



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES POLICY ON RESEARCH ROTATIONS FOR Ph.D. STUDENTS

Dated: November 1, 2023

Supersedes: Research Rotation Policy, dated June 1st, 2019

Last review: November 1, 2023

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the structure and requirements for research rotations for doctoral students enrolled in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBMS) at the New York Medical College (NYMC).

II. POLICY

Research rotations are mandatory components of the curriculum in the doctoral program. This experience is intended to provide a Ph.D. student with an insight into different approaches to scientific discovery and allow both the student and the Dissertation Advisor to reach an informed decision about where the student should conduct their dissertation research. **Students enrolled in the Integrated Ph.D. program (IPP) are required to complete three research rotations in three different laboratories. Advanced Standing Ph.D. or MD-Ph.D. students are not required to complete research rotations and can join the laboratory to conduct dissertation research upon entering the doctoral program. Submission of the Research Rotation Preferences form (Appendix I), List of Research Objectives (Appendix II), Summary Abstracts and Faculty Evaluation of Student Rotation form (Appendix III) is an absolute requirement.** Any exceptions to the required number, timeframe or duration of rotations will be reviewed on a case-to-case basis by the first-year Academic Advisor, IPP program director/Assistant Dean for Ph.D. students, and the Dean.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all GSBMS Ph.D. students, Academic and Rotation Advisors, Program Directors and Assistant Dean of the Ph.D. programs, and the Dean.

IV. PROCEDURE

1. A faculty member hosting a rotating student in their laboratory will become a *Rotation Advisor* for the period of that rotation. The Rotation Advisor is expected to interact with the student in a meaningful way, providing constructive feedback and honest assessment both to the student and to the first-year Academic Advisor. Accepting a research rotation student does not obligate the faculty member to accept that student as a dissertation student.
2. Rotation selection must be approved by the first-year Academic Advisor assigned to the student upon entry to the doctoral program or the IPP Program Director and reviewed by the Dean. The approval is largely based on the potential ability of a Rotation Advisor to support the student's dissertation research project. Any level of uncertainty about this ability should be shared with the student before the rotation begins.
3. Once rotation selection is approved, the student must submit signed Research Rotation Preferences form (**Appendix I**) to the GSBMS Dean's office by the deadline indicated on the Academic Calendar for Ph.D. students.
4. In the beginning of each rotation, the student and the Rotation Advisor must prepare in writing a List of Rotation Objectives (**Appendix II**) which lists specific and measurable objectives and expectations for the rotation (preferably, within a self-contained short project, or to learn specific technique). This should be countersigned by both the student and the Rotation Advisor, and submitted to the GSBMS Dean's office by the student one week after the posted start date of the rotation. It is allowable for these objectives to be modified during the course of the rotation if, for example, there is a change in the direction of the planned research project.
5. Each rotation lasts approximately three months (at least 15 weeks), corresponding to the academic semesters (Fall rotation: September through December; Winter rotation: January through April; Summer rotation: May through August). Precise start and end dates will be indicated each year on the Academic Calendar for Ph.D. students.
6. Students are expected to spend about 15 - 20 hours per week in the laboratory. Effort may vary based on exam schedules, holidays, etc. Students should be expected to spend more time on rotation activities during the summer rotation. The student and the Rotation Advisor should discuss the amount of effort that is expected. Students should be given sufficient time during the rotation to succeed in their academic courses.
7. It is understandable that the amount of time assigned to each rotation could be insufficient to complete an independent research project. Thus, a student can be assigned to assist with ongoing projects. The Rotation Advisor should guide the student's research activities and reading of relevant research literature.

8. Students should attend the journal clubs and research seminars of the department in which they are conducting their rotation but should not enroll in any “Journal Club” course. Students should be allowed and encouraged to attend additional seminars in other departments on topics related to their rotation or of personal interest to them.
9. On the last day of each research rotation, students are required to submit a 1-page Scientific Abstract, summarizing the research project they participated in to the GSBMS Dean’s office. Prior to the submission, the abstract should be reviewed by the Rotation Advisor. The format of the abstract is outlined in the course syllabus.
10. Each rotation course will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will not contribute to the student’s GPA.
11. Upon completion of each rotation by the students, each Rotation Advisor should submit a Faculty Evaluation of Student Rotation form (**Appendix III**) with a brief written report on the student’s performance to the GSBMS Dean’s office.
12. Upon completion of the last rotation, the student should meet with the first-year Academic Advisor or the IPP program director/Assistant Dean for Ph.D. students to review all submitted abstracts and faculty feedback, and to discuss any particular issues they encountered during rotations.
13. The research rotations should be completed during the first year of Ph.D. curriculum. However, in rare cases, IPP students may choose to postpone their third rotation until later in the program. Such flexibility will allow these students to tailor their rotation experience and learn a technique applicable to their dissertation research.
14. Under rare circumstances, a student can make a request to switch the rotation laboratory during the drop-add period (the first two weeks of each rotation).
15. The students that wish to request any modifications to the rotations must submit a Rotation Modification Request (**Appendix IV**), which must be reviewed on a case-to-case basis by the first-year Academic Advisor and/or IPP Program Director and have to be approved by the Dean.
16. The maximum number of rotations for IPP students should not exceed four rotations. The inability of a student to identify a laboratory to join for their dissertation research after the fourth rotation may serve as grounds for dismissal from the doctoral program.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective immediately.

VI. POLICY MANAGEMENT

Executive Stakeholder: Dean, Graduate School for Biomedical Sciences

Oversight Office: Office of the Dean

APPENDIX I



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Research Rotation Preferences Form

Student's name:

Academic Term: Fall Spring Summer 20__

My choices for research rotation advisors (please, include name and departmental affiliation) are:

1. Fall Rotation

2. Spring Rotation

3. Summer Rotation

4. Other preferred Rotation Advisors:

Academic Advisor/IPP Program Director _____ Date _____

APPENDIX II



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

List of Rotation Objectives

Student's name:

Academic Term: Fall Spring Summer 20__

Rotation advisor's name and departmental affiliation

List of objectives for the current rotation:

Student _____ Date _____

Rotation Advisor _____ Date _____

APPENDIX III



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Faculty Evaluation of Student Rotation

Student's name:

Academic Term: Fall Spring Summer 20__

Department:

Faculty member(s) making the evaluation:

First-Year Advisor:

Answer the following questions with either YES or NO.

1. Did the student meet the goals and expectations you set for him/her? YES NO
2. Were you satisfied with the student's effort during this rotation? YES NO
3. Should the student be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program? YES NO

Answer the following questions with your own brief comments.

1. Any additional details about the student's performance or behavior during this rotation that are relevant to evaluation of the student's progress in the program?

2. What were some of the student's strengths or most positive characteristics?

3. What were some of the student's weaknesses or areas that need some improvement?

4. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations as to how the student might address those areas that need improvement?

5. Any other comments?

APPENDIX IV



NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

A MEMBER OF THE Touro College and University System

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

Rotation Modification Request

Student's name:

Program:

Academic Term: Fall Spring Summer 20__

Which modification is requested:

Reason for the request:

Request: Approved Denied

Academic Advisor _____ Date _____

IPP Program Director _____ Date _____

GSBMS Dean _____ Date _____