Biomedical Engineering Department Procedures for Academic Performance Review and Academic Probation and Dismissal for Ph.D. Students

Part I.

The Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Policy on Probation and Dismissal for Academic Reasons was approved April 24, 2014 by the Graduate Council and is embodied in the Biomedical Engineering Department Plan as follows. All students in the Ph.D. program are expected to satisfy the academic performance requirements of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, which can be found in The Graduate School Bulletin’s General Requirements section.

In addition, all doctoral students are expected to satisfy the Department’s additional academic performance requirements, which are described as written in the “Policies and Regulations Governing Graduate Students in the Department of Biomedical Engineering” manual.

Department specific criteria for satisfactory academic progress are listed on the attached document.

Part II.

Statement of Department Standard Procedure to manage decisions regarding probation and dismissal when the student fails to meet criteria listed above.

Academic performance of all Ph.D. students is reviewed on an Annual basis by the Graduate Studies Committee. Annual student progress reports are required from both mentor and student starting at the end of the second year of the program. These are reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee to assess research progress and identify potential roadblocks to progress toward degree.

Review process for probation:

The Department has designated the Graduate Studies Committee to manage decisions regarding placement on probation, removal from probation, recommendations for dismissal after a probationary period, and recommendations for immediate dismissal due to extreme underperformance.

This Committee is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies and made up of members appointed by the Department Chair. If it is determined by the Graduate Studies Committee by a majority vote of the committee (the Director shall serve as a tie-breaker if the votes are evenly divided) that the student is not satisfactorily meeting the academic requirements of the Program based on the above criteria, the Graduate Studies Committee will consider whether the student should be placed on probation or if extreme underperformance immediately dismissed from the Program, in accordance with the GSAS Policy on Probation and Dismissal for Academic Reasons. Normally, a probationary period would be no less than three months and, where probation criteria involve coursework, the
probationary period will normally consist of one semester.

Situation where lack of progress on research toward degree is the criterion for 3 month probation: In the case of a lack of progress on research, the mentor may submit a letter requesting that the student be put on probation. The Director of Graduate Studies will then meet with both the student and the mentor to gather additional information. The Director of Graduate Studies shall present the letter from the mentor along with a summary of the meetings to the Graduate Studies Committee. If the Committee determines that the student should be placed on probation, the mentor will be asked to draw up a 3 month plan for the student with monthly milestones that can be assessed by the Committee. The student will receive the plan from the Director of Graduate Studies and shall submit monthly updates to the Committee via the Director of Graduate Studies as to his/her completion of the milestones. At the end of the 3 months, a final report from the student and mentor will be submitted outlining the completion of the milestones. The committee will then review whether to remove probation, extend a second probationary period or recommend dismissal from the program. The student will have the option of switching mentors/labs at any point in the probationary process and would receive a new probationary period (3 months) in the new lab.

There may be circumstances in which a student may be placed on probation for less than three months. If a student fails a qualifying exam, the committee may give the student 2 months to complete the retake of the exam. This option is generally exercised for students taking the exams in June, where a retake in August would allow to student to convert to an MS degree (and add an additional class to allow December degree completion) should the student fail the retake. This allows the student to avoid paying tuition for the Spring semester and also allows them to apply for alternative programs in the fall semester.

Notification of the student:
The student will be notified of the Graduate Studies Committee decision in writing, including an explanation of academic performance issues leading to probation or immediate dismissal and, if applicable, any requirements for what must be done within a specified period of time during the probationary period in order for the student to return to good standing. The written probation letter should generally be accompanied by the opportunity for the student to meet with the DGS or designated departmental faculty representatives for clarifying discussion(s), and copied to the Dean of GSAS.

All students on probationary status will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee after each semester to determine whether the student should be (a) removed from probation and returned to good standing; (b) continued on probation; or (c) dismissed from the program. The student will be notified of the COMMITTEE decision in writing.

If a student is dismissed from the program, the student will be notified in writing and will have the opportunity to appeal such dismissal in accordance with the GSAS Policy on Probation and Dismissal.
Biomedical Engineering Department-Specific Criteria for Satisfactory Academic Progress:

1. Completion of at least 2 research rotations (with rotation reports submitted) by the end of the 1st year.
2. Assignment to thesis research lab by the end of 1st year.
3. Successful completion of Qualifying Exam by the end of the first year.
4. Thesis committee formed by end of December of the 3rd year.
5. Basic teaching requirement completed by the end of the third year.
6. Thesis proposal successfully completed by end of third year.
7. Title Scope and Procedure form submitted by end of third year.
8. Advanced teaching requirement completed by end of fourth year.
9. Completion of annual student progress reports.
10. Completion of annual meetings with thesis committee.
11. Overall GPA of 3.0 or greater must be maintained.
12. Passing grade for departmental seminar each semester enrolled.
13. Professional performance in research lab including compliance with safety and regulatory requirements for research project (e.g. human subjects, HIPAA, animal welfare, academic integrity).
14. Appropriate research progress to toward completion of degree as assessed by the thesis committee and the Graduate Studies Committee.