding board or an advocate depending on your situation. Sometimes it is helpful to bring the DGS into the meeting to mediate the interactions between the advisor and the student.

Program Director: If the DGS is unavailable, you can also see the Program Director for the same support as you would have from the DGS.

Committee Lead: The Committee Lead is a designated faculty member on your Dissertation Committee who can advise you in case of a disagreement with your advisor and act as a mediator when needed. The Committee Lead may be an ideal resource for issues that relate directly to your research, since relevant scientific expertise may be an asset for resolving these concerns.

Program Administrator (applicable to students): The PA is a point of contact to all other resources in your program, the Division, and the University. The PA can act as a sounding board or a safe space to confidentially vent about your situation. The PA can also help you determine if your situation should be conveyed to other supervising entities (i.e. : DGS, GDBBS staff, etc.).

Student Representative (applicable to students): Your student representative can provide peer support and context for your situation. They can help you think through how to communicate with the faculty member, share their own experiences and advice and offer a supportive, listening ear.

Step 3: Utilize the student's committee

If a conflict arises between a student and advisor, the committee can serve as advocates for both the student and the advisor- depending on the situation. When used well, they can be an effective team for navigating disagreements and developing beneficial solutions. They are often the group most well versed with the science AND the personalities of the advisor and student. Both students and advisors should be able to contact members of the committee for feedback on the situation. Ask them how they would resolve it. If necessary, schedule a committee meeting. Ultimately, the committee has the responsibility of advising the student towards dissertation and defense and can intervene when either the student or advisor is making choices detrimental to this final goal.

Step 4: Utilize GDBBS staff

Contact the Associate Director of Student Affairs, Emily Neutens. She has a wealth of experience on behalf of faculty and students. She is a fantastic listener and well versed in the resources on campus as well as the Graduate School policies and Division policies that may pertain to your situation.

Finally, here are a few additional resources for faculty and students that can help maximize the mentoring relationship:

http://www.icre.pitt.edu/mentoring/challenges_solutions.html

http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/education/schools/school-of- medicine/faculty/mentoring/mentoring-best-practices/index.cfm

http://www.emory.edu/CAMPUS_LIFE/initiatives/programs_and_resources/ombudspers on.html

Building Successful Mentoring Relationships: LGS Student Guide Building Successful Mentoring

Relationships: LGS Faculty Guide

Atlanta Society of Mentors- Mentoring Resources

Dissertation and Final Defense

Students are expected to complete their dissertations and apply for graduation within six years. If students do not complete their dissertation by the end of their sixth year, programs may grant a one-year degree extension for the seventh year without further approval. Degree extensions for years eight and above require LGS approval. A LGS milestone extension request form and a program approved detailed timeline for completion must be submitted to LGS for consideration. Students will be guaranteed stipend and health insurance consistent with the terms of the CBA.

Each student will be expected to submit a written dissertation in compliance with the rules and deadlines of the Laney Graduate School. To receive the Ph.D. degree, the student is expected to have completed an original contribution to research, as demonstrated by publications in leading

peer-reviewed journals. Generally, a minimum of one first author paper should be published by the student in a top-quality journal indexed in PubMed (professional society-level journal or higher), though most students will be expected by their advisor and committee to exceed these standards.

Approximately six months prior to the anticipated defense, the student will meet with the committee to outline progress, publications and anticipated publications, and plans for completing the dissertation research. At this time, the committee either approves of the plan or outlines further recommendations or requirements for the student. When the plan is approved, the student will move towards completion of manuscripts to be submitted and the formal written dissertation.

At this point, in preparation for the defense and graduation, it is recommended that the student refer to the "Planning for Graduation" checklist located at the bottom of the *MMG Student Timeline*.

The dissertation should be made available in final form to the committee at least 2 weeks prior to the public, oral defense.

The dissertation and its presentation should demonstrate that the student has learned to plan, design and interpret experiments independently.

In anticipation of the public defense, the student must submit a Defense Flyer and Program to the Program Administrator to be distributed on the seminar listserv and posted on the program website calendar. These public announcements must go out at least 2 weeks prior to the public defense. Templates for these items are available on the program website. Public defenses are required to be in-person, but a remote "hybrid" option is allowed to allow family and friends to attend remotely. All committee members must be present and in person (up to one remote attendee is allowable; seek DGS permission if additional remote attendees are necessary). According to GDBBS regulations, only one member of the committee may be absent, and it must be documented (see GDBBS Handbook, p. 35, sec .13, par. 2).

Following the oral defense, the dissertation committee examines the student further regarding the research and decides on the final acceptance of the dissertation. Approval of the dissertation by the Dissertation Committee should be unanimous. In the event of serious disagreement, the Executive Committee of the Program will review the opinions of the committee members and make a final determination.

The written dissertation should contain:

1. An inclusive (5-10 page) introduction to provide an overall background for the manuscript(s) / research chapters
2. The published or to-be-published manuscript(s) (for multi-author manuscripts, the actual contribution of the student to the paper should be summarized)
3. Other unpublished results which can be included as separate chapter(s)
4. A summary and conclusion section (5-10 pages) in which the contribution of the dissertation research to the field is discussed and future directions following on from the dissertation research are discussed
5. References / Literature Cited

Other papers by the student on other topics may be included as an appendix. Your dissertation must meet all Laney Graduate School requirements.

Master's Thesis

In certain instances, it may be necessary for graduate students to complete their course of study with a terminal Master's degree. The advisor and student together will request to have the student switched to a terminal Master's track by contacting the Director and DGS. If the program approves, the Director or DGS will inform the GDBBS office by contacting the Program Administrator and Associate Director of Student Affairs (GDBBS). To be eligible to receive a Master's degree, the student must perform a research project and complete an acceptable Master's Thesis. The organization of the thesis is similar to that of the traditional Ph.D. dissertation, which would include, in order, the following sections: Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion and Literature Cited. The student will defend the thesis at a closed meeting with his or her committee. The committee will determine if the body of work completed and presented is sufficient to constitute a Master's thesis and warrant a Master's degree. After graduating with a Master's degree, the student may return to the program but will need to re-apply for admission.

Review of Student Progress

The Division Handbook has established certain minimum standards for Academic Performance which the program will enforce.

Probation

If a GDBBS student's term GPA is below 3.0 in any one term, including the summer term, that student will be placed on academic probation. Thus, a grade of C in research is highly likely to trigger academic probation. Grades of U or F in a course, regardless of credit hours, will also lead to the student being placed on academic probation. With regards to cumulative GPA, GDBBS students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.7 throughout their time in the Program, as required by the LGS. A cumulative GPA of less than 2.7 will trigger academic probation.

Causes for Recommending Dismissal

The Division Director will immediately recommend a student's dismissal to LGS for the following reasons:

- Two consecutive terms of probation or four terms of probation at any point in the student's graduate career. This includes summer terms.
- A grade of F in 597R, 599R, 699R, 799R or Directed Study, regardless of probation status.
- Failure to pass the qualifying exam.
- A one-year dissertation extension was not approved by the program for Year 7 or above.

In rare circumstances, programs can make a request to the GDBBS Director for an exemption of the Program or Division policy, and that the student not be recommended for dismissal. The request must carefully outline steps that have been taken to remedy the situation that led to the

recommendation for dismissal.

Tuition and Stipend Information

Stipend levels are determined annually by the Laney Graduate School. GDBBS students starting their PhD in Fall 2026 or earlier will receive their first 21 months of stipend support from the LGS. MD/PhD students will receive 9 months of support from LGS. In the absence of extramural resources, such as NSRA or T32 grants, the advisor is responsible for acquiring resources to cover the student's stipend and sponsored tuition starting after this institutional support period. Advisors may refer to the "Faculty Financial Responsibilities" document for current sponsored tuition and stipend details and direct questions to the LGS finance team.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement's (CBA) article on continuity of funding guarantees five years of stipend and tuition support for PhD students in good academic standing who are not dismissed from the program. Students in their first five years of their training will be paid until the end of the last month of the academic term in which they defend their thesis, unless: (1) their research appointment (RA) stipulates an earlier date (e.g., the date on which they have satisfied all requirements for the Ph.D.); or (2) they voluntarily request the end of stipend payments through the GDBBS Student Request to End Funding Form because they no longer wish to fulfill the obligations of their RTA and/or if they have taken a new paid position.

Students in their sixth year and beyond in good academic standing may continue to receive stipend support at the discretion of Emory University. Students in the sixth year and beyond will receive the stipend as long as they are: (1) enrolled in LGS and making appropriate academic progress; and (2) they hold an RA with their advisor as supervisor. Such students will be paid until the end of the last month of the academic term in which they defend their thesis, unless: (1) their research appointment (RA) stipulates an earlier date (e.g., the date on which they have satisfied all requirements for the Ph.D.); or 2) they voluntarily request the end of stipend payments through the GDBBS Student Request to End Funding Form because they no longer wish to fulfill the obligations of their RTA and/or they have taken a new paid position.

Unless a GDBBS student is dismissed, their research mentor is expected to pay their stipend through year 6. Students beyond year 6 will receive a stipend for the duration of any RA that they have with their advisor as supervisor.

GDBBS Policy 13. Students in Academic Difficulty

> Programs must inform the Division when students are not meeting required standards. This information should be provided to the Division Director and to the GDBBS Associate Director of Student Affairs. The GDBBS will work with the programs to ensure that proper GDBBS and LGS policy and procedures are followed in a timely manner.

The Director, DGS, Program Administrator, student, and student's advisor will meet to discuss the student's progress and develop a plan to address the student's learning needs. If a letter of appeal is requested by the Laney Graduate School, the student will draft this with assistance from their advisor and Program leaders and ensure they meet the deadline.

Throughout the year, the DGS and Director will meet to review the progress of all students in the program. For first year students, this is based on grades and rotation project work. For second year students, this is based on grades and successfully passing the Qualifying Examination. For students in years 3 and up, this is based on the research grades issued by the advisor and the Dissertation Committee reports from meetings as well as completion of meetings within the time frame required of the Division as listed in the Division Handbook. If any students are in jeopardy of not progressing towards their degree due to failures on the Qualifying Exam, low grades in courses, or missed committee meetings, the Executive Committee will meet to discuss the student's situation, vote on whether the student should remain in the Program, and outline the steps needed to regain satisfactory standing. Prior to the meeting, the Director will notify the student and advisor of the concern, and ask if they have any information that they would like the Executive Committee to take under advisement. Following the meeting, the Director will meet with the student and advisor to share the outcome of the committee's discussion and clearly line out what steps need to be taken and the time frame for completion.

Transferring Programs

Students currently enrolled in other Programs within the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences should send a letter to the Director explaining their reasons for requesting a transfer to the MMG Program. Each request will be considered by the Executive Committee, which may require that a transferring student take one or both parts of the Qualifying Examination, as well as specific courses. The program the student will be transferring to also needs to provide the student with written documentation of any additional requirements that will need to be completed. MD/PhD students need to complete this transfer process once they have started their G1 year in the fall. If approved by the Program, the request will then need to be reviewed and approved by the Director of the GDBBS and the Dean of the LGS. If a student is transferring to a non-GDBBS program, then they only need to complete the LGS Program Transfer Request form.

Attendance at Scientific Meetings

When they have reached an appropriate stage in their research, trainees are encouraged to present their results at both local and national meetings. Attendance at such meetings should help in meeting others engaged in their field of research and to explore future job opportunities. It will also provide them with important experience in communication and presentations skills as they listen to a variety of presentations by others of current research.

If students would like to receive Professional Development Support Funds for attending and presenting at a conference, they should refer to the Laney Graduate School PDS Funds Handbook. Students may direct questions about PDS Funds to the Program Administrator.

Student Support Services

Graduate school can be a stressful time on your body and mind. Be sure you are taking care of

yourself. Go to Laney Graduate School student support page and the GDBBS student support page for links to all student support services available to you.

Accessibility Services

As noted on the Department of Accessibility Services website, “Emory provides all persons an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and services afforded to others. The Department of Accessibility Services (DAS), part of the Office of Institutional Equity & Compliance, assists qualified students, faculty and staff with obtaining a variety of services and ensures that all matters of equal access, reasonable accommodation, and compliance are properly addressed.” OAS “is committed to providing access to campus resources and opportunities to allow students with disabilities to obtain a quality educational experience.”

Qualified students need to register with DAS and make a request for services. Confidentiality is honored and maintained.

Faculty-Specific Program Policies

Faculty advisors are expected to assist their students in meeting the requirements outlined above. Additionally, as a member of this training program, MMG faculty should:

1. Attend at least 3 MMG student presentations/year. These can be dissertation defenses, student research in progress seminars, or an MMG presentation at the DSAC Symposium.
2. Teach an average of 1 hour/year over a 3-year period in classes attended by MMG students.
3. Be available to serve on at least 2 MMG student dissertation committees.
4. Be available to serve at least 5 hours/year for the MMG Program. Service includes holding a Program Leadership position, Program committee work, administering qualifying exams, or attending Program events.
5. Be available to participate in the MMG Recruitment events if not out of town.
6. Respond to the annual MMG faculty review survey as well as NIH-required trainee information requests within deadlines given.
7. Maintain a positive and safe training environment that follows the Ethics and Conduct expectations set forth in the Emory Faculty Handbook- Chapter 12.
8. Adhere to the University expectations for graduate advisors as outlined in Emory Policy 7.9.

Appeals and Grievance Policy

Overview

If a student disagrees with a decision by their advisor or dissertation committee that impacts their progress towards a degree, they should first seek to resolve the issue directly with their advisor and/or dissertation committee. The Program Director, Program DGS, GDBBS Director and GDBBS Associate Director of Student Affairs will provide guidance and support when feasible. If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should then follow their Program’s appeal policy.

Consistent with principles of academic freedom, responsibility for evaluation of a student's course performance generally rests with the course instructor. Thus, students who believe that an assigned grade is incorrect should first discuss the assigned grade with the course instructor. After discussion, students who do not think the problem has been resolved in this manner should address their concern to the Program Director or DGS, who will seek to resolve the matter with the instructor and the student. If the concern involves a grade assigned by the Program Director or DGS, then the student should reach out to the GDBBS Director, who will oversee the process. If a resolution is not found, and the student believes that a Program, GDBBS, Laney Graduate School, or University policy has been violated in regards to the grade assignment, the student should then follow their Program's appeal policy. An example would include a grade that was assigned capriciously without regards to the syllabus criteria.

Students can also file an appeal of other decisions that impact their progress towards a degree in the Program. Examples of decisions that can be appealed include not allowing a qualifying exam retake, not allowing a thesis defense to be scheduled, and recommending dismissal from the program. If an appeal is denied at the program level, a student may submit an appeal request to the Division through the procedures detailed below.

In some cases, conflicts arise that do not fall under the academic and procedural scopes of appeals and academic grievances. If conflicts arise with an advisor, other faculty member, or other program member, students should reach out to their DGS or program leadership for support and guidance in mediating the conflict. If the conflict concerns the Program Director or DGS, or if the student feels that the Program Director or DGS have a conflict in the matter, the student should bypass their Program and reach out to the GDBBS Director or GDBBS Associate Director of Student Affairs. If the conflict concerns the GDBBS Director, the student should bypass the Program and Division and reach out to the LGS Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. If a student believes that a program, GDBBS, LGS or Emory University policy has been violated to their detriment, they can file a formal academic grievance to the LGS following procedures outlined in the LGS handbook. A student should only file a grievance to the LGS once all related Program and Division appeals are resolved.

Division Appeals Procedures

If a Program denies an appeal, a student can elevate their appeal to the Division. Within seven business days of receiving the written appeal outcome from their Program Director, the student should email the GDBBS Director about their desire to file an appeal to the GDBBS and copy their Program Director. This email should include any documentation the student would like to provide for consideration; students may meet with the GDBBS Associate Director for Student Affairs to get guidance of what they may want to include in the appeal letter. The Program Director should also provide any documents that were considered by the Program leadership during the program appeal and the outcome of any votes concerning the appeal.

The GDBBS Director may gather additional relevant information as needed. Based on the available information, the GDBBS Director will either: 1) consult at least two of the GDBBS Program Directors, excluding the Program Director of the student's own program, before making a decision or 2) in complex cases, move forward to a review at the next scheduled EC meeting. Program Directors present at the meeting, minus the Director of the Program directly involved in the appeal will review

the case and vote on the most appropriate path forward. A DGS or other Program EC member may stand in if the Director from their Program is not available. The GDBBS Director will distribute the appeal materials and will chair a synchronous meeting but will not vote on the outcome except in the need of a tiebreaker. A majority of programs should be represented at the meeting, and only those representatives who are present can vote. When possible, the student's program director or DGS and the student will be asked to be available to answer any questions during the meeting but will not attend the discussion. After discussion, votes will be taken via ballot to ensure confidentiality. Decisions will be made based on a majority vote. In all cases, appeals decisions are confidential and should not be shared outside of the meeting. In most cases, the GDBBS Director will notify the student and Program Director of the appeal decision within two weeks of the submission of the student's appeal to the GDBBS; if more time is needed, the GDBBS Director will provide an update and estimated timeline to the student and Program Director.

If the appeal is denied by the Division, the student may consider filing a grievance to the LGS if they believe that a program, GDBBS or Emory University policy has been violated to their detriment, following procedures outlined in the LGS handbook.

Student Honor Code and Conduct Code

All students should familiarize themselves with and adhere to the Laney Graduate School Honor Code and the Laney Graduate School Conduct Code as outlined in the Graduate Student Handbookhttp://gs.emory.edu/handbook/. This deals with the professional standards and conduct demanded of all graduate students, as well as the procedures for reporting and adjudicating any violations**.**