

Requirements

Milestone Agreement

All BME Ph.D. students are required to review and sign the [BME milestone agreement](#) at the beginning of their first semester.

Coursework Requirements

Personalized Learning Plan

The concept of a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is to tailor educational experiences to meet individual needs. Courses are selected in consultation with the student's supervisor, dissertation committee, and the graduate advisor to ensure adequate breadth and depth. While BME graduate programs of work have general requirements for course topics or areas of study, a variety of courses are available for students to meet each requirement.

[BME PhD Coursework Requirements](#)

[BME MSE Coursework Requirements \(No Thesis\)](#)

[BME MSE Coursework Requirements \(With Thesis\)](#)

Choosing a Faculty Advisor

All BME Ph.D. students are expected to secure a faculty advisor during their first semester in the program. Failure to do so will delay the qualifying exam process and will impact completion of program milestones on time. Students who fail to secure a faculty advisor by the end of their second long semester may be dismissed from the Ph.D. program. In this case, students may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to remain enrolled in the program as a master's degree seeking student.

Qualifying Exam

Students must pass a qualifying exam at the end of their first year. This is required for students to continue in the Ph.D. program. This exam has both written and oral components. Detailed instructions for the qualifying exam are available at the graduate office and are provided to students in advance. Details can also be found in [this program handbook](#). Students advance to candidacy following successful completion of the qualifying exam.

Advancing to Candidacy

Following successful completion of the qualifying exam, students [apply to advance to candidacy](#). In order to advance to candidacy, students must identify a doctoral dissertation committee of at least four members in consultation with their faculty supervisor.

Dissertation Proposal

Students must complete their [dissertation proposal](#) by the end of their third year, but are encouraged to do so as early as the end of the second year. The proposal exam includes both a written and an oral component. The written component involves submitting an NIH R01 proposal (maximum 12 pages) to the student's dissertation committee no less than two weeks prior to defending it orally to the same committee.

Dissertation Final Oral Defense

Students complete their [final oral defense](#) typically at the end of their fifth year. The Graduate School provides critical information regarding deadlines, paperwork, and scheduling. Students file to graduate at the beginning of their final semester.

Other Requirements

All graduate students in BME are required to attend seminars designed to promote academic and professional development and networking opportunities. These seminars include the Responsible Conduct in Research (Ethics) Seminar offered in two parts in the fall and spring semesters, the Individual Development Plan (IDP) Workshop each fall semester, and the Graduate Research Seminars that take place throughout the semester on Thursday afternoons.

Teaching Assistant Service

All Ph.D. students who entered the program prior to fall 2019 are expected to serve as a teaching assistant (TA) for two semesters. Ph.D. students entering the program in fall 2019 or later are expected to serve as a TA for one semester. The department recommends that students serve as a TA sometime between their first and third years, but the timing of this service will depend on the needs of the department and the recommendation of the student's research supervisor. TA service provides valuable learning experiences for graduate students, whether or not they are interested in a teaching career. Soft-skills like interpersonal communication, time management, and leadership are all important skills that are further developed through TA service.

Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress

The BME Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for setting program requirements and evaluating all graduate students against those requirements. Satisfactory academic progress is defined as securing a faculty advisor, passing the qualifying exam, maintaining at least a 3.00 graduate grade point average, satisfying teaching assistant expectations, completing required coursework, completing the dissertation proposal on time and progressing in research. The Graduate Studies Committee [reviews students annually](#) with input from faculty supervisors and the Graduate Advisor and provides, in writing, an update to each student regarding their progress.

NIH Public Access Policy

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