

Process Handbook

Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Programs

School of Pharmacy

Virginia Commonwealth University

Revised October 2016

This information supplements the description of policies that apply to advanced degree (Masters and Doctor of Philosophy; Certificate) programs administered by the School of Pharmacy as presented in the University Graduate Bulletin. In this document, Bulletin language relating to the progress of the student in a training program following admission to the institution has been reproduced (or paraphrased) and is *italicized* to provide a condensed policy handbook. This document also reflects a new School of Pharmacy policy for graduate education, which is now independent of School of Medicine guidelines. Students and faculty are advised to consult individual track handbooks, where appropriate.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The mission of the VCU Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program is as follows:

The School of Pharmacy endeavors to provide the highest quality graduate program in the pharmaceutical sciences for the Master of Science (M.S.), Masters of Pharmaceutical Sciences (M.P.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) level degrees.

Graduate education in the pharmaceutical sciences occupies a critical position in the varied missions of the School of Pharmacy at Virginia Commonwealth University

Thesis – a formal treatise written by a master’s degree candidate

Track – VCU School of Pharmacy offers emphasis in the following research areas or tracks: Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacotherapy and Outcome Sciences and Pharmacoeconomics and Health Outcomes (Dept. Pharmacotherapy and Outcome Sciences). Each track may have its own degree requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ORGANIZATION

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. Curriculum Oversight
2. Matriculation and Promotion
3. Graduate Student Funding, Teaching and Research Assistantships

III. REGISTRATION

IV. ACADEMIC STANDING FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

V. THE STUDENT'S ADVISOR AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. Advisor
2. Student Advisory Committee

VI. PROGRESS AND COMPLETION

1. Execution of Research
2. Execution of Other Duties
3. Admission to Candidacy (PhD only)
4. Final Oral Defense
5. Completion
6. Termination of Enrollment

Appendix Materials

Appendix I	Faculty Advisor Responsibilities
Appendix II	Degree Completion/Admission Pharm.D./PhD program or to VCU Medical School
Appendix III	Recognition of Student Achievement
Appendix IV	Graduate Faculty/School of Pharmacy
Appendix V	Duties of Representative for M.S. and Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations
Appendix VI	Graduate Student Advisory Committee
Appendix VII	Intellectual Property Issues Related to the Thesis/Dissertation
Appendix VIII	Use of the VCU Graduate School Special Action Form

I. ORGANIZATION

In the School of Pharmacy, the Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program is coordinated through the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. The Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies is responsible for all issues related to the administration of pharmaceutical sciences advanced degree programs and represents the School of Pharmacy graduate program to the VCU Graduate School and University.

In addition, students are enrolled in a specific department's track. Each department's track is the responsibility of the department's Graduate Program Director. The details of didactic and scholarly requirements are available from the department handbook. Each department's track is represented by the Graduate Program Director, who is appointed by the respective Department Chair. The Graduate Program Directors act on behalf of the programs and hold the responsibility and authority to represent the respective department(s) and their faculties to the School.

The School's Graduate Affairs Committee is composed of the Chair of the Combined Degree Committee, each department's Graduate Program Director, and is chaired by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. **Other members may be added at the discretion of the Dean.**

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. Curriculum and Program Oversight

The mission of the PSGP is to provide the highest quality teaching and research in the pharmaceutical sciences graduate program at the Masters of Pharmaceutical Science (MPS), Masters of Science (MS), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) levels.

PSGP Student Learning Objectives:

1: Knowledge of research in pharmaceutical sciences

The candidate should demonstrate a general knowledge of the elements of the pharmaceutical sciences and a detailed knowledge of his/her area of research, including an appropriate familiarity with the research literature, policies and procedures, and methodology pertaining to their field.

2: Design experiments in pharmaceutical sciences

The candidate should demonstrate an appropriate level of skill in the design of experimental protocols and the technical conduct of experimentation related to his/her research.

3: Demonstrate appropriate communication skills

The candidate should demonstrate that an appropriate level of oral, written, and visual communication skills have been acquired.

4: Identify problems in pharmaceutical sciences

The candidate should demonstrate an appropriate level of skill in the identification of meaningful problems in the pharmaceutical sciences and the design of and implementation of appropriate problem-solving methods.

While this document attempts to define rules and regulations of the Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate program, the ultimate responsibility for interpretation and implementation of the rules of the program lies with the Graduate Affairs Committee. This Committee is responsible for all curricular issues pertaining to the School's graduate core curriculum and graduate courses. All graduate students in the Pharmaceutical Sciences graduate program are required to take the Core Curriculum of the School of Pharmacy as well as fulfilling other degree requirements of the individual department tracks in which the student is enrolled.

Progression through a graduate program involves many steps that may each include notification and/or approval. Some steps require a paper form and signature and others are completed electronically; use of the correct format is required. Failure to use the required mechanism may result in delays to or mistakes in the notification and/or approval process. Electronic approval and tracking of student progress in the PSGP occur through GradTrak wherever possible.

Proposals for changes to the curriculum will normally come from the faculty acting through departmental bodies charged with the responsibility of monitoring academic training. In the case of offerings in interdisciplinary areas, these will normally require the input and approval of departments whose faculty and students are participants. Proposed changes and additions are, under University guidelines, subject to review by the Graduate Affairs Committee of the School. Approval of the Dean of the School of Pharmacy is required prior to submission to University Graduate Council for review.

2. Promotion

Graduate student promotion and progress in the Pharmaceutical Sciences graduate program occurs as described below. The Associate Dean of the Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program is responsible for monitoring the promotion and progress of each student. Each department is responsible for evaluation and promotion of each of their graduate students on an annual basis. Promotion each year requires that the student remain in good academic standing, progress adequately in their research, fulfill their duties as teaching and research assistants and comply with professional standards of conduct as defined below in section IV.1. Upon entering the graduate program, students will be trained in university and department policy regarding professional standards of conduct, and asked to sign a Training Record demonstrating understanding of these policies, which may include, for example:

- Radiation safety: _____

• Laboratory Safety: _____

Registration for the three academic terms (Fall, Spring, and Summer) is normally performed in advance of the formal registration period. THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TIMELY SUBMISSION OF REGISTRATION FORMS FOR EACH SEMESTER (generally a few days after the start of classes). Students will not receive stipend and/or tuition if they are not registered. Similarly, the student is responsible for compliance with University policy standards that may impact on registration. Overdue financial obligations, failure to comply with health policy requirements, for example, might interrupt the registration process. Should a late fee be applied, the student is responsible for payment unless mitigating circumstances can be shown to be relevant.

Courses – All School of Pharmacy graduate students must fulfill curricular requirements of the School of Pharmacy Core Curriculum and the core and elective courses required by their respective tracks (see www.pharmacy.vcu.edu for current listings). These courses and their grades will be documented in the Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan (see section V below).

Number of credits – Depending upon the particular department, full-time students normally register for 9-15 hours of graduate credit in the Fall and Spring semesters and for up to 6 hours of graduate credit for the Summer semester. Students funded by RAs or TAs must register for a *minimum* of 9 and 3 hours for Spring/Fall and Summer semesters, respectively. Except for under the most unusual circumstances, enrollment must be continuous during the training period. Full-time status permits registration for 15 credit hours; University policy regards registration for credit hours over 15 in a given semester (Fall, Spring or up to 15 in the Summer may be permitted) as an “*overload*” and subject to additional tuition cost. However, relief from additional tuition cost may be provided if the course “*overload*” is a requisite component of the program of study. This must be approved by the Graduate School following submission of a Special Action Form, which can be found on the Graduate School website. *While most students register for the first semester beginning in August, arrangements may be made to initiate graduate work at other times during the academic year.*

Registration for *less than the minimum* required number of credit hours may be permitted for students in the final stage of completing a dissertation. Such exemption must be approved by the Faculty Advisor with notification to the Graduate Program Director. Such exemption is not automatic. In addition, international students may not be eligible for this exemption and therefore must confirm eligibility with the Office of International Programs.

On occasion, students may be conducting degree work at a site distant from the institution. Under such circumstances registration for a reduced number of credit hours may be permitted with the written approval of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.

IV. ACADEMIC STANDING FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

Students are required to remain in good academic standing through the course of their degree program.

1. *Unsatisfactory student performance includes:*
 - a. *The assignment of a grade of "U" or "D" or "F" in any course*
 - b. *Failure to maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average of at least 3.0*
 - c. *No more than 6 semester hours or 20% of total semester hours attempted at a "C" grade or below*
 - d. *Failure to pass the written or oral comprehensive examination*
 - e. *Failure to pass the final examination*
 - f. *Failure to fulfill teaching assistant or research assistant duties*
 - g. *Failure to comply with minimum professional standards of conduct (see below)*

A student whose performance is unsatisfactory for two semesters must obtain the approval of the School of Pharmacy Graduate Affairs Committee to gain permission for continuing in the graduate program by submitting a written request to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. The Committee elicits the recommendation of the department (as represented by the Graduate Program Director) and, as appropriate, the student's Advisor in making a determination. Unsatisfactory performance also constitutes grounds for the termination of financial assistance to the student.

2. *Normally, students may not take the oral comprehensive examination for the Ph.D. degree if they are not in good standing. Students may not take the Final Oral Defense examination for the M.S. or Ph.D. degree if their grade-point average is below 3.0.*
3. *A degree is granted only after all requirements have been fulfilled, including payment of all fees to the University, and after submission of the copies of the thesis for binding.*

V. THE STUDENT'S ADVISOR AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The student's research Advisor holds the primary responsibility for providing the appropriate guidance and counsel essential to the scholarly development of the student. An Advisory Committee is appointed shortly after the permanent Advisor is selected and approved, and serves as both an examining and consultative body. The Advisory Committee functions as a source of counsel and assists in the development of the student.

Each student shall have an Advisor and an Advisory Committee. The Advisor should complete the Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan Form and upon completion, the student should distribute carbon copies as indicated. The Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan Form should be completed for approval on GradTrak.

1. Faculty Advisor (the "Advisor")

a. Appointment of Advisor

- i. Initial Advisor for New Students – The acting advisor for new students in the Departments of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacotherapy and Outcome Sciences will be the Graduate Operations Committee until they have a permanent advisor. The Graduate Program Director will function as the acting advisor for new students admitted to the Department of Pharmaceutics until they have a permanent advisor.
- ii. Permanent Advisor – Students in each department may be required to arrange an interview with each graduate faculty member in their department to discuss research projects. Departments of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacotherapy and Outcome Sciences require the student submit his/her preference to the Department Chairman by November 1 for students who enter in the fall. Medicinal Chemistry requires selection by March 1 for students who enter in the spring. Department of Pharmaceutics' uncommitted students are encouraged to choose an Advisor within four months of enrolling at VCU.

A change in the permanent Advisor may be made with permission of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies upon recommendation of the student's Graduate Program Director.

b. Duties of the Advisor:

- i. *The Advisor shall, with the Student Advisory Committee, have responsibility for guiding the student's academic and research program.*
- ii. *The Advisor shall develop a course plan for student's didactic program. The proposed program should be filed with the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies no later than the third semester of study, and no less than six months prior to Ph.D. candidacy using the Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan Form found on GradTrak.*

- iii. *The Advisor shall, on the basis of the proposed didactic and scholarly program for the student, identify members of the faculty to comprise the Student Advisory Committee and elicit their agreement to serve.*
- iv. *The Advisor shall supervise the student's research work and thesis preparation and will chair the examining committee for the student's defense of their thesis (M.S.)/dissertation (Ph.D.)*
- v. *The Advisor shall collect necessary information on the student's performance so that progress can be evaluated on an annual basis in accordance with specific School of Pharmacy guidelines.*

A more detailed listing of the responsibilities of the Advisor has been developed and adopted as School policy. This document is appended to the handbook as Appendix I.

2. *The Graduate Student Advisory Committee ("Advisory Committee")*

- a. *Composition – The composition of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee should include in its membership individuals having a broad level of relevant scientific expertise and experience in advanced degree education and should comply with VCU Graduate School rules.*
- b. *Appointment – The Student Advisory Committee shall be appointed no later than the end of the third semester of study after matriculation, and no less than six months prior to Ph.D. candidacy. Appointment of the Student Advisory Committee must be done prior to the administration of comprehensive (or cumulative) examinations. The composition of the Advisory Committee shall be such that significant areas of the student's scholarly program are represented in the expertise of the faculty members.*
 - i. *The committee for the Ph.D. candidate shall consist of a minimum of five members as follows: the student's Advisor (who serves as Chair of the Committee); two other members of the graduate faculty of the department in which the student is enrolled; and at least two other members of the graduate faculty from departments other than the one in which the student is enrolled (where feasible, from two different departments).*
 - ii. *The committee for the M.S. candidate shall consist of a minimum of three members as follows: the student's Advisor (who serves as Chair of the committee); one other member of the graduate faculty of the department in which the student is enrolled and one other member of the graduate faculty from a department other than the one in which the student is enrolled.*
 - iii. *A faculty member who is not a member of the graduate faculty may be appointed to a Student Advisory Committee after nomination by the Department Chair, appointment to affiliate graduate faculty by the Deans of both the School of*

Pharmacy and VCU Graduate School, and with notification of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. (see Appendix VI for details).

- iv. The student's Advisor submits a completed Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan Form to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. Appointment of the Advisory Committee is effected upon approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
 - v. Should changes/additions to the Advisory Committee become necessary, a revised form must be submitted **via GradTrak** for approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
- c. *Duties of the Student Advisory Committee.*
- i. *The Student Advisory Committee shall work with the student's Advisor in guiding the student's graduate program and should meet at least annually to ensure timely progress toward degree completion.*
 - ii. *The Student Advisory Committee will also serve as a consultative body to provide scholarly counsel. The body of experimental work to be incorporated into the dissertation is subject to approval of the membership of the Student Advisory Committee. The Faculty Advisor has the responsibility to advise the student when the meeting of the Advisory Committee should take place, and it is the student's responsibility to schedule an appropriate time for this meeting with their committee members.*
 - iii. *The Student Advisory Committee shall conduct the oral comprehensive and Final Oral Defense examinations (Section VI below).*

Additional information regarding the Student Advisory Committee is available in Appendix VI.

VI. PROGRESS AND COMPLETION

1. Execution of Research

Each student must conduct an original investigation under the supervision of the permanent Advisor, prepare a dissertation/thesis reporting the results of this research and an analysis of its significance in relation to existing scientific knowledge. This study is reported in a dissertation/thesis prepared in acceptable form and style.

The nature of scholarship in the pharmaceutical sciences is such that the role of the Faculty Advisor is particularly critical in providing guidance in the identification of a suitable area of investigation and the progressive accumulation of data, which constitute the body of the thesis/dissertation. In order to ensure that appropriate progress in the maturation of the student as a science professional is achieved, continuing communication between the student and Faculty Advisor is essential. It is in the best

interest of the student that the expectations of the Faculty Advisor be fully understood and discussed as appropriate. The student has the obligation to gain an understanding of what will be regarded by the Faculty Advisor as a satisfactory standard of accomplishment.

The body of experimental work to be incorporated into the thesis is subject to the approval of the Student Advisory Committee members (Section V above). The Advisory Committee should, therefore, be formally consulted as the research project nears completion to ensure that there is agreement with respect to the material deemed necessary and sufficient for incorporation into the thesis. Such consultation will normally occur in the form of a meeting of the Advisory Committee with the student. The thesis is prepared in an acceptable form and style with the counsel of the Faculty Advisor and university guidelines.

Four formal mechanisms are employed to monitor student progress in research:

- (1) Grade awarded for performance in Directed Research course credit.
- (2) Meetings of the student with the Advisory Committee and Faculty Advisor
- (3) Annual promotion by the department's graduate faculty, subject to approval by the Graduate Affairs Committee
- (4) Documentation of progress by completing and distributing Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program forms described in this document, such as Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan Form, Notice for the Oral Comprehensive Examination, Oral Qualifying Exam Form, etc. These forms can be obtained on [GradTrak](#), from the department Program Directors or from the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. *It is the student's responsibility, upon completion, to copy and distribute the completed forms to the parties listed on the document.*

The formal structure of advanced degree programs provides a basis for ensuring that the standards of performance are maintained and that students are treated equitably while engaged in training that develops an appropriate level of professional rigor and accomplishment. At least once a year a performance assessment will be communicated to the student by the Advisor, with notification to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, in writing. Such written assessment may include areas of concern with respect to the timely development of the student in the program which warrant particular attention and the actions the student must take to remedy deficiencies if they wish to remain in the program and retain funding. Students are awarded a grade for research activity by the Faculty Advisor in each semester. A grade other than "satisfactory" is a matter of serious concern and requires review and possible action by the School of Pharmacy Graduate Affairs Committee to permit continued participation in the program.

Graduate students (as well as postdoctoral fellows, visiting scientists, and other personnel) are prohibited from removing, or assisting in the removal of, research-related materials (including, but not limited to, laboratory notebooks, drugs, chemicals, biological

samples, laboratory supplies, laboratory specimens or data) from the MCV campus without the written permission of their faculty advisor. Violation of this policy will be construed as an act of theft.

2. Execution of Other Duties

a. Coursework – A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required for promotion in the program. Failure to maintain at least a 3.0 will automatically result in probation. Failure to raise the GPA to the minimum by the end of the next semester will result in termination from the program; readmission will occur only upon approval of department graduate faculty and the Graduate Affairs Committee.

b. Teaching Responsibilities - All students are required to perform some teaching (One semester of teaching, as defined by the department, is the required minimum). The teaching responsibilities must be completed and documented to a satisfactory level. Failure to do so, as indicated by the respective course coordinator, will automatically result in probation. Students receiving probation must teach at least one more semester and receive a satisfactory report from their teaching supervisor, or termination from the program will result. Examples of unsatisfactory teaching performance can result from failure to appear at scheduled times without prior approval for the absence, failure to fulfill duties as specified by the teaching supervisor, or unprofessional conduct exhibited during teaching duties. Documentation of teaching duties must be submitted to the DPSGP and Departments prior to the Final Oral Defense.

c. Professional Conduct – Any action by a graduate student in a program considered to be unprofessional conduct shall constitute cause for disciplinary action, including possible probation, expulsion or loss of funding. Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- *fraud or deceit in gaining admission to the University, i.e., false or obviously misleading representations on the admission application,*
- *an act that violates the established legal standards regarding conduct of one person towards society (i.e. stealing, lying, cheating and slander),*
- *conviction of a felony*
- *plagiarism or other scientific misconduct, and*
- guilty verdict by the MCV Honor Council

Other examples of unprofessional conduct can include harassment of or disrespectful behavior towards faculty, graduate students, or professional students.

d. Outside seminar requirement - In addition to department seminar requirements, all students are required to attend 2 seminars from each department outside their home department to advance to candidacy (see below). Seminar attendance must be documented and form submitted to the Graduate Office prior to advancing to candidacy.

3. Admission to Candidacy

The development of the individual as an independent research scientist is a critical component of the Ph.D. degree. The potential for such development is assessed on the basis of both mastery of subject matter and research competency as judged in the context of written and oral examinations administered at the level of the department. Students are admitted to candidacy on the basis of completing required coursework and examinations as required and the recommendation of the Faculty Advisor, Student Advisory Committee and Graduate Program Director. Advancement to candidacy should preferably take place prior to initiating the third academic year in the program.

Degree Candidacy Review

Masters students progress to candidacy when they form their Advisory Committee. At this time they must undergo Degree Candidacy Review by the Graduate School. Doctoral students undergo Review when they pass their Oral Comprehensive Exam (see below).

- a. *Written Comprehensive Exam – In Medicinal Chemistry, cumulative examinations will be given whereas in the Departments of Pharmaceutics and Pharmacy a written comprehensive examination will be given. The written examination(s) generally focus(es) on the subject matter deemed critical as a foundation in the particular program. The written examination is largely based on material covered in required course work and its application to theoretical and practical problems. Individual department guidelines should be consulted for greater detail. The written examination is administered by the student's department. In the event of failure of the written comprehensive examination, the student, with the approval of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, may be permitted to repeat the written examination. The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies should be notified in writing of the outcome of the written exam by the student's Program Director.*
- b. *Oral Comprehensive Exam – After passing the written examination(s), the student is eligible for the oral examination. The oral examination is conducted by the Student Advisory Committee and is chaired by the student's major Advisor. The oral examination is administered to assess the ability of the candidate to integrate information and display an appropriate mastery of problem-solving capabilities. (see Appendix V for additional details).*
 - i. *Time line – The oral examination must be completed successfully at least six months before submission of the dissertation.*
 - ii. *Notification – An announcement of the candidate's name, department, time and place of examination shall be posted at least **10 working days** in advance of the examination. The student must provide a completed copy of the announcement to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. The Notice for the Oral Comprehensive Examination form can be obtained **on GradTrak**. Along with the completed form, a copy of material (e.g. a research proposal) should be provided to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. The student*

will then post the Notice for the Oral Comprehensive Examination on the respective department bulletin board.

- iii. *School Representative – A graduate faculty member representing the School shall attend this examination as a voting member of the examining committee. The School Representative will be appointed to this role on a rotating basis by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. The representative holds the responsibility for compliance with protocol appropriate to the examination, including the equitable treatment of the candidate. (See Appendix V for Duties of Representative). Three to five working days in advance of the examination, the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies will send the representative the student’s file for the exam. Attached to the file is a form used to report the outcome of the examination, the Oral Comprehensive Examination Form.*
 - iv. *Attendance – The oral comprehensive examination is open to all members of the faculty. If a committee member knows in advance that they will be unable to attend the examination, a substitute can be obtained with the prior approval of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies by revising the Advisory Committee Form on GradTrak.*
 - v. *Exam Format – Faculty members in attendance may ask questions of the candidate, but their questions shall not be presented until after the Advisory Committee has completed its questions. Faculty members other than those on the examining committee shall not vote on the success or failure of the candidate.*
 - vi. *Voting – A favorable vote by the examining committee (all members of body being required to vote) with no more than one negative vote, is required to pass the examination. Members of the examining committee must vote on the performance as either pass or fail. Absence of a committee member will be construed as a negative vote. The members of the examining committee must indicate the outcome of the exam by completing and submitting Oral Comprehensive Examination Form to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.*
 - vii. *Failure to pass – Should the student fail the oral comprehensive examination, the examination may be retaken only on approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in consultation with department’s Program Director and the student’s Advisor. As a general guide, the re-examination, provided that approval is gained, should normally be administered within three months of the approval date. Only one re-examination is allowed.*
4. Final Oral Defense (See Appendix V for additional information)
- a. *Final Oral Defense Preparation – The Faculty Advisor determines when the thesis or dissertation document can serve as the basis for the Final Oral Defense. The form for scheduling the M.S. and Ph.D. Final Oral Defense can be found on GradTrak.*

- b. Notification – *With approval of the Faculty Advisor, copies of the thesis\dissertation consistent with University standards shall be provided to the members of the Student Advisory Committee **ten (10) working days** or more before the date of the defense of the thesis\dissertation.* Receipt of the thesis is indicated by the signature of the Advisory Committee members on the Notice of Final Oral Defense form **or by submission electronically on GradTrak**. Signature of the Advisory Committee members on the Notice of Final Oral Defense form is not an endorsement of the dissertation document. The Faculty Advisor has the responsibility of ensuring that the document is in a form that can adequately provide a basis for the defense.

*Following acceptance of the thesis\dissertation defense schedule by the committee, the student must submit a copy of the thesis\dissertation and a request for scheduling of the final examination to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies a minimum of **ten (10) working days** in advance of the examination date via GradTrak.*

The student will then post the Notice of Final Oral Defense to include the name and department of the candidate together with the title of the dissertation and the day, place and time of the examination. A Final Oral Defense seminar is also required and must be scheduled as required by the individual department.

- c. School Representative (M.S. only) – *A graduate faculty member representing the School shall attend this examination as a voting member of the examining committee.* The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies will select this Representative on a rotation basis and whose appointment is outside the department. **The Representative** will then be appointed to this role upon approval by the Director of the Pharmaceutical Science Graduate Program. *The Representative holds the responsibility for compliance with protocol appropriate to the examination, including the equitable treatment of the candidate.* (see Appendix V for Duties of Representative)

For the Final Oral Defense, the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies will send the candidate's file to the School Representative, three to five days in advance of the defense. Attached to the file is the Dissertation Defense Form used to formally report the outcome of the examination to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Director.

- d. Exam Format and Attendance – *The Final Oral Defense examination is open to all members of the faculty. If a committee member knows in advance that they will be unable to attend the examination, that member should be replaced by submitting a revised Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan via GradTrak for approval to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. Faculty members in attendance may ask questions of the candidate, but their questions shall not be presented until after the Advisory Committee has completed its questions. Faculty members other than those on the examining committee shall not vote on the success or failure of the candidate.*

- e. *Voting – A favorable vote by the examining committee (all members of body being required to vote) with no more than one negative vote, is required to pass the examination. All members of the examining committee must vote on the performance as either pass or fail. Absence of a committee member will be construed as a negative vote. After passing the final examination, Committee members must complete the Dissertation Defense Form, which the Committee Chair then submits to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. This form, along with the student's file is returned to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. This form is NOT the signature page that must appear in the final version of the thesis or dissertation. At this stage the Advisory Committee has **NOT** approved the document as final but only that the candidate has completed an examination on the content of the document.*
 - f. *Failure to Pass – If the outcome is negative, the Final Oral Defense may be retaken with the approval of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the student's Graduate Program Director. Advance written approval by both parties is required by the department on behalf of the candidate.*
5. Completion
- a. Graduation Application – In the normal course of the development of the thesis/dissertation project, the student's Advisor will indicate to the student a point in time when the project has reached sufficient maturity that the writing of the thesis/dissertation should be initiated. At this point the candidate should complete and file the Graduation Application on-line (<http://www.vcu.edu/enroll/forms/graduation/>), which indicates an anticipated completion date. An email is sent to all students at the beginning of each semester detailing the procedures and timelines for students expected to graduate in that semester. The student should consult the School and university calendars for deadline dates for completion of each part of the graduation application. This form must be co-signed by the Graduate Program Director, Faculty Advisor, and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
 - b. Writing the Dissertation/Thesis – Students routinely underestimate the time required to complete the writing of the thesis/dissertation document and the creation of a version conforming to the University policy. As the process of creating the document is initiated, a copy of the VCU Thesis Manual should be consulted for guidance. Copies of the manual are available on the University web site: <http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html>.
 - c. Format – The student should correctly format the thesis/dissertation using the library's electronic thesis and dissertation online submission and template (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html>). Current policy affords considerable flexibility in the format of the document but certain requirements, particularly those describing page margins, **MUST** be followed. Candidates should consult with the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies to ensure that an acceptable format is being followed in the creation of the document when the

on-line template cannot be used.

- d. Completion of Thesis/Dissertation – *The Student Advisory Committee approves the thesis document as acceptable after the Final Oral Defense has been successfully completed.* Corrections or modifications of the thesis/dissertation document may be requested by the Advisory Committee. *Approval of the thesis/dissertation as acceptable is indicated by the signature of all members of the Advisory Committee on the ETD Signature Page of the thesis (available at http://www.pharmacy.vcu.edu/programs/graduate/current-students/student_resources/) Approval of the thesis/dissertation by the Advisory Committee must be unanimous.* Two original signed copies of the Signature Page should be obtained by the student. A complete copy of the dissertation, along with the Signature Page, is then submitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for signature by the Dean of the School of Pharmacy, **or his representative**, and the Dean of the Graduate School.
- e. Graduation Attendance - Students normally participate in the earliest VCU graduation ceremony that follows completion of degree requirements. The Graduate School permits summer graduates to walk in spring VCU graduation ceremony immediately prior to the summer completion, or in the following fall ceremony. Students will not be permitted to walk in following year's VCU spring ceremony. However, summer graduates may request to march in the School's Spring Graduation ceremonies that either precedes or follows degree completion. Approval from the student's advisor, program director and the School's Dean are all required to participate in the School's graduation if it precedes degree completion, as well as notification to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. All students should notify the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of intent to walk in any VCU and/or SOP graduation ceremonies, in a timely manner so proper preparations may be made for their participation. After graduation, students should notify the Director of all changes in contact information.

Submission of the dissertation document should be done on-line (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html>), along with submission of hard-copies as required by the department. The following forms are also to be delivered to the library when the dissertation is submitted: the completed Signature Page, the Survey of Earned Doctorate form (can be obtained **on the School's website**, **or** from the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies or Graduate School) and the University Microfilm International Agreement Form obtained on-line at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/services/binding.html>. For those submitting in print, the Libraries require a Special Collections Agreement Form, also found at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/services/binding.html>.

The candidate shall be responsible for binding and processing the thesis through University Library Services and for payment of all charges for these services including the copyright fee. The form for payment of the dissertation can be completed online and forwarded directly to the James Cabell Library:

<http://www.library.vcu.edu/services/binding.html>. Part II of the Graduation Application Form (<http://www.vcu.edu/enroll/forms/graduation/>), requires signature of the Faculty Advisor, Program Director, and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, which indicates final completion of all requirements and recommendations for graduation.

- e. Residence – *For the Ph.D. program, a period of residence of at least two consecutive semesters is normally required. Residency requirements are defined by the departments.*
- f. Time limit – *In practice for the M.S., it is found that two years of study are usually necessary to complete the requirements. A time limit of five calendar years, beginning at the time of first registration, is placed on work to be credited toward the Master of Science degree. For Ph.D. students, a time limit of seven calendar years, beginning at the time of first registration, is placed on work to be credited toward the doctor of philosophy degree.*

6. Termination of Enrollment

The university reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any student for unlawful, disorderly, or immoral conduct or for persistent failure to fulfill the purposes for which the he or she was matriculated.

A student enrolled in a graduate program may be dismissed from the School in which he is enrolled for failure to meet academic requirements prescribed by his school or failure to exhibit the attitudes and skills deemed necessary to function within the chosen scientific discipline.

Though the annual review may be used for disciplinary action, the primary purpose of the annual review is to clearly communicate in writing expectations and impressions regarding student performance to the student, faculty, department and School each year. This annual process also acts as the basis for an annual advisor/student conversation regarding the student's progress. Feedback may range from praise to disciplinary action, and everything in between. Therefore, students should not interpret all feedback on the annual review as disciplinary in nature, but rather informative.

Each graduate student will be evaluated **during the annual review** for satisfactory progress in research, TA or RA duties, coursework, and professional conduct. The graduate faculty of the student's department will rate each student in these areas. A student who receives an unsatisfactory rating in any category will be notified in writing using the **electronic Graduate Student Annual Review**, including what actions must be taken by the student to correct the unsatisfactory rating. Any unsatisfactory rating will automatically cause the student to be on probationary status. Because graduate student funding and mentor advising is a privilege, not an entitlement, failure to remedy the unsatisfactory behavior in the time period specified on the Graduate Student Annual Review Form **may be** cause for immediate termination and/or loss of funding.

If the student is terminated from the program or loses funding, the student may request reinstatement in writing to the Director of the Pharmaceutical Science Graduate Program. The final decision regarding the appeal is final.

Appendix I

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISOR

1. To exercise leadership and direction in the student's choice of a worthwhile research project, which is likely to lead to the generation of new knowledge in a particular field of biomedical science.
2. To direct the student's research of background literature salient to the proposed experiments, and to accept responsibility for training (or making arrangements for training) the student in techniques essential to the project.
3. To educate the student concerning scientific integrity, and the appreciation and respect for the work of others; to acquaint the student with rules of copyright and patent, as well as the definition of plagiarism.
4. To educate the student in the proper care and usage of laboratory equipment, and to make the student aware of laboratory safety procedures, and the handling of hazardous or toxic agents/materials/substances; to make the student aware of the proper usage and handling of laboratory animals, and, where applicable, appropriate surgical procedures.
5. To investigate extramural and intramural (department, University) sources of financial support, and, where appropriate, assist the student in applying for support.
6. To plan and monitor the student's progress in an appropriate curriculum that will provide essential knowledge of their area of research interest through departmental curricular (course) requirements, teaching requirements, and research; promote awareness of departmental, school, and university policies and deadlines (having to do with the appointment of graduate Advisory Committee, scheduling of comprehensive examinations, and Final Oral Defense of thesis).
7. To advise the student in choosing the members of their graduate Advisory Committee appropriate for his/her principal research interests, and make arrangements for the appointment of the Student Advisory Committee by submitting the official form to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies no later than the third semester of study and no less than six months prior to the Ph.D. candidacy: A doctoral (Ph.D.) committee consists of: the student's Advisor, plus 2 members from the student's major department and 2 members from departments outside the student's major department – each of whom is a member of the graduate faculty (if a desired faculty member is not on the graduate faculty, the Department Chair may request the Dean of the School to petition by memo to the Dean of the VCU Graduate School, for his/her appointment to affiliate graduate faculty for the purpose of serving on this one student committee, i.e. not a permanent appointment).
A Master's committee consists of: student's Faculty Advisor, plus one additional member from the student's major department, one member from outside the student's major department – each of whom is a member of the graduate faculty (see above). A Master's Committee must be appointed no later than the third semester of study and no less than six months prior to the Final Oral Defense of the thesis.
8. To guide the student in his preparation for the written and oral comprehensive examination(s), and to Chair the student's oral examination(s).

9. To supervise the conduct of the student's research and to monitor the student on his/her progress.
10. To call a regular meeting of the Student Advisory Committee (no less than once per year is recommended), and to submit annual progress report to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
11. To guide the student through the organization and writing of the thesis/dissertation according to department guidelines, and to meet School and University requirements for the proper format (see Guidelines from VCU Thesis/Dissertation Manual). The principal responsibility for correcting major problems (technical scientific writing, proper English, proper style, proper format, and proper references) in the thesis is the Advisor's, NOT the other members of the student's committee. The committee should be primarily concerned with the content, accuracy, and thoroughness of the presentation and discussion of results.
13. To assist the student in organizing the seminar which introduces the defense, and to conduct the Final Oral Defense (no School Representative present for the final Ph.D. defense; final M.S. defense has a School Representative).
14. To assist the student in making final (post-defense) corrections in text or format of the thesis.

Appendix II

ADMISSION TO THE COMBINED DEGREE PROGRAM

The VCU School of Pharmacy offers a number of combined degree programs for highly motivated and qualified Pharmacy students who are interested in research in the Pharmaceutical Sciences or who want to obtain additional business or public health experience. This flagship program takes advantage of efficiencies in both the professional and graduate programs while maintaining sufficient rigor, scope and depth. Currently, the following combined degrees are offered jointly with the VCU School of Medicine, VCU School of Business, or VCU School of Public Health: Pharm.D./Ph.D., Pharm.D./M.B.A., Pharm.D./M.P.H. (available on separate documents).

Students are encouraged to apply to a combined degree track no later than the end of the second year of the Pharmacy degree program. Upon admission to the combined degree program, the student will be registered as a graduate student, allowing graduate tuition rates that are lower than Pharm.D. tuition rates.

After successful completion of all combined degree program requirements (including clerkships and graduate dissertation if applicable), the students will graduate with a joint degree. The program is overseen by the Combined Degrees Program Steering Committee advising the Dean of the School of Pharmacy.

See the PharmD/PhD guidelines for additional information.

Appendix III

RECOGNITION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT/DEGREE COMPLETION CEREMONY

The University sponsors events to recognize and reward student's achievement in scholarship in the Fall and Spring semesters. In the Fall, graduate students are invited to participate in Watts Research Symposium where poster presentations of ongoing research are assembled to inform the faculty and fellow students. In the Spring semester, the Forbes Research Colloquium is held featuring selected oral and poster presentations describing ongoing research by students. Presentations are selected by the faculty on the basis of written descriptions of the projects; a parallel program identifies outstanding examples of proposed research. The Forbes Colloquium proceedings also include the announcement of departmental awards to students recognizing outstanding achievement. In addition, the Graduate Student Association sponsors a GSA Research Symposium every Spring featuring student poster presentations. The School of Pharmacy also hosts an annual Research Day where graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are invited to present their research. Graduate students posters are judged and one is selected for recognition.

At the conclusion of the Spring semester, the School hosts a ceremony individually recognizing degree graduates who have completed degree requirements during the academic year (Summer, Fall and Spring semesters). Graduate students who wish to be recognized at the School's Spring graduation ceremony may do so by informing the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of their intention to attend.

Appendix IV

GRADUATE FACULTY SCHOOL OF PHARMACY / VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

Policy and protocol followed in the School of Pharmacy with respect to the designation of members of the Graduate Faculty is consistent with institutional policy as stated in the Bylaws of the VCU Graduate School.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Graduate Faculty are eligible for service as the permanent Advisor for students enrolled in advanced degree programs administered by Departments in the School of Pharmacy and are also eligible for service as a member of the Student Advisory Committee, a body appointed to serve in both an examining and advisory capacity for each advanced degree student.

The responsibilities of the permanent Advisor and members of the Student Advisory Committee are described in detail in the University Graduate Bulletin and in this document (Section VI and Appendix I). Members of the Graduate Faculty hold voting rights at meetings of the Graduate Faculty and are eligible for participation in the election of members to the University Graduate Council. Membership in the Graduate Faculty is a requirement for service on the University Graduate Council (as representative or alternate), an elected position which represents the School of Pharmacy in this institutional body. Nominees for election to University Graduate Council are drawn from the School's faculty to ensure an awareness of issues arising within the School which impact on advanced degree education and to facilitate communication to and from the members of the Graduate Faculty in the School of Pharmacy.

APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

New and continuing membership on the Graduate Faculty is designated on an annual basis by the Chairs of departments offering advanced degree programs. Chairs may nominate fulltime members of the University holding the rank of Assistant Professor or above who hold full or affiliate membership in the respective Department. The list of nominees is submitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies (who makes a recommendation to the Dean), and following approval of the Dean of the School of Pharmacy this is forwarded to the VCU Graduate School for concurrence.

Affiliate membership on the Graduate Faculty may be requested for individuals not satisfying the criteria for membership but who hold special skills or knowledge relevant to activities in advanced degree education. This is a situation that often arises in the constitution of Student Advisory Committees. Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty may serve on Student Advisory Committees but are not eligible for service as a permanent Advisor. Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty may be either designated by the Chair for continuing service on an annual basis (see above, Section V) or appointed for a specific role according to the process detailed below.

Appointment for a period of service as an Affiliate member of the Graduate Faculty occurs as follows. The Chair (usually acting through the Program Director) submits a written request to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies indicating the nominee, the objective of the requested appointment (e.g. service on a specific Student Advisory Committee) and a justification of the suitability of the nomination along with a copy of the curriculum vitae of the nominee. Approved requests are forwarded to the VCU Graduate School by the School of Pharmacy Dean for confirmation. Such appointments as an Affiliate member of the Graduate Faculty are linked to a defined service activity and continue for the duration of that activity as confirmed annually by the Department Chair.

In cases where continuing participation in advanced degree program activities is deemed to be appropriate, an invitation for affiliate membership in the Department should be extended to the individual by the Chair of the Department.

GRADUATE FACULTY APPOINTMENTS SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

The authority to designate individuals for graduate faculty status is restricted to the Chairs of departments. Chairs may only designate faculty for graduate faculty status who hold a primary or secondary appointment in that department and also meet the eligibility criteria expressed in the Bylaws of the VCU Graduate School.

Appointment to the graduate faculty is performed on an **annual** basis. Graduate faculty status is thus not permanent. Graduate faculty status endows the faculty member with the ability to chair thesis and dissertation committees. As applied in the School of Pharmacy, the list of graduate faculty defines the faculty whom the Chairs, the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the Dean approve as appropriate for the essential function of directing and mentoring advanced degree students. The criteria that govern the eligibility of faculty whom a Chair may designate for graduate faculty status are summarized below:

The graduate faculty member must:

1. Hold a primary or secondary appointment in the Department*
2. Be a full-time member of the University*
3. Be at the rank of Assistant Professor or above
4. Have earned the terminal degree (normally the Ph.D.)

Faculty meeting these criteria are eligible for appointment as graduate faculty.

In the School of Pharmacy, we require that faculty serving on graduate student committees hold graduate faculty status, either by appointment to the graduate faculty or by virtue of an ad hoc request for appointment to affiliate faculty status for service for a specific committee. Such ad hoc appointments, which are restricted to the Student Advisory Committee identified in the request to the VCU Graduate School, expire on dissolution of that committee. In addition, the School of Pharmacy requires that individuals who participate in oral comprehensive (Ph.D.) examinations and Master's defense/final examinations hold graduate faculty status (including the School Representative). Similarly, substitutions of committee members when the student

committee functions as an examining body are restricted to faculty holding graduate faculty status.

*The record of reference for the purpose of identifying faculty satisfying criteria 1. and 2. is the listing of faculty appearing in the current Graduate Bulletin. Individuals holding appointments in a VCU department but who do not have a primary appointment at a VCU department or McGuire VA are “external” and are not eligible for Graduate Faculty designation.

Appendix V

DUTIES OF REPRESENTATIVE AND FACULTY ADVISOR FOR M.S. AND Ph.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

A School Representative participates in the final examination for the awarding of the M.S. degree and the oral comprehensive examination for students enrolled in Ph.D. programs. The School Representative supplements the Student Advisory Committee in constituting the examining body. The principal role of the Representative is to ensure that the examination process is conducted equitably and in conformity with University, School and Department guidelines. While scholarly expertise in the disciplinary area for a particular examination is of some advantage, this is not a requirement for service as a Representative. The primary responsibility of the Representative is to ensure that the process of the examination is appropriate, equitable to the student and consistent with the maintenance of standards of excellence in our programs.

Particularly in the case of the Ph.D. oral comprehensive examination, departments have evolved distinct formats for the examination process. In many cases, a written document in the form of a "research proposal" is prepared by the student and distributed in advance to the Committee. This document then serves as a vehicle for initiating the questioning phase of the examination. The Representative will be provided with a brief description of the examination format as employed by the School at the time of appointment; the Representative shall be supplied with a copy of any written document employed in the conduct of the examination in advance, and will follow the protocol applicable to other members of the examining committee. Irrespective of format, the subject matter appropriate for questions at both the M.S. level examination and the Ph.D. oral comprehensive examination includes general knowledge relevant to the disciplinary area, including the subject matter of course work undertaken by the student. While committee members may elect not to question the student in these areas, these remain legitimate areas of inquiry.

Specific responsibilities associated with the conduct of the examination are listed below noting that these responsibilities are borne by the Faculty Advisor for the conduct of the final Ph.D. examination.

1. In advance of the examination, the Representative shall obtain the student's file and examination signature page from the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
2. The Representative shall preside at examinations and
 - a. shall instruct the committee on purpose of exam,
 - b. shall have the student's folder available for circulation or for questions concerning student's background,
 - c. should briefly review student's academic career, including comments on undergraduate and graduate record.
3. After these introductory remarks, the Representative may turn the meeting over to the

Advisor during the questioning period and shall see that examination is of, and for, the student keeping discussion and interruption by the examiners to a minimum.

4. At this stage the advisor or Representative shall set the order of questioning (traditionally, other committee members, Advisor, Representative, visitors), establish any general protocol (i.e. 10-15 minute time period for questioning by an individual; the presentation of a summary statement by the candidate prior to the questioning period, etc.).
5. At the end of a complete round of questioning, the committee membership is asked if there are further questions. A full round of questions followed by a focused second round will occupy approximately two hours.
6. As the duration of the examination approaches two hours, the Representative may call for a brief recess (10-15 minutes). Fatigue and stress, experienced over a prolonged time, have an effect on both the examiners and the examinee. In general, the quality of the examination process deteriorates if extended beyond two and a half hours. It is appropriate for the Representative to ensure that the extension of the examination period does serve to assist the committee in arriving at an appropriate recommendation. Once initiated, an examination may not be continued at a later date. The student will either pass or fail the examination administered on that date.
7. At the conclusion of the questioning the Representative shall excuse the student and request for a motion and second as to the examination outcome. The Representative shall then elicit discussion of the performance ensuring that the duration and focus of the discussion is appropriate. The Representative then calls for a vote on the motion by show of hands. All committee members and Representative must vote on the performance of passing or failing and are the only persons allowed to vote. More than one negative vote on M.S. examination, a Ph.D. oral or a Ph.D. final examination constitutes failure of the examination.
8. The Representative shall recall the student and, before the committee informs the student of the outcome, offer congratulations or condolences as appropriate. The student should be informed (if the examination has not been passed) what recourse might be appropriate. The Representative should remind the student, Faculty Advisor, and student committee members that should the opportunity for a re-examination be deemed appropriate, approval of the School's Graduate Affairs Committee is to be sought by the department on behalf of the student. The Student Advisory Committee has the primary responsibility of formulating a recommendation and communicating the recommendation to the student's Graduate Program Director.
9. The signature page indicating the student passed/failed shall be signed by all committee members, the Representative, and visitors and returned to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies with the student's folder at the conclusion of the examination.

Appendix VI

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Faculty Advisor (not the student) is responsible for constituting the Student Advisory Committee.

1. The minimum Student Advisory Committee for the M.S. student is composed of two faculty members holding a primary appointment in the department housing the program and one additional member from outside the parent department.
2. The minimum Student Advisory Committee for the Ph.D. student is composed of three faculty members holding a primary appointment in the department housing the program and two additional members from outside the parent department.
3. The Faculty Advisor of the student serves as the Chair of the Student Advisory Committee.
4. To maintain standards of academic integrity, students are obligated to follow defined curricular requirements. The curriculum normally is defined by the parent department of the student. Should circumstances arise in which identical curricula are offered by more than a single department, the parent department will be defined as the department of the Faculty Advisor.
5. If the Faculty Advisor does not hold a primary appointment in the department administering the advanced degree, an affiliate appointment to the department is required.
6. For clarity, affiliate appointment in a department shall not disqualify an individual for service as an "outside" member of the Student Advisory Committee. Conversely, affiliate membership in a department will not be interpreted to qualify an individual as holding a primary appointment in the department, even when the individual serves as the Faculty Advisor. Thus, if, for example, an affiliate member of a department serves as the Faculty Advisor for a Ph.D. student, the Advisory Committee must have three faculty holding primary appointments in the department and one additional "outside" member.
7. In order to serve on an Advisory Committee, an individual must be a "full" or affiliate member of the Graduate Faculty. Temporary appointment as an affiliate member of the Graduate Faculty for the purpose of serving on a Student Committee is granted by the VCU Graduate School following review and approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the recommendation of the Dean. (The current version of the By-Laws of the VCU Graduate School is not specific with respect to criteria for temporary appointments as affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty. Until and unless this is changed, the determination of Department Chairs in requesting such appointments and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in approving such recommendations will be followed.)

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The composition of the Student Advisory Committee requires a combination of faculty holding a primary appointment in the department of the student's degree program and faculty from outside the department. We allow faculty members holding an affiliate appointment in the student's department to serve as a "departmental" member, recognizing that (particularly for departments with a small number of faculty) appointment of the requisite number of departmental faculty may, on occasion, be difficult. However, we do not permit a member of the student's department (primary appointment) to serve as an "outside" member of the Student Advisory Committee on the basis of an affiliate appointment held in another department. To do so would de facto compromise the intent of the rules regarding Committee composition. A significant number of our faculty holds affiliate appointments in one or more departments. Allowing a department member to be identified as an "outside" Committee member on the basis of such an appointment would permit Committees composed entirely of the members of a single department. This is contrary to the desirable cross-fertilization of scholarly expertise and administrative experience that is a very real strength of our Committee architecture. Until and unless we change our rules formally, allowing such a precedent is unwise. Committee size is not restricted; a Ph.D. Committee with four "internal" members and two "external" members is within the bounds of our guidelines.

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTIONS/PARTICIPATION

On occasion, faculty schedules create irresolvable conflicts in the timely scheduling of Student Advisory Committee functions including the conduct of candidacy examinations and thesis/dissertation defense examinations. In such cases, a substitute may be appointed as a visiting member of the Committee for the specific activity subject to the following conditions:

- The substitute must be a member of the Graduate Faculty
- The faculty member for whom the substitute is appointed provides a written agreement in advance indicating his/her approval of the individual serving as a substitute
- The Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies is informed of the intended substitution in a timely fashion so the substitution can be approved. As a point of information, participation by a Committee member does not require their physical presence. There is precedent for participation by teleconferencing, as an example.
- For the Final Oral Defense, committee member substitution may only occur by completion and approval by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of a new Student Advisory Committee and Study Plan, [available on GradTrak](#), that reflects the revised Advisory Committee.

COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION BY INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NOT GRADUATE FACULTY

Individuals who are not full-time VCU faculty (and therefore cannot hold appointments as Graduate Faculty) may serve as voting members of a Student Advisory Committee as described above in "Appointment of the Student Advisory Committee".

Submission to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of the completed Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan form naming the individual to the Committee along with a current curriculum vitae (required as a means of verifying the suitability of the requested appointment) is sufficient to request a particular appointment. Such requests are forwarded to the Deans of the School of Pharmacy and VCU Graduate School to complete the approval process.

Such approval is required for all individuals who do not hold Graduate Faculty status. Appointment as an “external affiliate” of a department is not required for such special appointment for service on a Student Advisory Committee nor does holding an “external affiliate” appointment supersede the requirement for special approval of the individual; it is not necessary that the individual hold an academic appointment.

DIRECTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT BY AN INDIVIDUAL WHO DOES NOT HOLD GRADUATE FACULTY STATUS

In special circumstances, the direction of the thesis/dissertation research may occur under the mentorship of an individual who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty. The most common instance of this special circumstance occurs when a member of the VCU Graduate Faculty relocates to another institution and has been identified as the Faculty Advisor of a student. Other possible examples (for which there is precedent) include research projects conducted at an “off-campus” site under the direction of a suitably qualified individual. Such sites may include the laboratory of a collaborator with VCU faculty, a laboratory in the private sector or other sites. In all such circumstances, prior written approval of the arrangement is required to ensure that compliance with academic standards and mentoring of the student will take place.

In all such cases, an Advisor of Record shall be appointed who is a member of the VCU Graduate Faculty. The Advisor of Record (usually a member of the Student Advisory Committee) holds the responsibility of representing the interests of the student, the department and the School of Pharmacy by providing liaison and guidance to the student and mentor at the off-campus location. The Advisor of Record is the local point of contact should questions regarding progress or compliance arise.

The conduct of research training at an off-campus location in no way alters the requirement for regular Student Advisory Committee meetings to monitor timely progress, registration as a student or any institutional or departmental obligations. Because the scholarly activity is conducted off-campus, registration for 1 credit hour each semester fulfills the requirement for continuous enrollment. The conduct of examinations performed in fulfillment of degree requirements in such circumstances will take place at VCU. In any such cases, the following procedure is required.

- Prior to the initiation of the research conducted at the off-campus location a written description of the arrangement, including a justification and endorsement from the Chair of the department housing the student’s program, shall be submitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for approval.
- The description of the arrangement will be accompanied by the Graduate Student Advisory Committee and Course Plan approval form, identifying the Advisor of Record

and requesting approval of the proposed mentor for service on the Student Advisory Committee

With the above approvals in place, the individual directing the thesis/dissertation research may be so identified on the thesis/dissertation document. There is no requirement to indicate the Advisor of Record in the thesis/dissertation.

The process outlined below is the recommended procedure to follow should faculty relocation from VCU be involved.

- Forward a letter to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, School of Pharmacy requesting that the faculty member be allowed to serve on all currently active student committees (if desired) including those on which the faculty member is the Advisor. List all student names. Include a current curriculum vitae for the faculty member.
- For those students for whom the faculty member is the Advisor, an “Advisor of Record” who is a full-time member of the University in the home department should be indicated. A member of the current Student Advisory Committee can so serve.

Appendix VII

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES RELATED TO THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

The thesis/dissertation is the written statement of the research conducted in satisfaction of degree requirements, which forms the basis of the final examination and (in its final form) is intended for dissemination to the scientific community and the public. The content of the thesis/dissertation must be sufficient to allow the Student Advisory Committee, in its function as the examining body, to judge the appropriateness of the work and its description as a satisfactory fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for a thesis/dissertation project to be research conducted under aegis of proprietary agreement that precludes the timely release of such information. This would limit the information content of the thesis/dissertation to a degree compromising the ability of the Student Advisory Committee to render judgment, and potentially restrict the career development of the student. This does not imply that research involving proprietary information and/or content for which intellectual property protection is desirable is excluded from consideration as thesis/dissertation projects.

In most cases, there is an expectation that sensitive information be held in confidence for a defined period (usually twelve months or less) to allow for the implementation of intellectual property protection, which would be compromised by the release of information into the public domain. A procedure to accommodate such circumstances is described below.

However, the details of any particular circumstance will vary and are difficult to anticipate. Ultimately, the Student Advisory Committee holds the authority and responsibility for assessing the content of the thesis/dissertation in satisfying the requirements for the degree and serving as the basis for judging the qualification of the student. It is thus imperative that the Student Advisory Committee be consulted by the Faculty Advisor as soon as such issues arise.

INCLUSION OF PROPRIETARY INFORMATION IN THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

Should circumstances arise where the thesis/dissertation document includes information deemed proprietary, restriction of the use and dissemination of such information may be arranged by the advance written consent of the involved parties. This would normally include the student, the Faculty Advisor, members of the Student Advisory Committee including individuals who are privy to such information by virtue of their participation in the conduct of the final examination, and the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. Such written consent should include constraints on the dissemination or use of information as appropriate and may take the form of a Confidentiality Agreement, recognizing that signatories to such an agreement undertake any legal obligations entailed.

To protect the proprietary nature of the information, the completed and approved thesis/dissertation document will not be released for archival storage in the institutional library system until given written approval by the Advisor and student, nor will the document be submitted for public dissemination. The completed thesis/dissertation, including all signature pages and forms required for archiving the document (including the submission of copies for binding) will be held by the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, School of Pharmacy pending receipt of the written release. The Advisor and student remain responsible for the submission of the document to the University Library System. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the delay in submission of the document for release into the public domain should not exceed 12 months from the date of the successful completion of the final examination.

Appendix VIII

USE OF THE VCU GRADUATE SCHOOL SPECIAL ACTION FORM

A copy of the "Request for Special Action" Form is appended. Use of the Special Action Form is required for a variety of actions, including those listed on the form (e.g. extension of time limit for degree, leave of absence, etc.). Please note that a justification for the action for which approval is sought should accompany the form as a letter/memorandum. The justification can be brief but should provide a rationale for the action taken.

The Special Action Form should be employed as the means of documenting changes in student status (e.g. change in degree program from M.S. to Ph.D., change in department in which the student is enrolled, etc.) Use of the "Other" category is appropriate for such changes in status.

The Special Action Form is also employed to secure permission to register for one-credit hour in the final term of a degree program. Such permission is based on the assumption that completion of degree requirements is imminent and would take place early in the term. This expectation should be reflected in the request.

The Request for Special Action form can be found on the VCU Graduate School web page (<http://www.vcu.edu/graduate/gf/forms.html>) or can be obtained from the Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.