

PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering
Thesis Master's Handbook

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PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering

Thesis Master's Graduate Handbook

Important Notice: Immigration regulations and university policies may change. International students should always consult [International Students and Scholars \(ISS\)](#) for the most current requirements and guidance. In the event of conflicting information, ISS guidance takes precedence.

Mission & Vision

Overall Vision for Weldon Grad Program: Aspirations of the Program

An exceptional graduate education and training program that empowers the next generation of leaders in biomedical engineering to contribute to improving healthcare delivery, patient outcomes, and quality of life through pioneering scientific discoveries and their translation.

Overall Mission for Weldon Grad Program: Achieving our Vision

To provide an exceptional training environment for Weldon School's trainees that is grounded in 1) broad mentorship from faculty, staff, and peers, 2) a consistent curriculum grounded in both fundamental theories and practical applications of biomedical engineering that prepares trainees to perform ethically, scientifically, and technically rigorous research, 3) facilities for performing collaborative, multi-disciplinary research using cross-functional methods, 4) individualized professional development opportunities, and 5) an environment with a shared culture and values that allows each trainee to achieve their highest potential.

Core Values of the Weldon Grad Program: What We Stand for

- We collectively hold all individuals to a high standard of ethical and respectful behavior.
- We provide exceptional mentorship of trainees (broad-based faculty, staff, and peer mentoring of each individual).
- We implement empathy, grace, and intentionality in all our activities.
- We provide BME graduate students with support for a well-rounded training environment where they can achieve their highest potential.
- We support graduate students' engagement in professional development opportunities that will enhance and strengthen their portfolio for their chosen career path.
- We celebrate each member's unique lived experiences and perspective and collectively make the Weldon School a community that people want to engage with.

Hallmarks of a Weldon Master's degree

- Critical analysis of challenges to human health and wellbeing, through evaluation of emerging and existing solutions, identification of gaps, and generation of testable hypotheses in significant biomedical research areas.
- Rigorous and reproducible methods, experiments, and data analyses.
- Development and/or use of innovative technologies, techniques, and methods to overcome critical biomedical challenges.
- Excellence in scientific and technical communication, through critical analysis, interpretation, and dissemination skills that move the field forward.
- Ethical conduct of research.

Commitment to Good Mentoring

Respect and Integrity are the bedrock of our community. A lasting and impactful mentoring relationship is a result of clear communication and expectations, professionalism, and consistency. We celebrate and recognize the individuality of each community member. We expect contributions from all and build relationships through collaboration, networking, and team work. We value **developing the individual**. We support the person where they are and coach them to meet their professional and personal goals. We celebrate failures and successes as critical pieces of the growth process.

As biomedical engineers at Purdue, we are taking intentional steps to act against all forms of racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, transphobia, and other structures of oppression embedded in the fabric of our society. We understand that this commitment is a long-term endeavor and affirm efforts that improve the climate within our academic institution.

We will actively strive to educate ourselves, humbly learn from our missteps, and to commit to building a safe climate where our faculty, staff, and students can thrive. We commit to actively celebrating, learning from, promoting, and advocating for all of our students, staff and faculty.

Preferred Communication Methods

Your student support team uses many ways to communicate important information to students. The most common means of communication is your Purdue email. Students must check their Purdue email daily. Student support staff provide links to schedule one-on-one meetings within their email signature blocks. These links utilize BoilerConnect and should be used for all 1:1 meeting requests. Students will also receive a weekly newsletter via email from the grad office with professional development opportunities as well as job announcements. Our team is available year-round and can assist in answering a variety of questions pertaining to your training.

Academic Integrity and Generative AI Use

Academic Integrity

Refer to the University [Academic Integrity and You: Graduate Edition](#) for information and examples of academic integrity and dishonesty.

Generative AI Use Policy

Graduate program level educational documents like the written thesis document are intended to demonstrate independent analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of ideas, data, and findings generated

by the student in their research of scholarly literature and experimental discovery. These student works are evaluated for independent scholarly ability and technical mastery in a particular field or fields related to biomedical engineering. As such, any use of generative AI must be clearly indicated as supportive and supplemental assistance in the scholarly effort. Appropriate quotation and citation must be documented for use of AI generated text and any lack will be considered as plagiarism and academic dishonesty with repercussions as indicated in the [Purdue Academic Code of Conduct](#).

Responsible Conduct in Research

All Purdue graduate students must satisfactorily complete the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) requirement as outlined on the Office of Research website before the end of their first semester.

Minimum Academic Standards

There are many [resources](#) available to help with your academic success. Reach out to someone you trust either in the department or someone else on campus whenever you feel additional support is needed.

GPA Requirements

To be in good standing with BME and Purdue University, students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above for the duration of the program. If your semester and/or your overall GPA fall below 3.0/4.0 or if you receive a letter grade of a C or below, you and your faculty advisor will receive an academic notice letter from the BME Graduate Programs Office. If your GPA remains below a 3.0 for more than three consecutive semesters (not including summer), you will be dismissed from the program regardless if you are meeting the University standard. If you fall below the University's guidelines, you can be dismissed from the university prior to the BME three semester policy.

Research Grades

Each semester the student should initiate a discussion with their faculty research advisor about research and performance expectations required to earn a satisfactory grade in research for that term. It is highly recommended that the student utilize the [Graduate Research Credit Expectations Agreement form](#) to facilitate this discussion at the beginning of every semester.

For the first Unsatisfactory (U) in research, the student will receive an academic notice warning letter and BME graduate programs leadership will meet with the student to schedule a mediation meeting. For two (2) U's consecutively (and no more than three (3) total), student will be dismissed from the program.

Funding Implications

It is at the discretion of the BME faculty research advisor whether or not to offer research assistantship funding to their thesis master's students. Students might choose to pursue other funding opportunities outside of a research assistantship. Many financial awards will require you to maintain a GPA of a 3.0 or better to maintain your funding. Therefore, funding may be rescinded before a dismissal from the program occurs. If you have a fellowship or other source of funding (especially external funding), those resources may have more stringent guidelines. Always refer to your offer or award letter when evaluating your funding status.

If you feel action taken by the BME Graduate Program is not warranted or if you have extenuating circumstances, you may follow the waiver procedure in this handbook (see Petitions for BME Programmatic Waivers in this handbook).

Master's Degree Navigation

A series of steps have been developed to facilitate the training of our thesis master's students on their pathway to becoming independent researchers in biomedical engineering. The following skills are hallmarks of a Purdue MSBME and place our students in a position to succeed and become leaders in one or more of many possible career paths (e.g., academia, industry, clinical, global health):

- Apply and synthesize a deep understanding of the theories, methods and techniques in biomedical engineering.
- Demonstrate the ability to make critically reasoned, ethical, and socially responsible engineering decisions in a variety of scenarios.
- Bridge life science and engineering approaches and concepts to address current and emerging biomedical applications.
- Contribute to biomedical engineering solutions through clear communication, effective negotiation and strategic leadership.

The MSBME navigation steps are checkpoints for thesis master's students to demonstrate expected competencies in the above skills as they progress through the program. They are also critical opportunities to identify areas of professional growth for each trainee and for the faculty to provide them with the mentoring they need. The following is a guide to the successful completion of the BME thesis master's degree program:

Prior to First Registration

- Confer with faculty advisor for guidance on courses to take in the first semester. Consult with BME Graduate Programs office as needed.
- Self-register for courses and research credits through [myPurdue](#) before the semester begins.

During First Semester

- Satisfy applicable English proficiency requirements and all other admission conditions (e.g., submission of final transcripts to the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars (OGSPS) office and fulfill immunization requirements). Refer to your OGSPS admission letter for details.
- Select a thesis advisory committee with input from your faculty research advisor.
- Hold a meeting with your thesis advisory committee regarding research objectives and Plan of Study (POS). Refer to the [MS curriculum requirements](#) when planning your coursework.
- Submit your electronic POS (ePOS) through [myPurdue](#) following [POS submission instructions](#). **BME master's students are required to submit the ePOS by the end of the first semester of the MS program.**

Every Semester

- Initiate a discussion with faculty research advisor about research and performance expectations required to earn a satisfactory grade in research for the term. It is highly recommended that the student utilize the [Graduate Research Credit Expectations Agreement form](#) to facilitate this discussion at the beginning of every semester.
- Confer with faculty advisor for guidance if semester course registration will vary from approved plan of study on file. Consult with BME Graduate Programs office as needed.
- Self-register for courses and research credits through [myPurdue](#) before the semester begins.

Prior to Final Semester

- Review online plan of study to ensure that all degree requirements are met. Submit an online change to the plan of study form if any courses completed vary from the plan of study.
- Discuss future plans with faculty research advisor and the BME Associate Director of Graduate Programs.
- Review instructions under 'Defense' in this handbook in advance of final semester, and consult with the BME Graduate Programs office with any questions.
- Review Purdue [graduation deadlines](#) in advance of final semester, and consult with the BME Graduate Programs office with any questions.

During Final Semester

- Follow instructions listed under 'Written Thesis' and 'Defense' in this handbook for guidance on writing your thesis and the defense and thesis deposit process. Consult with the BME Graduate Programs office with any questions.
- Prior to the [deadline to declare candidacy](#), request that your faculty research advisor confirm your expected graduation via email to the BME Lead Graduate Program Assistant so that they may register you as a candidate for graduation in your final semester.

BME Thesis Master's Degree Requirements

Enrollment Requirements

BME thesis master's students with funding (RA, TA, GA, Fellowship), and international students (whether funded or not), are required to register full-time each fall, spring, and summer semester. Full-time registration in fall and spring semesters is 8 to 18 credit hours, and in summer sessions is 6 to 9 credit hours. This could be combined course work and research, or just research credits. The combined plan of study course credits and research credits must equal at least 30 credits (21 credits course work, 9 credits MS research) to meet the MS degree requirements for graduation.

Self-funded BME thesis master's students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. may choose to register less than full-time. Students are responsible for monitoring their semester registration level to ensure successful completion of at least 30 credits by the end of their degree program.

Core Competency Course Requirements

- 21 minimum credit hours of graduate-level course work (courses numbered 500 and 600).
 - 21 credits is a minimum. The student's thesis committee may require additional courses.
 - Only 3-credit hour 500- or 600-level courses will count toward the 21 credit hours of core competency requirements. 1- or 2-credit courses might be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Students may choose to take additional courses for their own professional development as their time allows, or as required by their committee.
- 6 cr. hr. [BME](#)
- 3 cr. hr. [Quantitative / Analytical](#)
- 3 cr. hr. [Life Sciences](#)
- 9 cr. hr. [Other Graduate Coursework](#)

Students admitted to the combined BME BS/MS degree program may use a maximum of 12 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate (whether dual-counted or in excess or combination of both) toward the master's degree requirements. Grades in each course must be B- or better. BME BS/MS students admitted to the [Regulatory Affairs and Regulatory Science for Medical Devices graduate certificate program](#) must take all three required courses as a graduate student (after graduating with the BS).

Seminar Requirements

Successful completion of two (2) semesters of BME Seminar (BME 69000) is required for the master's degree requirements. BME Seminar, which is a series of distinguished speakers and experts in the field, is held each fall and spring semester on Wednesdays at 9:30 AM. Students might choose to take the BME Graduate Student Research Seminar as one of the two required. BME Graduate Student Research Seminar (also BME 69000), which is a series of BME PhD student speakers about their research, is held each fall semester at 9:30 AM.

Plan of Study Advisory Committee

Plan of Study Advisory Committee Makeup

Broad advising on the student's thesis research and training plan is important throughout the master's degree program. The Plan of Study Advisory Committee must include:

- at least three (3) members total (one being your faculty research advisor)
- at least two (2) of which must be BME faculty members from the Weldon School

If a committee member selected is from outside of Purdue, a request for a special graduate faculty appointment must be filed with the OGSPS at least 30 days prior to the plan or study due date. Contact the BME Graduate Programs office for assistance.

Research Project and Registration Requirements

Students must register for research credits, which is BME 69800 under the faculty research advisor's name, each fall, spring, and summer semester.

The research question should be chosen to allow the student to develop an original set of Specific Aims that will impactfully advance the current state of the chosen research field. The choice must be supported by a well-developed scientific premise based on review of the relevant scientific literature.

Specifically, the Research Question or Specific Aims:

- must be novel and distinct from the student's past research projects.
- can be related to ongoing work in the mentor's lab but must be novel and distinct from ongoing or proposed research projects being conducted by the mentor, postdocs, graduate students, undergraduates, or technicians.
- must be different from those of research groups actively collaborating with the mentor's laboratory.

In choosing a Research Question and Specific Aims, the student should focus on what they can do that is independent and that will have significant impact on advancing the field. The student should challenge themselves to be innovative, but in impactful ways that will facilitate the field to move forward.

Transfer Courses

Up to 3 credits of graduate-level coursework beyond the BS degree and which has not been applied to a subsequent degree may be transferred from another university. This will require appropriate documentation from that university. Transfer courses must be 3 credits with grades of B- or better. Both required BME core competency courses must be taken through the Weldon School of BME at Purdue.

Courses that will not transfer to a BME Plan of Study

- Graduate-level courses that fulfilled undergraduate degree requirements;
- Undergraduate-level courses;
- Seminar courses;
- Project or independent study courses.

Registering for Classes

[Registration Basics](#)

[Using myPurdue to Self-Register for Courses](#)

[Schedule of Classes](#)

[myPurdue](#)

Electronic Plans of Study

[How to Use the Electronic Plan of Study System](#)

Written Thesis

Students must use one of the OGSPS-provided templates for formatting the written thesis. Refer to [Thesis and Dissertation Policies and Practices](#) for detailed instructions. *NOTE: The BME graduate program has no specific formatting requirements beyond those of the OGSPS Thesis/Dissertation office. Consult with your faculty research advisor and committee members on their preferred format.*

To help students better prepare in advance of their final thesis deposit deadline, all students planning to graduate with a master's degree will be asked to submit their thesis file for a format consultation to the OGSPS by a specified deadline in their graduation semester.

Defense

Thesis Advisory Committee

The Plan of Study Advisory Committee generally also serves as the Thesis Advisory Committee for the defense; however, changes to the committee are allowable as long as at least two members are BME faculty in the Weldon School.

In order for a student to demonstrate that they have met the independent-research expectations for the master's degree, they must defend their work in the public domain. Likewise, they are expected to be able to disseminate their work to the field and thus must also write a comprehensive thesis documenting their research. This document is intended to provide a cohesive and comprehensive story of how all their thesis-research projects fit together to advance the field by filling in existing gaps within the scientific literature regarding a significant research question. This detailed document also often serves as an archive of their work for future students in the lab and, as such, is often more detailed than the journal papers that come from this work.

Logistics & Timing

Deciding when a student is ready to defend is a shared decision between the student and the thesis committee and should be made based on a mutual agreement of when a student has met the requirements for the MSBME degree and in alignment with the OGSPS policies. Note that BME BS/MS combined degree students are expected to graduate no more than one calendar year from the start of master's degree study.

Once agreement is reached, the faculty research advisor must notify the BME Graduate Programs office via e-mail to add the student's name to that semester's candidate list. The OGSPS sets specific deadlines - for registering as a candidate for graduation, scheduling the defense, and completing the thesis deposit - which candidates must meet in order to be eligible for graduation. Candidates are strongly encouraged to provide the finalized thesis document to their Thesis Advisory Committee at least two weeks before the scheduled oral defense. Given these stringent timelines, students should identify their applicable deadlines several months before the intended graduation semester.

Preparing for and Scheduling Your Defense

Required steps:

- Prior to the [deadline to declare candidacy](#), request that your faculty research advisor confirm your expected graduation via email to the BME Lead Graduate Program Assistant so that they may register you as a graduation candidate for your final semester.
- Arrange the date and time of your defense with your research advisor/s and Thesis Advisory committee members.
- Reserve an appropriate conference room or classroom to hold your defense. MJIS 2001 is the commonly used room and reservation requests must be submitted at <https://forms.office.com/r/c3YZakRNd0>. Set up a remote meeting link (Teams, Zoom, WebEx) if needed.
- At least two weeks prior to proposed defense date, submit the online GS Form 8 (found on the Graduate Student Card in myPurdue) to officially schedule your defense with the OGSPS.

- At least 2 weeks prior to the defense date, send the written thesis document and CV to Thesis Advisory committee members.
- Email to the Lead Graduate Program Assistant the following information for announcing your defense to the Weldon BME community:
 1. Your full name
 2. Title of the Thesis Research
 3. Names of Thesis Committee members, with Major Professor designated
 4. Date, time, and place of the defense, and remote meeting link if applicable
 5. An abstract (no more than 350 words) of the thesis proposal clearly defining the problem and its significance

Following the successful completion of your defense, complete the electronic thesis deposit following the instructions on the [OGSPS Thesis/Dissertation](#) website.

Expectations

In the oral defense and written document, students must demonstrate that they have met the BME expectations of master's graduates including the ability to:

- Critically analyze the literature to identify gaps in a biomedical area
- Design experiments to address these gaps
- Develop and/or use technology to perform these experiments
- Critically analyze, interpret, and disseminate their own data to move the field forward in translationally relevant ways

It is also expected within their defense and thesis document that students will demonstrate they have carried out their own research by adhering to all principles for responsible conduct of research. There is no set number of published papers required to graduate with a master's in BME.

Possible outcomes

- Be certified by the faculty for the master's degree
- NOT be certified by the faculty for the master's degree
 - o Student could be withdrawn from the Graduate Records
 - o Student could defend again in a subsequent semester only with specific conditions and with approval of the faculty advisor and thesis committee

Defense results are documented by the faculty chair and Thesis Advisory committee members and reported to the OGSPS via the online Report of Master's Examining Committee form (GS Form 7).

Graduation

The table below shows approximate deadlines for steps leading up to graduation with the BME master's degree. **THESE DATES ARE APPROXIMATE.** You must confirm exact dates with the BME Graduate Programs Office and refer to the [Purdue OGSPS Calendar](#).

	TO GRADUATE IN AUGUST	TO GRADUATE IN DECEMBER	TO GRADUATE IN MAY

File online Plan of Study with the OGSPS	Always due by end of first MS semester	Always due by end of first MS semester	Always due by end of first MS semester
Declare candidacy (faculty advisor email confirmation to BME Grad Office who will enroll student in appropriate CAND course or Degree Only*)	Upon registration for summer, but no later than first week of June	Upon registration for fall, but no later than second week of September	Upon registration for spring, but no later than second week of February
Schedule Final Oral Defense (via online GS form 8 with all signatures)	At least 2 weeks prior to proposed defense date	At least 2 weeks prior to proposed defense date	At least 2 weeks prior to proposed defense date
OGSPS Thesis Format Review	Early July	Early November	End of March
Pass Final Oral Defense (via online GS 7 with all signatures)	Mid July	Late November	Mid April
Deposit Thesis	Late July	Early December	Late April

*Students completing degrees between semesters or who plan to defend early in a semester might be eligible for Degree Only registration at a reduced rate. Students must be registered for at least one research credit in the previous semester to be eligible to register Degree Only.

Changing from Master's degree to PhD

A BME master's student making swift and positive progress in research and academics might be recommended by their faculty research advisor to forgo the master's degree and change to the BME PhD program. Because there are differences in degree requirements and timelines and other factors to consider, BME master's students in this situation are required to schedule a meeting with the BME Graduate Programs office and the BME Director of Graduate Programs to discuss all aspects of such a change and address any questions to ensure full understanding before the change of degree objective will be considered for approval. The faculty research advisor must have funding available for the student (affirmed by the BME business office) in order to make this change. International students must first consult with the Purdue International Students & Scholars (ISS) office on the implications and required steps for making such a change. If approved, the BME Graduate Programs office will assist with the paperwork necessary to request the degree program change. Final approval is made at the discretion of the OGSPS.

Continuing for PhD after MS graduation

At times a student might wish to continue on for PhD study and training in the same lab after MS graduation. Students should first discuss this possibility with their faculty research advisor who must have funding available for the student (affirmed by the BME business office). If the advisor approves, the BME Graduate Programs office will assist with the steps and paperwork necessary to request the degree program change. International students must first consult with the Purdue International Students & Scholars (ISS) office on the implications and required steps for making such a change. Final approval is made at the discretion of the OGSPS.

Changing Major Advisor

On occasion, graduate students will need to change their faculty research advisor. This change may be student-initiated, advisor-initiated, or may result from the advisor leaving the university. Processes and options differ for the three situations and are detailed below. Faculty members and students should review these processes and work together to have clear communication about expectations and needs when working through such a change. The BME Associate Head of Academic Programs, BME Director of Graduate Programs, and the BME Graduate Programs office must be informed and consulted about potential changes **before any decision is made or action taken**.

The student's thesis advisory committee can also serve as consultants/mentors who can help guide major advisor and student through inevitable difficult conversations.

Student-Initiated Major Advisor Change

Students should be aware that a change in faculty research advisor might result in:

- Limited choice of a new advisor as fewer faculty may be available to accept students.
- Funding could be at risk and you may need to find alternative funding resources.
- Progression through the MSBME program milestones and graduation may be delayed.

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their situation directly with their faculty research advisor as early as possible to attempt to resolve any issues. If such discussions are not satisfactory then the student should engage the members of their Thesis Advisory committee, another trusted faculty member, BME Graduate Committee members, the BME Director of Graduate Programs, or the Associate Head of Academic Programs to assist with negotiations and resolutions, depending upon how far they have progressed in the BME master's degree program (see [Conflict Resolution Flow Chart](#)).

If there is concern about confidentiality, the student should clearly ask about confidentiality prior to any conversation. Confidentiality will be maintained within [BME and university guidelines](#). As mandatory Title IX reporters, faculty and departmental staff may be required to report situations to the Purdue Office of Institutional Equity (OIE).

If the student determines, after such consultation and attempts at resolution, that they still desire to find another research group to complete their degree program, potential new faculty research advisors should then be sought by the student. If students plan to stay in BME, they are strongly encouraged to participate in 2 lab rotations in the same semester. If after one semester of rotations a student is not able to find a lab, alternative pathways will need to be discussed.

The student should recognize that the potential new faculty research advisor may wish to discuss the situation with the current faculty research advisor and other faculty. The potential new faculty research advisor should ask for consent from the student prior to contacting the current faculty research advisor.

Once a new faculty research advisor has been identified, the student should notify the BME Graduate Programs office to request the change. The Grad Programs office will then follow-up with the new faculty research advisor for confirmation and any other information that may be needed.

If a plan of study has already been approved, it is the responsibility of the student to discuss with the new faculty research advisor any revisions to courses on the plan of study or thesis advisory committee members and to make the necessary course and committee changes in a timely manner.

The student should also initiate a discussion, with the current and new advisors, BME Graduate Programs Office staff, and BME Business Office (if funding is involved) for the timing of transfer of lab and funding (if applicable). Normal lab checkout procedures will apply to all transfers, including the required cleanup. Research materials including all lab notebooks, samples, equipment, and electronic data are expected to remain with the original thesis advisor unless other arrangements have been made in writing. Students may request access or obtain copies of these materials if sanctioned by the original faculty research advisor. It is the choice of the original advisor if they will allow the student to include work from their laboratory in the student's thesis or in any public presentation or publication and these requests and decisions should be discussed early and documented immediately in written form.

Advisor-Initiated Major Advisor Change

Advisor-Initiated Removal from a Research Group

When a student is not making satisfactory academic or research progress (see Minimum Academic Standards), a major professor/thesis advisor may initiate the student's separation from their research group.

Prior to initiating removal, the faculty advisor is expected to:

- Communicate concerns to the student in writing, with a copy provided to the Graduate Programs Office.
- Reference relevant documentation such as the Research Credit Expectations Form, Individual Development Plans (IDPs) if applicable, mentoring meeting notes, and other supporting records.
- Clearly identify specific performance gaps and provide examples.
- Outline reasonable actions the student can take to address the gaps.
- Inform the student that continued failure to address these gaps may result in removal from the research group.

Following the written warning, the thesis advisor and student will meet to discuss the identified concerns and develop a written improvement plan that includes specific action items, expectations, and timelines for improvement. At the student's request, they may invite another

faculty member or a graduate program staff member to attend the meeting as a source of support.

If the student does not successfully meet the agreed-upon expectations by the end of the semester, the advisor may dismiss the student from the research group and assign a grade of "U" in research.

Please note that if there are two (2) U's consecutively (and no more than three (3) total), student will be dismissed from the program as outlined in the minimum academic standards under research grades section of the handbook.

Seeking a New Advisor

A student who is removed from a research group has both the right and responsibility to actively seek a new advisor. The student is encouraged to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, Associate Head of Academic Programs, thesis committee members, and other faculty members during this process.

Students may consider research groups outside of Biomedical Engineering if those opportunities better align with their research interests and career goals. If a student joins a research group in another academic department, a transfer to that department's graduate program may be required, if allowed.

No faculty member is obligated to accept a student who has been removed from another faculty member's research group.

Maintaining Adequate Academic Progress

Students seeking a new advisor will be permitted one academic semester (excluding summer) to complete lab rotations and identify a permanent research advisor.

During this period, the student will enroll in research credits under the Associate Head of Academic Programs, Director of Graduate Studies, or another neutral BME faculty representative designated by the Associate Head of Academic Programs.

By the end of the rotation semester, the student must secure a permanent master's faculty research advisor. If students are not able to secure an advisor, the BME graduate programs office will work collaboratively with the student to explore alternative pathways. These options may include transferring to another graduate program or institution, or transitioning to a thesis- or professional-based Master of Science degree, if allowed.

Research Misconduct

If a student is suspected of research misconduct, the faculty advisor may remove the student from the laboratory before the end of the semester.

In such cases, the faculty member will follow the procedures outlined by the Office of the Provost for reviewing allegations of research misconduct.

Unless otherwise directed, the student may remain enrolled in the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering and participate in advisor rotations under the same timeline as listed above while the allegation is under review.

Transitioning Out of a Research Group

Upon leaving a research group, the student should meet with the current advisor and the Graduate Programs Office to establish an appropriate timeline for transitioning research responsibilities, funding, and laboratory access.

All standard laboratory checkout procedures, including required cleanup activities, must be completed before departure.

Unless otherwise agreed upon in writing:

- Laboratory notebooks, samples, equipment, and research materials remain the property of the original research group.
- Electronic and physical research data remain with the original advisor.
- Students may request copies of research materials or continued access to data, subject to approval by the original advisor.

The original advisor will determine whether research conducted within their laboratory may be included in the student's thesis, presentations, publications, or other public disclosures. Expectations regarding future use of research products should be discussed as early as possible and documented in writing.

Identification of a New Thesis Advisor

Once a new thesis advisor has been identified, the student must notify the Graduate Programs Office and submit:

- A request for a change of advisor;
- Written confirmation and financial commitment (in the form of an offer letter, if applicable) from the new advisor.

If the student's Plan of Study has already been approved, the student is responsible for consulting with the new advisor regarding any necessary revisions to coursework, committee membership, or other degree requirements and submitting the appropriate updates in a timely manner.

Funding During Advisor Transitions

Students who are funded at the time of separation from a research group will ideally continue to receive funding through the end of the academic semester in which the separation occurs, provided they remain in good academic and continue to make satisfactory progress toward degree requirements. Summer funding under advisor transition is not guaranteed unless otherwise agreed upon by the faculty advisor, the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering, or another funding source.

During the advisor search and rotation period, funding arrangements will be determined by the Associate Head of Academic Programs in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and other appropriate faculty and administrative personnel, and is not guaranteed.

Faculty members who agree to host a student for a rotation are not obligated to provide financial support during the rotation period unless such support is agreed upon in advance.

Once a new thesis advisor has been identified, responsibility for the student's funding will transfer to the new advisor according to a timeline established with the new advisor and the business office, and is not guaranteed.

Options if Major Advisor Leaves Purdue

There is no formal faculty policy regarding student options when a major advisor leaves Purdue. There are typically several different options to consider depending on the exact circumstances. Students are encouraged to consult with their Thesis Advisory committee members and BME Associate Head of Academic Programs and Director of Graduate Programs to consider options. A student might choose to remain at Purdue and switch to a new advisor, or may explore transfer to the new university with the Major Advisor, if allowed. In the case of transfer, the BME Graduate Programs office staff members can assist in transferring records.

OPTION 1:

Stay at Purdue, find a new lab with a BME faculty co-chair: The professor who is leaving cannot be your only committee chair, but they can be a co-chair with another BME-faculty member.

OPTION 2:

Stay at Purdue, find a new lab and a new faculty research advisor This shift may require a new thesis project.

OPTION 3:

Move with the current faculty research advisor, but graduate with a Purdue MSBME. OGSPS will allow students to remain as Purdue students while they complete the thesis research at another institution. Students should work with the BME Graduate Programs office for the current university policy for this option.

Funding Opportunities

It is at the discretion of the BME faculty research advisor whether or not to offer research assistantship funding to their master's students. There are several ways for students to find funding outside of a research assistantship. These additional funding opportunities will help to bolster your CV/resume and can help you gain valuable skills during your training. Note that if you pursue and are awarded funding outside of BME, that funding may not be at the same level as the BME minimum salary requirement.

Teaching Assistantships (TA)

In BME—Students must be nominated by the student's faculty research advisor in order to be considered for a BME course TA position. If you are interested in being a TA in BME, make sure you let your faculty advisor know so that they can nominate you if they feel you would be a good fit for a position.

Outside BME—For non-BME teaching assistantship positions, the student will need to contact the school/department of interest directly to ask about TA opportunities in that program and the application process.

Graduate Assistantships (GA)

Students might pursue GA positions, which are graduate administrative/professionals performing administrative or other duties not directly related to teaching or research. These opportunities will be

emailed to students when the BME Grad Programs office becomes aware of them or can be listed in [Purdue's Career Website](#).

OGSPS Funding Resources

[OGSPS Graduate Funding & Fellowships](#)

Professional Development Opportunities

BME Resources

- [Biomedical Engineering Graduate Student Association](#)—The BMEGSA hosts workshops, speakers, and symposiums to help students with their professional development.
- [Career Coaching](#) —Schedule an appointment with the BME Associate Director of Graduate Programs (currently Tammy Siemers) for one-on-one coaching for skills needed in the job search
 - Resume and Job Search
 - Interviewing Skills
 - Job Negotiation
- [Weekly Announcements](#)—Each Wednesday, weekly announcements are sent to BME graduate students via email which provides a compilation of many of the workshops and opportunities around campus as well as job postings for the week.
- [Professional Development Opportunities for Graduate Students](#)

Career Fairs and Center for Career Opportunities

The [Purdue Center for Career Opportunities](#) hosts opportunities and workshops to strengthen your job search including resume reviews, workshops, career fairs, company information sessions, current job postings etc.

College of Engineering Resources

[COE Professional Development](#)

Graduate Certificates

Students might choose to pursue a [graduate certificate](#) along with their master's degree training to enhance their skillsets. One of the most popular certificates for BME grad students is the [Regulatory Affairs and Regulatory Science for Medical Devices](#) certificate. *Note: Students admitted to the BME combined BS/MS degree program must take the three courses required for the regulatory affairs certificate as a graduate student (after graduating with the BS).*

Graduate Concentrations

Students might choose to pursue a computational concentration along with their master's training. Refer to the [Computational Interdisciplinary Graduate Program \(CIGP\)](#) website to learn more about the Computational Science and Engineering (CSE), Computational Life Sciences (CLS), and Computational Data Science (CDS) concentrations.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

[Purdue Innovates](#) is a system providing innovators support and resources for technology commercialization, intellectual property protection and venture capital.

Internships

Internships can be a great way to gain exposure to what industry is like while gaining marketable skill sets and building your network. Regardless of whether you are interested in a career in industry or academia, an internship adds valuable training to your MS experience, if allowed. The timing of an internship must be discussed with your faculty advisor early to ensure you have permission to pursue an internship and when. Students who plan to pursue an internship must follow each step and the instructions found on the [BME Internship Requirements](#) website. *NOTE: Due to the one-year time limit for combined BME BS/MS students to complete their degree requirements, it is generally not conducive for these students to pursue an internship during their master's year.*

OGSPS Resources

[OGSPS Office of Professional Development](#)

Purdue Graduate Student Government Grants

PGSG offers a wide variety of [grants](#) to students that are available for individuals and organizations.

Student Awards and Recognition

[College of Engineering Awards](#)

[OGSPS Awards](#)

BME Awards (announced to students and faculty as available)

Teaching Development and Teaching Certificates

[Innovative Learning Programs](#)

[College of Engineering Teaching and Learning Certificate](#)

Travel Grants

[Purdue Student Government Travel Grant](#)

Writing Lab

Purdue's award-winning [Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) offers free resources and support for writing and teaching, research, English as a Second Language, grammar and mechanics, job search, and professional writing assistance.

Petitions for BME Programmatic Waivers

All graduate students have the right to petition for a waiver of any existing BME programmatic policy if they feel that their circumstances warrant special consideration. The student may file a petition with the BME Graduate Committee via the BME online [waiver form](#). Once submitted, the request will be sent to the student's faculty research advisor/s for initial approval. If the waiver is approved by the student's faculty advisor/s, the request will then be sent on to the BME Director of Graduate Programs for final review. Once a decision has been made on your request, you and your faculty advisor/s will receive an email with the decision.

Petition Deadline: You must submit the waiver in an adequate timeframe for the committee to address the concern.

Student Benefits (if eligible)

Purdue University provides the following [benefits](#) to eligible Graduate Student Staff:

Vacation Days
Sick Leave
Family Illness
Bereavement
[Parental Leave](#)

For detailed policies and procedures and eligibility requirements, refer to the [Graduate Staff Employment Manual](#) .

Medical Insurance

Benefits-Eligible Graduate Student Staff may be eligible for participation in a medical insurance plan sponsored by the University. For detailed policies and procedures and eligibility requirements, refer to the [Graduate Staff Employment Manual](#) .

Mental Health Resources

[Purdue's Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
[Office of Graduate Assistance \(OGA\)](#)
[The Office of the Dean of Students](#)
[Health and Wellness Resources](#)
[Therapy Assistance Online](#)
[Inclusion Resources](#)

Conflict Resolution Resources

[College of Engineering Anonymous Reporting](#)
[Office of Graduate Assistance \(OGA\)](#)
[Student of Concern Report](#)
[Conflict Resolution Flow Chart](#)

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

The BME Graduate Leadership Team will provide impartial and informal assistance with reference to your concerns based on our knowledge of university policy, practices, and personnel without judgement.

The information you share during any of our conversations will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality as possible. Our office may share information about your situation with others on the Graduate Leadership Team to draw on our collective knowledge and experience. The BME Graduate Programs office staff will recommend in cases where faculty mentor(s) or thesis advisory committee members should be brought in. We will not share information with others outside our office except in the following circumstances:

- with your express written consent;
- if required by university policy to report cases of alleged research misconduct to the Research Integrity Office or the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships;
- if required by law to report, such as in cases in which our faculty and staff have a reasonable basis to believe that there is a risk of imminent harm to you or to others or suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect;
- if required by our role as a Title IX mandatory reporter, which requires us to report incidents of sexual discrimination, harassment, assault or exploitation, any other incident of unwelcome sexual conduct, and incidents of relationship violence or stalking;
- in instances where the International Students & Scholars office, Sponsored Program Services, or other administrative offices need to be aware.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Caretakers

We acknowledge Purdue University is located on the traditional homelands of the Woodland People. We honor and appreciate these indigenous caretakers which include the Bodéwadmik (Potawatomi), Lenape (Delaware), Myaamia (Miami), and Shawnee People.

Other Documents and Resources

[BME Forms](#)

[BME Machine Shop](#)

[Graduate Student Forms](#)

[OGSPS New Graduate Student Welcome Packet](#)

[Purdue ID Card Operations](#)

[Purdue Information Technology](#)

[Purdue Parking Operations](#)

[Student Organizations](#)