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Preface

The Student Handbook of the Vanderbilt University Department of Biomedical Informatics describes the purpose and goals of the program, admission policies and procedures, academic standards, and all other guidelines and policies that affect students.

The Graduate School governs the academic programs of the Department, and the Student Handbook is intended to be complimentary to the Bulletin of the Graduate School. For additional details about policies, please consult the Bulletin.

We encourage interested students to review our web site at www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/dbmi as an additional resource.

Created/maintained by: Dominik Aronsky, Rischelle Jenkins, and the Academic Program Committee

Updated on: September 2005
1. Introduction
1. Introduction

**Overview**

Biomedical Informatics encompasses the structure, acquisition, integration, management, and optimal use of biomedical knowledge in biological research, in clinical sciences, and in health care delivery. The field involves multidisciplinary research in developing applications to support practice, research, and administration in all aspects of health care delivery, biomedicine, and public health. Biomedical Informatics adopts, applies, evaluates, modifies, and expands results from a variety of disciplines including Information Science, Computer Science, Library Science, Cognitive Science, Business Management and Organization, Statistics and Biometrics, Mathematics, Artificial Intelligence, Operations Research, Economics, and of course, Basic and Clinical Health Sciences.

Because Biomedical Informatics spans the spectrum from the theoretical to the applied, it has equally developed “basic science” and “clinical” components. In addition, there is a strong component of organizational theory as applied to health care systems and institutions. Biomedical Informatics extends beyond the narrow focus of biomedical computer systems. It offers theories and tools for analyzing, supporting, and improving practice, administration, and research in biomedicine and health care.

**Mission of Training Program**

The mission of the Vanderbilt Biomedical Informatics Graduate Degree Program is to educate the next generation of leaders in the field of Biomedical Informatics.

**Goals of Training Program**

Goal 1 - **Student Excellence**: To attract highly-qualified graduate students who will develop innovative research projects and catalyze research and service efforts in the existing biomedical informatics and bioinformatics projects and units on campus. An important prerequisite for this goal is attracting biomedical informatics training funds.

Goal 2 - **Research Excellence**: To facilitate innovative, state-of-the art biomedical informatics research that has significant theoretical and applied impact, and to increase research collaboration among Vanderbilt University centers, programs, and individual faculty in the biomedical informatics arena.

Goal 3 - **Educational Excellence**: To design and implement innovative curricula that will address important educational challenges. In particular curricula that (a) will make it worthwhile for students to postpone highly-compensated employment to pursue advanced academic education in today’s highly competitive job market; (b) will provide education that through flexible adaptation to the students’ needs and goals, can lead to success in diverse post-graduation pursuits as academics, R&D or scientific management in large corporations, or entrepreneurial endeavors, and (c) will instill students with not only the ability and confidence to achieve high-goals but also the ethical responsibility, social consciousness and compassion that must characterize professionals working in the healthcare field.
History

In 1991, William W. Stead, M.D., was recruited to Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) as Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, Director of the Informatics Center, and Professor of Medicine. The Informatics Center was formed as a consequence of Dr. Stead’s recruitment. By 1993, the Informatics Center initially consisted of the Division of Biomedical Informatics (DBMI), the soon-to-be constructed Irwin and Annette Eskind Biomedical Library, and the hospital-and-clinic-based applied information technology group.

On January 24, 2001, the Executive Faculty approved the Division of Biomedical Informatics to departmental status. As an interdisciplinary center within the University (as opposed to an academic unit within the School of Medicine), the Informatics Center was designed to provide space for visiting researchers from other Vanderbilt departments, and for visiting professors from other institutions, and has done so since its inception.

Unique among academic health centers at the time (during the 1990s), VUMC entrusted the Informatics Center with the responsibility for essential services, including:

- Providing the essential information infrastructure for patient care, management, research and education;
- Supporting for informatics-related research and education in clinical informatics and the emerging field of bioinformatics (including new initiatives in genomics and proteomics);
- Fusing scholarly research in biomedical informatics with the dissemination of the resultant knowledge through its educational programs and through the infrastructure it provided for the operations of the Medical Center.

Under Dr. Stead’s leadership, members of all of the units of the Informatics Center have been linked into a cohesive team with diverse talents. The Informatics Center has collectively had responsibility for software acquisition, development and maintenance within VUMC clinical facilities; corresponding hardware acquisition and maintenance tasks; network hardware, software, and maintenance; and, project management. All the Informatics Center units have collaborated closely, so that academic software projects, once mature, can be delivered directly to hospital wards or clinics in conjunction with programmers and managers from the hospital and clinics -- the individuals who are responsible for the long-term maintenance of such projects. Conversely, the applied hospital-and-clinic-based IT group has involved members of the academic unit directly in its leadership infrastructure, planning, development, and troubleshooting activities. This synergy within the Informatics Centers has created an unparalleled laboratory for informatics research, fostering multidisciplinary rapid prototyping and deployment of applied systems, and the evaluation of their impact. Researchers have had access to real-world problems and operational monies (the Informatics Center budget averaged more than twenty-five million dollars per annum over its first decade). Academic faculty members have been encouraged to meld informatics service responsibilities with informatics research activities in a manner that leverages the clinical and research facilities of the university as an “applied informatics” laboratory.
2. Our People
2. Our People

**DBMI Primary Faculty:**

**Chair:** Dan Masys, M.D. – Professor and Chair, Department of Biomedical Informatics

**Vice-Chair:** Kevin Johnson, M.D., M.S. - Associate Professor and Vice Chair of Biomedical Informatics

Constantin Aliferis, M.D., Ph.D. – Assistant Professor Biomedical Informatics and Director of the Discovery Systems Laboratory

Dominik Aronsky, M.D., Ph.D. – Assistant Professor Biomedical Informatics and Emergency Medicine; Director of Graduate Studies

Erik Boczko, Ph.D., Ph.D. – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics

Steven Brown, M.D., M.S. – Associate Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Director, Compensation and Pension Examination Program, Veterans Administration Tennessee Valley Healthcare System

Fern FitzHenry, Ph.D., RN – Instructor in Biomedical Informatics and Information Services Consultant in Information Management

Mark Frisse, M.D., MBA, M.S.c – Aventure Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Director, Volunteer and Health Initiatives, Vanderbilt Center for Better Health

Dario Giuse, Dr. Ing. – Associate Professor of Biomedical Informatics, and Associate Professor of Computer Science; Associate Director of Informatics Center

Nunzia B. Giuse, M.D., MLS – Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Director of the Annette and Irwin Eskind Biomedical Library

William Gregg, M.D., M.S. – Instructor in Biomedical Informatics

Shawn Levy, Ph.D. – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Molecular Physiology and Biophysics; Director of the Vanderbilt Microarray Shared Resource

Nancy M. Lorenzi, MLS, Ph.D. – Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs

Randolph A. Miller, M.D. – Donald A. B. and Mary M. Lindberg University Professor of Biomedical Informatics, Associate Director of the Informatics Center, and Professor of Medicine

Trent Rosenbloom, M.D., MPH – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
2. Our People

Edward K. Shultz, M.D., M.S. – Associate Professor of Biomedical Informatics; Director of Information Technology Integration

Anderson Spickard, III, M.D., M.S. – Assistant Professor of Medicine and Biomedical Informatics

Jack Starmer, M.D. - Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics

Ioannis Tsamardinos, Ph.D. – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics

Lemuel R. Waitman, Ph.D. – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics

Stuart Weinberg, M.D. – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics

Secondary Faculty

Mary E. Edgerton, M.D., Ph.D. – Assistant Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Pathology

Michael Higgins, M.D., MPH - Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, Surgery, and Biomedical Informatics; Vice-Chairman, Clinical Affairs

Jim Jirjis, M.D. - Assistant Professor of Medicine; Director of the Adult Primary Care Center

Asli Ozdas, Ph.D., M.S. - Assistant Professor of Surgery and Biomedical Informatics

Judy Ozbolt, Ph.D., RN – Independence Foundation Professor of Nursing and Professor of Biomedical Informatics

Neal Patel, M.D., MPH – Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Anesthesiology and Biomedical Informatics

Josh Peterson, M.D. - Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Biomedical Informatics

Putnam, Joe, M.D. – Professor and Chair of Thoracic Surgery

William W. Stead, M.D. – Professor of Medicine, Professor of Biomedical Informatics, Director of the Informatics Center, Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, Assistant to the Chancellor for Informatics and Chief Information Architect for the University

Stricker, Andrew, Ph.D. – Associate Provost of Innovation through Technology

Elizabeth Weiner, Ph.D., M.S.N – Professor of Nursing and Biomedical Informatics; Senior Associate Dean for Educational Informatics
2. Our People

**Administrative Staff**

**Alexis Broussard**
Term Professional  
4th floor Eskind Biomedical Library  
(615) 936-6247  
*Alexis assists with the departmental budgets.*

**Alayne Ford**
Executive Secretary  
4th floor Eskind Biomedical Library  
(615) 936-1423  
*Alayne assists the Assistant Vice Chancellor with her responsibilities. Please contact Alayne to schedule appointments with Dr. Lorenzi.*

**Joyce Green**
Administrative Officer  
B003D Lower Level Eskind Biomedical Library  
(615) 936-2882  
*Joyce assists Dr. Randolph Miller. Please contact Joyce to schedule appointments with Dr. Miller.*

**Linna Guzzi**
Administrative Officer  
*Linna handles the budgetary responsibilities for the department.*

**Rischelle Jenkins**
Administrative Assistant  
4th floor Eskind Biomedical Library  
(615) 936-1068  
*Rischelle assists Dr. Aronsky with managing the Degree Program. Please contact Rischelle for degree program information and for scheduling appointments with Dr. Aronsky.*

**Jane McLaughlin**
Administrative Assistant  
4th floor Eskind Biomedical Library  
(615) 936-1556  
*Jane assists Constantin Aliferis and Ioannis Tsamardinos*

**Becky Mullen**
Assistant to the Chair  
*Becky assists the Chair, Dan Masys and the Vice-Chair, Kevin Johnson. Please contact Becky to schedule appointments with Drs. Masys and Johnson.*
## Departmental Phone List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aliferis, Constantin, M.D./Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>936-1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aphinyanaphongs, Yindalon, M.D./Ph.D.</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>936-3690</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aronsky, Dominik, M.D./Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>936-1739</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boczko, Erik, Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>936-6668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broussard, Alexis, Term Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td>936-6247</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Laura, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<td>936-6696</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Steve, M.D./M.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>321-6335</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carnevale, Randy, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<td>936-5036</td>
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<td>Dexheimer, Judith, Ph.D. Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>936-3373</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duda, Stephany, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<td>322-7854</td>
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<td>Fananapazir, Nafeh, M.D./Ph.D. Student</td>
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<td>936-3340</td>
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<td>Ford, Alayne, Administrative Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frey, Lewis, Ph.D., Fellow</td>
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<td>936-6497</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fu, Lawrence, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<td>Giuse, Dario, Dr. Ing.</td>
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<td>Giuse, Nunzia, M.D./MLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green, Joyce, Administrative Officer</td>
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<td>Gregg, William, M.D./M.S.</td>
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<td>Guzzi, Linna, Administrative Officer</td>
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<td>Hoot, Nathan, M.D./Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Jenkins, Rischelle, Administrative Assistant</td>
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<td>Johnson, Kevin, M.D./M.S.</td>
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<td>Kazerooni, Alexander, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorenzi, Nancy, MLS/Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Masys, Dan, M.D.</td>
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<td>McLaughlin, Jane, Administrative Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miller, Randolph, M.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mullen, Becky, Assistant to the Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ozbolt, Judy, Ph.D./RN</td>
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<td>Ozdas, Asli, Ph.D./M.S.</td>
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<td>Pratap, Siddharth, Ph.D. – M.S. Student</td>
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<td>Raggio, Chris – M.S. Student</td>
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<td>Rosenbloom, Trent, M.D./MPH</td>
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<td>Sanders, David, M.D., M.S. Student</td>
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<td>Statnikov, Alexander, M.S. Student</td>
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<td>Tsamardinos, Ioannis, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Unertl, Kim, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webhe, Firas, M.D. – Ph.D. Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>936-3016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weiss, Jacob, Ph.D. Student</td>
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<td>936-1773</td>
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3. The Program
3. The Program

3.1 Areas of Concentration

- **Clinical Systems** - designs, develops, evaluates, and supervises user training of clinical information systems.

- **Decision-Support Systems & Healthcare Decision Sciences** - designs, develops, evaluates intelligent decision support tools and decision models/guidelines/policies.

- **Evidence-Based-Practice Concentration Area** - uses, designs, develops, evaluates systems for optimal retrieval and application of knowledge from the literature and discovery and application of knowledge from data.

- **Health Policy, Management, and Administration Concentration Area** - uses, designs, develops, manages and evaluates systems for optimal information application and resource optimization at the basic research, clinical, and organizational domains.

- **Bioinformatics for Molecular Medicine Concentration Area** - uses and designs new algorithms and/or software for medical bioinformatics applications and research.

- **Clinical Bioinformatics Concentration Area** - designs/executes/evaluates studies/systems for linking molecular biology to disease diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

3.2 Curriculum

3.2.1 Biomedical Informatics Core Courses

3.2.1.1 Courses Required for the Master’s Degree and the Ph.D.

Unless waived because of satisfactory completion of a prior similar course, all candidates for the M.S. Degree are required to take the following five core courses in biomedical informatics (but not the associated laboratories):

- BMIF 300, Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice
- BMIF 310, Foundations of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology
- BMIF 320, Healthcare Organization and Management
- BMIF 330, Biomedical Artificial Intelligence
- BMIF 340, Clinical Information Systems and Databases

A grade lower than B- for any core course will require the student to repeat the course.
3. The Program

3.2.1.2 Associated Laboratories Required for the Ph.D. Degree

BMIF 300A, Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidenced Based Practice Laboratory
BMIF 320A, Healthcare Organization and Management Laboratory
BMIF 330A Biomedical Artificial Intelligence Laboratory

3.2.2 Cognate Knowledge

Degree candidates are expected to demonstrate advanced knowledge of identified topics in each of three cognate fields, Computer Science/Informatics, Biological and Health Sciences, and Mathematical Sciences. Students demonstrate advanced knowledge by successful completion of at least three graduate courses covering selected topics in each cognate field. Some or all of these courses may have been taken prior to beginning this program.

The cognate topics are as follows:

**Computer Science/Informatics topics**: compilers and formal languages, complexity, computability, computer organization, data bases, data structures, design and analysis of algorithms, networks, operating systems, programming languages, software engineering.

**Biological and Health Sciences topics**: principles of cell, organism, and population biology; anatomy, physiology, and mechanisms of disease; nosology, diagnostics, and therapeutics; genetics and molecular medicine.

**Mathematical Sciences topics**: mathematics for computer science (discrete mathematics, probability theory); mathematical statistics, applied statistics, biostatistics, and mathematics for statistics (linear algebra, sampling theory, statistical inference theory, probability); qualitative and quantitative research designs, epidemiology, and methods of systems evaluation.

A student may petition the Academic Program Committee to accept certain upper-level undergraduate courses taken prior to entering the program as meeting some of the cognate course requirements. For each such course, the student shall provide a course description and a transcript showing a grade no lower than a B. The Academic Program Committee will consider these courses in relation to the student’s research focus and needs for advanced knowledge. Although some undergraduate courses may be acceptable, students will not be permitted to count more than one undergraduate course toward the cognate requirement in each of the three cognate areas.

A student may also petition the Academic Program Committee for permission to take an undergraduate course for graduate credit while enrolled in graduate studies in the department. The request must include a letter from the instructor describing the additional requirements the student will meet for the awarding of graduate credit. If approved by the Academic Program Committee, a formal request bearing the signatures of the instructor and the Director of Training/Graduate Studies will be forwarded to the Graduate School. The form for this request may be found at [www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool).
3. The Program

3.2.3 Undergraduate Prerequisite Courses

Some students may need to take undergraduate pre-requisite courses to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for participating in the core courses or the cognate courses. The NLM fellowships will pay for a maximum of three such courses per student.

3.2.4 Electives

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree are required to take three elective courses relevant to their goals and research focus. Options for elective courses include courses in Biomedical Informatics that would not otherwise be required of the student, independent study with faculty members, and courses from the cognate fields. Other elective courses may be selected if approved by the faculty mentor/research adviser, the Director of Training/Graduate Studies, and the Academic Program Committee.

3.2.5 DBMI Seminar

All students must participate in the research seminars during their course of study. Participation is logged and students are expected to attend 75% of offered seminars. CME for clinicians is available.

3.3 Definition of Full-Time Status

A full-time student is one registered for 9 to 12 hours per semester during the academic year and 6 to 9 hours in the summer. BMIF 369 (Master’s Thesis Research) may be used to bring master’s degree students up to full time status when they are taking fewer than 9 hours of course work. Because thesis credits, in addition to course credits, are not required for graduation, students register for BMIF 369 for no credit. Ph.D. students may register for dissertation research as needed to achieve full time status.

3.4 Research Policies

3.4.1 Protection of Human Subjects

All students in the Department of Biomedical Informatics are required to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning their research.

Established in accordance with federal regulation 45 CFR 46, the IRB is charged to review research proposals and progress reports and to assure the protection of human subjects. At Vanderbilt, the IRB has four different committees: Health Sciences Committee #1, #2, #3, and the Behavioral Sciences Committee.
3. The Program

There are three types of IRB Review:

- **Full Board (Standard Review):** Review of proposed research at a convened meeting where a valid quorum of IRB members is present.

- **Expedited Review:** Review of proposed research by the IRB Chair or a designated voting member or group of voting members, rather than by the entire IRB Committee. Federal rules permit expedited review for certain kinds of research involving no more than minimal risk and for minor changes in approved research.

- **Exemption:** A specific research project may be exempted from the requirement for IRB approval when it is determined that the research does not involve human subjects as defined in federal regulation 10 CFR 745 and/or the only involvement of human subjects is in one of the categories listed under 45 CFR 46 Section 101(b)(1)-(6). Human subjects’ regulations do not apply to exempt projects. **Even if the research project is thought to be exempt, if it involves human subjects or data about human subjects, it must be submitted to the IRB for determination of exempt status.**

For more information about IRB, please see [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/irb/](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/irb/)

3.4.2 **Access to Personal Identifiable Health Information**

Because of patient privacy issues, our students are not automatically given access to our patient care information system. There must be a valid reason to obtain access. If a student requires access to patient information for research, the student must obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board before access is granted.

3.5 **Requirements for the Master’s Degree**

All candidates for the M.S. Degree must complete a program of study that includes at least 27 credits of formal course work in the content specified in the curriculum. To meet requirements of the Graduate School, at least 21 credits must be taken in Graduate School courses at Vanderbilt. In addition, most students will satisfactorily complete the master’s thesis research and, in some instances, other research projects.

3.5.1 **Course Work**

A minimum of 27 semester hours of formal course work is required for the master’s degree in the Department of Biomedical Informatics. All requirements for the master’s degree must be completed within a **six-year** period calculated from the end of the student's first semester of enrollment in the Graduate School.

The Academic Program Committee reviews the student’s plan of study and determines which courses may be counted toward the requirements for the degree. On recommendation of the Academic Program Committee and approval by the Graduate School, up to six semester hours toward the master’s degree may be transferred from graduate schools in accredited institutions or from other Schools of the University.
3. The Program

If a student receives a grade lower than a B- in a course, the grade will not count toward their Master’s degree.

3.5.2 The Thesis

Most students enrolled in the master’s program are required to complete a research project under the supervision of a faculty committee and to submit and defend a written thesis. Students in the Ph.D. program in clinical bioinformatics have the option, subject to faculty approval, to substitute 9 hours of formal course work for the thesis, in addition to the course work otherwise required in the program.

3.5.2.1 Topic

Although the precise topic of the thesis may not be defined until much later in the program, the student should identify an area of interest and a research adviser in that area by the end of the first semester of study. The student will include this information when updating the Plan of Study at the beginning of the second semester.

3.5.2.2 Committee

No later than the end of the summer semester concluding the first full year of study, the student nominates at least two faculty members to serve as the thesis committee. One of the faculty members must be a senior faculty member within the department. Using the M.S./Ph.D. Program Progress form, the student submits this request, with the signatures of all nominated persons, to the APC. The approval of the APC officially constitutes the thesis committee.

3.5.2.3 Proposal

The thesis committee determines the requirements for the written research proposal. The timing of the proposal, the style, the formality, the length, and the level of detail are established by the committee, and may vary widely from student to student. The committee hears the student’s oral defense of the proposal, and the chair reports the results to the Academic Program Committee.

3.5.2.4 Thesis and Defense

At the conclusion of the research, the student submits a written thesis to the committee and schedules the oral defense. Upon approval of the thesis, committee members sign the title page. The student makes all corrections specified by the committee and submits two copies of the thesis to the Graduate School. For details of
3. The Program

procedure and timing, please see the Graduate School Bulletin at
www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/currentstudents.html

3.5.2.5 Intent to Graduate Form

Students completing their Masters or Ph.D. must complete an Intent to Graduate Form and return to the Graduate School before their anticipated graduate date. The form may be downloaded from
www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/current_students.html

3.6 Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

3.6.1 Academic Progress

Students admitted to the Master’s Degree Program may apply for admission to the Ph.D. program contingent upon satisfactory completion of the master’s degree. Students admitted directly to the Ph.D. program must complete requirements for the M.S. degree in Biomedical Informatics, in addition to requirements specific to the Ph.D..

Continuation in the Ph.D. program after completion of the M.S. degree is contingent upon the faculty’s assessment of the student’s potential success as a scientist. The Academic Program Committee will review the student’s performance in the M.S. program and make a recommendation to the faculty of the department. A favorable vote by the faculty is required for the student to progress in the Ph.D. program.

To progress from doctoral student to doctoral candidate, the student must complete all course work required by the training program and pass a qualifying examination in the field of specialization and, if there is a minor, in the minor subject. The examination will be administered by the student’s Ph.D. committee, which will supervise subsequent work toward the degree. Upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements and the qualifying examination, the Ph.D. committee will recommend to the Graduate School that the student be admitted to candidacy.

Within four years after admission to candidacy, the student must present an acceptable dissertation in the major field of study and the minor field, if any, and must pass a final oral examination administered by the student’s Ph.D. committee, duly announced by the Graduate School in advance and open to the public. The dissertation defense results form, signed by the committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies for the program, is forwarded to the Graduate School.

3.6.2 Residence and Course Work

The Ph.D. degree requires at least three academic years of graduate study. A student must complete 72 hours of graduate work for credit, including a minimum of 33 hours in formal course work and seminar work in the Department of Biomedical Informatics. The Academic Program Committee reviews students’ plans of study and determines which
3. The Program

courses may count toward the degree. The remainder of the 72 hours may be in
dissertation research hours, in special readings, and in transfer credit if applicable.

All students working full time toward the Ph.D. must register each fall and spring
semester. When the required 72 hours of course work has been completed, registration
for dissertation research without hourly credit applies; this reflects full-time effort on
research and confers full-time student status. The minimum tuition of $200 is charged.

3.6.3 The Ph.D. Committee

The functions of the Ph.D. committee are:

- To administer the qualifying examination
  - To approve the dissertation subject
  - To aid the student and monitor the progress of the dissertation
  - To read and approve the dissertation
  - To administer the final oral examination

The student selects members of the Ph.D. committee in consultation with the research
adviser, seeking the range of expertise in content and methods to support the qualifying
examination and the dissertation research. The committee must include at least five
members of Vanderbilt’s Graduate Faculty. At least three members must hold
appointments in the Department of Biomedical Informatics, and at least one member
must hold an appointment in a different department. If there is a minor, at least one
member must come from the student’s minor department.

Additional persons who are not members of the Vanderbilt’s Graduate Faculty may be
nominated. Their service on the committee is contingent upon the approval of the APC
and the Associate Provost for Graduate Education. Their privilege of voting requires the
specific approval of the Director of Graduate Study and Training or the Department Chair
and the Associate Provost for Graduate Education.

After obtaining the consent of each person to serve, the student petitions the Academic
Program Committee to approve nominees to the student’s Ph.D. Committee. The
Academic Program Committee reviews the list of nominees and grants approval or
refers the list back to the student and the research adviser. When the list has been
approved by the APC, the Director of Graduate Study and Training forwards the
proposed committee roster to the Associate Provost for Graduate Education. When
approved by the Associate Provost for Graduate Education, the Ph.D. Committee is
officially constituted.

Any additions to or deletions from the Ph.D. Committee must go through the same
process of proposal and approval.

3.6.4 The Qualifying Examination

Purpose The purpose of the qualifying examination is to test the student’s knowledge of
the field of specialization, to assess familiarity with the published research in the field,
and to determine whether the student possesses those critical and analytic skills needed
for a scholarly career.
Prerequisites: Before the qualifying examination can be administered, the student must have completed at least 36 hours of graduate work (to include all course work required for the degree). In addition, the student must have completed all requirements for the master’s degree. **A minimum of two weeks must elapse between the official constitution of the Ph.D. committee and the date of the examination.**

Time limits: Students who are admitted directly to the doctoral program in Biomedical Informatics must take the qualifying examination no later than the end of the fourth calendar year in the program (including time spent completing requirements for the master’s degree). Students who enter the Ph.D. program after completion of the master’s program must take the qualifying examination by the end of their first calendar year in the Ph.D. program.

The student must complete the written and oral portions of the examination within four weeks of receiving the questions from the committee.

Administration: The Ph.D. committee determines the content and the format of the examination. The committee notifies the Director of Graduate Studies of the time and place of the oral examination, and the Director informs the Graduate School at least two weeks before the scheduled date. The oral examination is not public, and voice or video recordings are not permitted. The student is allowed only two opportunities to pass the examination. The qualifying examination results forms, signed by the committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies, shall be forwarded to the Graduate School immediately after the examination.

Admission to Candidacy: When the student has passed the qualifying examination, the Ph.D. committee shall recommend to the Graduate School that the student be admitted to candidacy for the degree.

3.6.5 The Dissertation

3.6.5.1 Topic

The candidate secures the approval of the Ph.D. committee for the topic and scope of the dissertation research.

3.6.5.2 Proposal

The candidate prepares a formal, written research proposal and submits it to the Ph.D. committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense of the proposal. The Ph.D. committee has the responsibility and the authority to determine the requirements for content and format of the proposal. Typically, a proposal includes the following chapters:

- An introduction that includes the problem statement, the research questions or hypotheses, and the specific aims. Prior research on which the current proposal is founded may be summarized here.
- A review of the literature that integrates the development of knowledge in the area and describes the gaps that the proposed research will fill.
3. The Program

- The methods of the experiment, if any, the sources of data, and the instruments and procedures for collecting and/or analyzing the data

3.6.5.3 Oral Defense of the Proposal

The candidate meets with the Ph.D. committee to defend the proposal. The committee may accept the proposal, reject the proposal, or require modifications to the proposal. If the proposal is rejected or if there is a requirement for modifications, the committee shall set a due date for the new or revised proposal. When the proposal has been approved, all Ph.D. committee members sign the Dissertation Proposal Approval form and return it to the Director of Graduate Studies.

3.6.5.4 The Written Dissertation

The dissertation provides a comprehensive report of the research. It includes the chapters of the dissertation proposal, brought up to date, as well as chapters for Results and Discussion.

3.6.5.5 Time Limits

The dissertation must be completed and successfully defended within four years after a student has been admitted to candidacy for the degree. Upon petition to the Graduate School, a one-year extension of candidacy may be granted. If such a period has expired without successful completion of the dissertation, the student will be removed from the rolls of the Graduate School. Readmission to the Graduate School, and to candidacy, requires application to the Graduate School, with approval of the program faculty. In such cases the student may be required, by the Graduate School or by the Ph.D. committee, to demonstrate competence for readmission by taking a qualifying examination or additional course work.

The student provides each member of the dissertation committee a complete copy of the dissertation in final, polished form at least one month before the intended date of the defense.

At the same time, the chair of the Ph.D. committee notifies the Director of Graduate Studies of the time and place of the oral defense. The Director of Graduate Studies informs the Graduate School of the time and place no later than two weeks before the oral defense.

At least fourteen days before the end of the term in which the degree is to be conferred, or by April 1 for May graduation, the student must:

- Pass the oral defense of the dissertation
- Submit to the Graduate School two copies of the approved dissertation, with the original signatures of not less than the majority of the Ph.D. committee, and an abstract of not more than three hundred fifty words, signed by the student’s adviser.
- Pay microfilming, binding, and copyright fees.
3. The Program

Because committees usually require at least minor revisions to the dissertation, candidates are strongly advised to set the oral defense well before the deadlines for graduation. If the student passes the defense but does not meet the deadlines, the degree will be conferred at the subsequent graduation.

3.6.5.6 The oral defense of the Dissertation

The final oral examination is administered by the student’s Ph.D. committee and is on the dissertation and significant related material; the student is expected to demonstrate an understanding of the larger context in which the dissertation lies. The public is invited to attend the final examination, which is announced in advance in Vanderbilt’s electronic calendar and/or in the Vanderbilt Register.

The oral defense may be waived only on the written approval of the department, the Ph.D. committee, and the Graduate School.

The Ph.D. committee determines the agenda and manner of administration of the final oral examination. Some common features of these examinations include:

- A twenty- to thirty-minute presentation by the candidate of the main points of the research, possibly including an overview in lay language for the visitors
- A question-and-answer period for the audience
- A question-and-answer period for the committee
- Dismissal of the audience for further questions and discussions between the committee and the candidate
- Dismissal of the candidate for deliberations and decisions by the committee
- Return of the candidate to hear the decisions of the committee and the requirements, if any, for revisions to the dissertation
- Announcement of the result to any members of the audience who may have waited.

3.6.5.7 Acknowledgement of the committee’s contribution

It is a tradition and a courtesy for the candidate to present to each member of the Ph.D. committee a bound copy of the dissertation as revised and submitted to the Graduate School.

3.6.5.8 Intent to Graduate Form

Students completing their Masters or Ph.D. must complete an Intent to Graduate Form and return to the Graduate School before their anticipated graduate date. The form may be downloaded from www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/current_students.html
3. The Program

3.7 Requirements for the non-degree Fellowship

The Department of Biomedical Informatics fellowships are for qualified researchers/clinicians who have a good background in the biomedical informatics field and wish to focus on in-depth research while being mentored by faculty. For clinicians with a less formal biomedical informatics background, the M.S./Ph.D. route should be an option to consider, because there is time for formal didactic training. If an individual has substantial programming experience, the program takes this into account and the student can broaden his/her experience with more advanced classes from other fields. Also from a career perspective the M.S./Ph.D. option may provide better "credentials" than the fellowship alone.

Applicants interested in pursuing a fellowship should complete the same online application as degree program applicants. The web site is https://graduateapplications.vanderbilt.edu/ It should be indicated on the application’s first page under “degree sought for this program” this is a “special, non-degree.”

The research adviser and the Director of Training/ Graduate studies, shall, subject to the approval of the Academic Program Committee, assist each non-degree-seeking fellow to plan a program of course work and research consistent with the trainee’s goals and research focus. Some core and cognate courses may not be required because they are not closely tied to the fellow’s objectives. The usual expectation is that non-degree fellows will take at least one course each semester.

Some students may need to take undergraduate pre-requisite courses to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for participating in the core courses or the cognate courses. The NLM fellowships will pay for a maximum of three such courses per student.

3.8 Admission to the Program

3.8.1 General Requirements

Admission to the program requires acceptance through the Vanderbilt Graduate School.

1. Applicants must have completed or anticipate completion of at least a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university before entering the program. Official transcripts of all previous academic work beyond the secondary level should be submitted. If the applicant is still in school, a transcript showing the first three years of undergraduate work is acceptable. Before matriculation, we must receive a final transcript for each degree received for students admitted to program.

2. Three confidential letters of recommendation from individuals qualified to write concerning the applicant’s potential success in both a graduate program and the field of Informatics is required.

3. A statement of purpose is required with the application.
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4. Applicants are to submit scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) taken within the previous five years. GRE scores should be submitted with other application materials.

5. Excellent oral and written communication skills (including command of the English language for non-native speakers) are required. International students must submit the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores. There is a two-year limit for TOEFL beginning from the date of the test.

6. Interested candidates can submit their application online at www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/application_and_information.htm by following the appropriate links. Additional information about the program and curriculum can be found at our departmental web site www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/dbmi

7. Confidential letters of recommendation, GRE scores and TOEFL scores can be electronically submitted with the online application. Transcripts should be mailed to the Department of Biomedical Informatics, Attn: Rischelle Jenkins, 4\textsuperscript{th} floor Eskind Biomedical Library, 2209 Garland Avenue, Nashville, TN  37232-8340.

8. Questions regarding the application process can be directed to Rischelle Jenkins at Rischelle.Jenkins@vanderbilt.edu or by phone at 615-936-1068.

Applications are considered once a year for fall admission. Application deadline is always January 15\textsuperscript{th}. Applications received after the deadline are reviewed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the program.

3.8.2 Applicants for Part-Time Study

The admissions committee will review and make recommendations for applicants interested in pursuing a degree part-time (M.S. and/or Ph.D. degree). In general, part-time students’ commitment for graduate studies in the DBMI must be at least 50%.

3.8.3 International Applicants

Currently, limited funding is available for international applicants. To meet requirements for entry into the United States for study, applicants must demonstrate that they have sufficient financial resources to meet expected costs of their educational program. Applicants must provide documentary evidence of their financial resources with their application. International applicants are encouraged to apply for a grant from their home country.

United States laws and regulations restrict the opportunity for international students to be employed. Students may be allowed to work off campus only under special circumstances. Many spouses and dependents of international students are not allowed to be employed while in the United States. Inquires about non-academic matters can be provided by International Student and Scholar Services at www.vanderbilt.edu/isss

Since September 11, 2001, the US government has profoundly changed the way in which it deals with visas for visiting scientists. The Department of Homeland Security
3. The Program

and the State Department are very careful in their issue and in the enforcement of regulations concerning international scholars when they are here. This communication concerns J-1 visas, which are issued to visiting scholars and we see them primarily in the postdoc community where we have about 110 such individuals at present.

It is imperative that this group follow the law regarding reporting of changes in home addresses and in maintaining their employment in an appropriate fashion. Failure to follow the law can result in the institution losing its rights to bring anyone over in this status. We should not take this concern lightly. Any changes must be reported to the Office of International Student Services (ISSS) immediately, so that they can be entered into the national SEVIS database.

The Postdoc Office occasionally are asked to facilitate a J-1 postdoc moving from one lab to another. There are two important criteria which must be met if such a move can be supported. First, the move must be reported to SEVIS before consummating such a move. Second, the research training area must be the same as that for which the J-1 visa was issued in the first place. The Postdoc Office can help in defining “area” and “same,” and it is very strongly encouraged that internationals contact the Postdoc Office before such a move since they can expedite and facilitate communications with ISSS to maximize success.

Who is responsible for attending to such visa situations? Three groups, over and above ISSS and the Postdoc Office. First, the postdoc themselves are responsible for their actions. They are informed of these responsibilities upon arrival in the institution by ISSS and by the Postdoc Office. Second, the personnel who process the mechanics of appointing them to positions here. The Postdoc Office is in contact with this group on a daily basis, and it is often the personnel who will alert the Postdoc Office to difficult situations.

3.8.4 Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee reviews all applicants. Applications are reviewed based upon the submitted application materials. However, the committee may choose to interview some applicants in person or by phone. Applicants admitted to the program interested in pursuing a Ph.D. must complete the requirements for a Masters first before pursuing the Ph.D.

Candidates being seriously considered for the program are usually notified by the end of February. Candidates are either scheduled for an on-campus interview or by phone. The candidate will be notified as to whether they are accepted into the program within two weeks of their interview. A formal letter will be sent providing details on their start date and additional information needed.

If an applicant is not a final candidate, the applicant is notified, in general, by mid-March of their status.
3. The Program

3.9 Funding for Students

The major source of funding for the Vanderbilt Biomedical Informatics Degree Program is a grant from the National Library of Medicine (NLM). Funding for eligible applicants is reviewed annually based on academic progress.

The National Library of Medicine requires that a funded fellow be either a U.S. Citizen or a U.S. Permanent Resident. Pending U.S. Permanent Residency cannot be accepted nor will a letter from an immigration lawyer stating such status. NLM rules are very specific regarding who can and cannot be funded.
4. Vanderbilt University
Academic Requirements and Policies
The grading system in the Graduate School includes the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F. A student will not be granted graduate credit for any course in which a grade of less than C is received. The letter "I" may be used at the discretion of the instructor in those cases in which the student is not able to complete work in the normal time. The notation “W” is entered onto the transcript when a student withdraws from a course or from the Graduate School. A grade point average of 3.0, or a B average, on all courses taken for credit is required for graduation. Letter grades are assigned grade point values as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students receive grades in all courses except those approved for non-credit, audits, and some seminars. If an “I” (Incomplete grade) is not replaced by a letter grade within one year it is changed to the grade “F” at the discretion of the instructor; otherwise, the “I” (incomplete grade) automatically becomes permanent and remains on the transcript as such. It is the department’s policy that an incomplete grade from a spring course has to be completed by the end of the semester and from a fall course by the end of the spring semester.

The exam schedule for each semester is at http://www.vanderbilt.edu/registrar/calendar/exams/index.htm

The terms for academic probation are established by the university. A grade point average of 3.0, or a B average, on all courses taken for credit is necessary for graduation. Students who fall below an average of 3.0 are placed on probation for one semester. If the student’s performance does not improve during the semester, the Dean and the appropriate department chair will decide whether to dismiss the student or to allow the continuation of probation. If at the end of the second semester the grade point average is still below 3.0, the student is advised to withdraw or face dismissal. Students who earn a grade point average of 2.0 or less during their first semester of residence are subject to dismissal at the end of that semester.

In the Biomedical Informatics Department, the Academic Program Committee (APC) oversees the students’ academic work and progress. The APC can have additional or more stringent requirements than the university to assess satisfactory student progress. Accordingly, the APC requires a grade of B- or better in each core course. Students who earn lower grades will be placed on departmental academic probation. They are required to maintain an overall average of B or above and to repeat successfully the core course.
in which they obtained an unsatisfactory grade the next time it is offered. Otherwise, they are subject to dismissal.

**Leave of Absence**

The Graduate School requires continuous registration except for summer sessions. Students who want to interrupt their graduate study must apply to the Dean and receive an authorized leave of absence. Leave of absence is granted for a maximum of one year. Those without authorized leave who do not register are dropped from the rolls of the Graduate School and are not considered students. If they want to resume graduate study at Vanderbilt, they must apply for reinstatement.

Candidates who have passed the qualifying examinations or completed 72 or more hours of credit toward the Doctor of Philosophy degree are not usually granted a leave of absence, except in special circumstances (e.g., maternity or medical leave).

**Withdrawal**

Students who intend to withdraw from the University should inform the Graduate School in writing. Improper notification may result in loss of credit or other penalties.

**Tuition Benefits for Full-time Staff**

The definition of full-time staff is any regular or term staff working 30 hours or more per week. Staff interested in receiving educational benefits must be employed for three months before registration.

Financial assistance is provided for one course per semester or three courses per academic year. A maximum of 3 credit hours or 4 laboratory hours will be compensated. Staff enrolled at Vanderbilt will receive a 70% tuition discount upon registering. Fees, books, and any remaining tuition are the responsibility of the staff.

Vanderbilt will assist with paying tuition for undergraduate, graduate, or professional courses for staff as follows:

- Staff must be eligible for the benefit and enrolled in an accredited institution as defined in section II of this document
- Financial assistance is provided for one course per semester, or three courses per academic year
- Upon satisfactory completion of the course at another college or university, Vanderbilt will reimburse eligible staff 70% of the charge for tuition, up to an amount equal to 70% of what Vanderbilt would charge for similar level coursework.
- For course work at Vanderbilt, a 70% discount will be applied to Vanderbilt charges for tuition upon registration.
- Fees, books, the remaining amount of tuition, etc., are the responsibility of the staff member
4. Vanderbilt University Academic Requirements and Policies

- Staff members who apply to Vanderbilt for coursework are subject to the same competition for admission as other applicants.

In addition to the benefits outlined above, eligible staff members may audit one Vanderbilt course per semester and tuition will be waived, provided the staff member has the instructor's and the supervisor's written permission to attend. No credit is given for audited classes.
5. DBMI Degree Program Policies and Procedures and Other Program Opportunities
5. DBMI Degree Program Policies and Procedures and Other Program Opportunities

**Orientation**

New student orientation for graduate students is always the Monday before classes start. An email announcement is always sent from the Graduate School. This announcement is distributed to all new students and is posted on the department’s announcement board located on the fourth floor past the elevator.

The Department of Biomedical Informatics will also schedule an orientation for new and returning students.

**Compliance Training Programs**

All faculty, staff, and students are required to complete annual compliance training programs. Compliance topics include HIPPA, Standards of Conduct, and Confidentiality. Programs to complete the compliance requirements are now available online. The online web sites are below:

- HIPPA Training: [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/hipaa/index.html](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/hipaa/index.html)
- Standards of Conduct: [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/compliance/soc.htm](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/compliance/soc.htm)

**Academic Advisor**

Upon matriculation, new students will be assigned an academic advisor to assist with the initial advising, such as class registration, identifying research projects, and mentoring. In addition, the DGS will support the academic advisor in their respective roles.

**Registration**

Prior to registering for classes, students should discuss and have approved their plan of study for each semester with the academic or research advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and obtain approval by the Academic Program Committee.

After classes have been approved, students can register for courses online via Online Assess to Student Information Systems (OASIS). The link is [http://oasis.vanderbilt.edu/](http://oasis.vanderbilt.edu/)

You will be prompted for your VUnet ID and password. If you do not have a VUnet ID, or you have forgotten your password, look on the campus web pages at [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/vunet](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/vunet) for help. Information on e-passwords can be found at [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/password](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/password).

Each semester, students are required to complete the Online Registration Data Form. The link is [www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/rdf.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/rdf.html). Failure to complete this form will make the registration process invalid. Therefore, it is advised that this be completed early in the registration process.
You **MUST** register every fall and spring semester until you graduate.

**Transcripts and Grades**

If you want to look at your transcript, grades, prior degrees, please go to the web site https://webapp.mis.vanderbilt.edu/AcademicAddress/Controller

An e-password is needed to request a transcript or grade. To obtain an e-password, visit https://webapp-a.mis.vanderbilt.edu/AcademicRecord/Controller

The Board of Trust has approved a new “one-time transcript fee” policy for official University transcripts. The policy started in the fall semester 2003 for all new students entering Vanderbilt for the first time. All new incoming students were assessed a $30 one-time transcript fee. Once the fee is paid, a fee for each transcript will no longer be charged. Other special handling fees (i.e., FedEx, UPS, etc.) may be charged but no fee for each transcript will be charged.

Returning students will continue to pay a “per transcript fee” until they have paid $30. Prior transcript fees paid by continuing students will be credited toward the $30 maximum. Once the maximum is reached, a fee for each transcript will no longer be charged. Other special handling fees (i.e., FedEx, UPS, etc.) may be charged but no fee for each transcript will be charged.

As of August 1, 2003, Vanderbilt alumni will no longer be charged a fee for transcripts.

**Health Insurance Waiver Process**

Effective Fall 2003 health insurance waiver cards will no longer be mailed to students. Students will be informed by a mass mailing about the new process of waiving the insurance online. Students will have the option to go to the Student Accounts web page, which will link to the Vanderbilt University sponsored insurance company’s web page, to waive the insurance.

For additional information, contact: Pamela Canady, Assistant Manager, Student Accounts, 615-322-4092 or 1-800-288-1144.

**Student Accounts**

Every month all students are sent a statement reflecting any outstanding charges. Please carefully review for charges. The department is responsible for tuition, insurance, and activity fees for students receiving these benefits from the department. Library fines, student health visits, or other charges are the responsibility of the student.
5. DBMI Degree Program Policies and Procedures and Other Program Opportunities

**Academic Program Committee**

It is the primary responsibility of the Academic Program Committee (APC) to facilitate and to monitor the progress of all trainees in the Department of Biomedical Informatics (DBMI) and to notify the Chair and the department's faculty at an appropriate time of actions taken by the Committee. The APC’s policies and regulation are described in a separate document.

In addition, the APC shall review the progress of students seeking an informatics-related degree in another department with funding through a DBMI training grant. The direction and content of the program of study of such students are under the jurisdiction of the degree-granting department, but the APC shall review progress to determine whether funding should continue to be provided by the DBMI. For those students, the Program Director shall request progress reports in January and in June from the department in which the student is studying, and shall ask to be notified promptly at any time if the degree-granting department has concerns about the student's progress.

All fellows will be given annual reviews or more frequently if necessary. The reviews will be administered by the Academic Program Committee.

For the academic year 2004-2005, the Academic Program Committee consists of: Judy Ozbolt, Chair; Constantin Aliferis, Dominik Aronsky, Kevin Johnson, and Shawn Levy.

**Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)**

All new students are required to attend a two-day retreat held annually in August by the department of Biomedical Research Education and Training (BRET).

At Vanderbilt, responsible conduct of research, graduate school survival skills and communication skills are taught together. This is primarily because they are so co-dependent and it offers a logical and economical solution to present the material in this way.

The survival and communication skills and RCR are presented in a two day retreat taken by graduate students during the IGP year, and by M.D./Ph.D. students at any time during the first three years of the Medical Scientist Training Program, and at no later time than the G1 phase of their career. The Retreat meets for two days. Although students register for zero hour credit, attendance is mandatory and successful completion is obligatory for graduation in all participating departments of the IGP and M.S.TP.

Additional information is available at the BRET web site:
http://bret.mc.vanderbilt.edu/bret/html/rcr_training.htm
5. DBMI Degree Program Policies and Procedures and Other Program Opportunities

**Seminars**

All students are required to attend the departmental weekly seminars held during the fall and spring semesters. Dates and presenters for the seminars are available on the departmental web site at [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/dbmi](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/dbmi). The seminars take place in Light Hall and last one hour. A weekly email announcement is sent and poster boards are displayed on the first and fourth floors of the Eskind Biomedical Library identifying the speaker, topic, time, and location. Lunch is provided.

A weekly sign-in sheet is provided for students’ signature. The sheet is located on the table upon entering the room. CME credits are offered for physicians.

**Journal Club**

The journal club is a student-run conference. The format is a student-led discussion of articles. Students ask faculty members to assist in facilitating discussion of the articles and would be asked to submit their article(s) choice at least one week prior to their meeting. A web site for the club is at [http://160.129.203.29/journalclub/](http://160.129.203.29/journalclub/)

Some general guidelines:

- If a faculty member presents during the presentation and/or discussion, invite the faculty member at least one week ahead of time.
- Students should read the paper(s) before the meeting in order to maximize the utility of the discussion.
- Critical discussion of any paper should focus on the negative AND positive aspects of the paper at hand. Flaws will necessarily be brought up and discussed; however, the goal is not to "bash" a given paper to the extent possible, but rather to learn from its contribution.

**Interdisciplinary Graduate Program (IGP)**

Individuals pursuing a Ph.D. in the basic biomedical or biological science departments at Vanderbilt University join these departments through the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in the Biomedical Sciences (IGP). Participating departments include Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Cancer Biology, Cell & Developmental Biology, Microbiology and Immunology, Molecular Physiology and Biophysics, Neuroscience, Pathology, and Pharmacology.

The 1st IGP year consists of an integrated course that provides an introduction into the field of the participating departments. In addition, students complete three lab rotations to experience work in a lab of their interest. Students in the Department of Biomedical Informatics who have an interest in bioinformatics-related topics can take the IGP course (one of two semesters). The DGS of the DBMI and the IGP can assist students.
5. DBMI Degree Program Policies and Procedures and Other Program Opportunities

Contact information:

Interdisciplinary Graduate Program
in the Biomedical Sciences
340 Light Hall
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN. 37232-0301

If there are any questions about applying to this program, please feel free to contact their office at 1-800-810-8993 or e-mail at Michelle.Grundy@vanderbilt.edu

Masters of Public Health Program (MPH)

The Master of Public Health (MPH) is a two-year program offered by the Department of Preventive Medicine/School of Medicine that is designed for physicians and other doctoral-level health care professionals. The primary objective of the program is to provide training in the methods of assessment of clinical outcomes in populations or samples of humans. This encompasses epidemiology, clinical epidemiology, clinical trials and other non-randomized clinical research, and outcomes/health services research. The training includes courses in epidemiologic methods, clinical trials, research study design, biostatistics, health services research, economic analysis and computing.

The Program is open to physicians who have completed their residency training or other health care professionals at a comparable level. Normally, applicants will be fellows in clinical specialties who seek training for a future career in epidemiologic, clinical, or outcomes research or health administration. The sponsoring unit (Department or Division) must provide assurances that the fellow will have adequate time and other resources to successfully complete the program. The Program includes two intensive six week didactic sessions and a supervised project resulting in a paper for submission to the biomedical literature. The Program is housed in The Department of Preventive Medicine, which includes 12 full-time faculty with interests in pharmacoepidemiology, health services research, cancer epidemiology, infectious diseases, public health practice, clinical trials, and biostatistics. For further information call Cindy Naron at (615) 322-2017.

The courses are offered in 3-4 week blocks and potentially conflict with other semester-oriented courses. DBMI students interested in the MPH classes should contact Cindy Naron as early as possible (6-12 months prior to class enrollment) and should carefully plan for other classes to avoid scheduling conflicts. In general, MPH students have priority to enroll in these courses. The remaining spots are popular and classes fill up early (usually 6-12 month prior to the course).
(www.vanderbilt.edu/prevmed/mph.htm)
5. DBMI Degree Program Policies and Procedures and Other Program Opportunities

Medical Scientist Training Program (M.S.T.P.)

The Medical Scientist Training Program (combined M.D./Ph.D. program) was established at Vanderbilt University in 1964. It is designed to develop teachers and investigators in the clinical and basic medical sciences. The program provides students with the opportunity to study a basic biomedical science in depth and to do advanced research in some aspect of that subject while concurrently pursuing studies leading to the medical degree. This training develops the academic skills and the laboratory techniques that are necessary for an effective experimental approach to problems in basic and clinical medical sciences. The program is designed for students aspiring careers in academic medicine and medical research.

The M.D./Ph.D program meets the requirements of the School of Medicine for the Doctor of Medicine degree and of the Graduate School for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. The combined degree program usually requires six to seven calendar years for completion. Although some saving of time is built into the program, there is no implication that the combined degree program circumvents, alters, or dilutes the requirements for either the M.D. or Ph.D. degree. The intent is to optimally utilize the strengths of each school.

Additional information is available at http://bret.mc.vanderbilt.edu/M.S.tp/

M.S.TP students can complete the Ph.D. portion of the M.D./Ph.D. program in the Department of Biomedical Informatics. M.S.TP students should carefully prepare a tentative plan of study to outline the sequence of medical and graduate school course work (including DMBI class work). Changes to the plan of study have to be submitted in a timely fashion because the changes may impact DBMI’s administrative and funding decisions.
6. National Library of Medicine
Trainee Appointment Form

The administrative assistant for the Degree Program will complete annual appointment forms for trainees to sign before submitting them to NLM.

Trainee appointments are made usually in 12-month increments. A trainee may receive up to 4 years of aggregate NLM support at the predoctoral level or up to 3 years of support at the postdoctoral level.

Any extension of the total duration of trainee support at either the predoctoral or postdoctoral level is possible in certain cases and requires approval by NLM. Requests for extension must be made in writing by the trainee, endorsed by the department chair, director of the training program, the appropriate institutional official, and addressed to the NLM Program Officer. The request must include a sound justification for an extension of the limits on the period of support.

Stipends

NLM training awards provide funds in the form of stipends to graduate students and postdoctoral trainees. A stipend is provided as a subsistence allowance to help trainees defray living expenses during the research training experience. It is not provided as a condition of employment with either the Federal Government or the awardee institution. Trainees are required to follow the NLM training grant directives (e.g., not having other concurrent federal grant support). Stipends must be paid to all trainees at the levels stipulated by NLM stipend schedules.

Stipend levels depend on the trainee’s prior education and year’s of professional experience. Stipend levels are requested by the DBMI and determined by NLM. After the initial level of the NLM stipend is determined, the student receives annual increases set forth by NLM. However, the initial stipend level does not change. Students are eligible for annual adjustments after the completion of 12 months in the program.

Stipends are tax-exempt. Vanderbilt does not report stipend payments on a 1099. However, this does not mean the stipend is not taxable. It is the responsibility of the student to verify their tax status and whether taxes are payable to the Internal Revenue Service.

Tax Liability

Internal Revenue Code Section 117 applies to the tax treatment of all scholarships and fellowships. Under that section, non-degree candidates are required to report as gross income all stipends and any monies paid on their behalf for course tuition and fees required for attendance. Degree candidates may exclude from gross income (for tax purposes) any amount used for tuition and related expenses such as fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for courses of instruction at a qualified educational organization. The taxability of stipends, however, in no way alters the relationship between NLM trainees and institutions. NLM stipends are not considered salaries. In
addition, trainees supported by NLM are not considered to be in an employee-employer relationship with NLM or the awardee institution. It must be emphasized that the interpretation and implementation of the tax laws are the domain of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the courts. Public Health Service (PHS) takes no position on what the status may be for a particular taxpayer, and it does not have the authority to dispense tax advice. Individuals should consult their local IRS office about the applicability of the law to their situation and for information on their tax obligations.

Details on National Institute of Health (NIH) policies on administering stipends, on stipend supplementation, on other compensation, on educational loans, on concurrent awards and on advice on the tax liability of stipends are available from National Research Service Award Guidelines. [http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm)

**Health Insurance**

NLM will allow costs associated with family health insurance for trainees who have families and are eligible for family health insurance coverage at the sponsoring institution. Self-only health insurance is an allowable cost for trainees without families. Please call 1-800-457-5599 regarding insurance problems or questions.

**Activity Fees**

University activity fees are covered by the training grant.

**Travel & Annual Meetings**

Trainee travel is provided for attendance at scientific meetings that the institution determines to be of importance to the individual’s research training. The Department of Biomedical Informatics requests that trainees attend the annual American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) held in November and one NLM meeting held annually and other national conferences related to the field of Biomedical Informatics. It is mandatory that all NLM trainees attend the NLM meetings.

Students are strongly encouraged to have a membership with AMIA. Membership and registration to attend AMIA may be done simultaneously. Students who prepare poster presentations for AMIA should use the department format if available. The department will pay for expenses incurred for the printing of posters, if the student is first author and the poster relates to the student’s research.

Before traveling to meetings/conferences, a travel report must be completed. The administrative assistant will confirm hotel and flight reservations with the department’s credit card. Trainees are responsible for returning all original travel receipts to the administrative assistant for processing travel reimbursements. No reimbursement can be obtained without submitting the original receipts.
Students receive $1,200 per year (July 1-June 30) for travel and the purchase of books and software. The $1,200 is disbursed as follows: pre-docs receive $500 and post-docs receive $1,000 for travel from NLM. The remaining funds, upon approval from the Director of Graduate Students, may be used for the purchase of books or software.

**Part-Time Training**

Fellows are expected to make a full-time commitment to their training program. However, under unusual and pressing personal circumstances, a fellow may submit a written request to NLM to change to less than full-time training. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. They must be approved by NLM in advance for each budget period. The nature of the circumstances requiring the part-time training might include medical conditions, disability, or pressing personal or family situations such as child or elder care. Permission for part-time training will not be approved to accommodate other sources of funding, job opportunities, clinical practice, clinical training, or for other responsibilities associated with the fellow's position at the institution. In each case, the fellow must submit a written request countersigned by the sponsor and an appropriate institutional business official that includes documentation supporting the need for part-time training. The written request also must include an estimate of the expected duration of the period of part-time training, an assurance that the fellow intends to return to full-time training when that becomes possible, and an assurance that the trainee intends to complete the proposed research training program. In no case will it be permissible for the fellow to be engaged in NLM-supported research training for less than 50 percent effort. Individuals who must reduce their commitment to less than 50 percent effort must take a leave-of-absence from NLM fellowship support. The fellowship notice of award will be reissued and the stipend will be prorated during the period of any approved part-time training.

**Note:**

Information pertaining to NLM guidelines may be found at http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-03-070.html
7. Infrastructure
Office Procedures

Leave Policies

Vacation and sick leave days are accrued on a fiscal year, from July 1 through June 30. Days not used in a fiscal year do not roll over to the next year.

**Vacation Leave.** Full-time students receiving stipends administered by Vanderbilt University are expected to exert a full-time effort on their studies and research throughout the year, including semester breaks and the summer term. They may receive stipends for up to 15 business days (Monday through Friday) of vacation leave per year. Vacation leave taken during an approved Vanderbilt holiday does not require using a vacation day. Approved Vanderbilt holidays are: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

**Sick Leave.** Full-time students receiving stipends may receive stipends for up to 15 business days (Monday through Friday) of sick leave. Sick leave may be used for medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth, as well as for other illnesses and injuries.

**Parental Leave.** Full-time students may take up to 30 calendar days (including weekends) of parental leave for the adoption or birth of a child when the use of parental leave is approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and Training. For students who receive stipends, stipends will continue through a 30-day period of approved parental leave.

**Terminal Leave.** A period of terminal leave is not permitted and stipends will not be paid for leave not taken.

**Leave of Absence.** All students, whether or not receiving stipends, are expected to be registered continuously, including the summer session. Students receiving stipends are expected to be away from their studies no more than the times specified in these leave policies. Students who want to interrupt their graduate studies must apply to the Graduate School and receive an authorized leave of absence. Leave of absence is granted for a maximum of one year. Those without authorized leave who do not register are dropped from the rolls of the Graduate School and are not considered students. If they want to resume graduate study at Vanderbilt, they must apply for reinstatement.

**Application for Leave.** The Department of Biomedical Informatics requires that a leave form (see appendix) be submitted for approval to the Director of Graduate Studies and Training prior to an absence of one or more days.

**Academic Work Off Site.** If a student is working on an academic assignment away from the office, the student is responsible for notifying the administrative assistant of location, means of communication, and expected time of return. The student informs the administrative assistant when the student returns to the office.

Software Requests

The Program Director will review all allowable requests in consideration of available funds in the budget. Subsequently, the student will then be informed as to the status of his or her request. Students must receive prior approval. Please do not make purchases and then request reimbursement. Software installed on departmental computers must be appropriately licensed Most software purchases are offered through
7. Infrastructure

the Department of Information Technology Services. Their web site is www.vanderbilt.edu/its/

Classroom Assignments

Prior to the beginning of each semester, the administrative assistant will request classrooms for the instructors. When the classroom confirmations are received, the administrative assistant will distribute to instructors and students enrolled.

Computer Resources

Ken Duncan (ken.Duncan@vanderbilt.edu) is the technical support person for the department. Ken will assist with setting up email and any computer/technical problems. Ken can be reached by calling the Help Desk at 3-4357. In Ken absence, there will be a designated technical to provide assistance.

Office Space

If possible, students will be assigned cubicles located in the Eskind Biomedical Library. Computers will be available for all incoming students prior to their arrival.

The administrative assistant will inform students of their assigned cubicle. All cubicles will have a phone with an assigned number. This number can be shared with family members and others as deemed necessary. If long distance phone calls are required related to departmental projects/assignments, then the administrative assistant can provide the Vnet number. Otherwise, personal long distance calls can be assessed by using a personal phone card.

Housing

All trainees are responsible for locating housing. The Vanderbilt web site provides information on housing. We recommend that each individual designate an appropriate amount of time to visit the Nashville area to choose an apartment before relocating.

Job Postings

Job announcements sent to the Department of Biomedical Informatics will be posted on the fourth floor bulletin board.
8. Campus Resources
8. Campus Resources

**Psychological and Counseling Center**

The Psychological and Counseling Center is a broad-based service center available to students, faculty, staff, and their partners and dependents. Services include: (1) family, couples, individual, and group counseling and psychotherapy; (2) psychological and educational assessment; (3) career assessment and counseling; (4) programs such as assertiveness training; marital communication; individual study skills techniques; weight, stress, and time management; group support programs for acquiring skills such as relaxation; (5) administration of national testing programs; (6) special programming related to diversity issues; (8) campus speakers and educational programs.

Eligible persons may make appointments by visiting the Psychological and Counseling Center or by calling (615) 322-2571. Services are confidential to the extent permitted by law. For more information, see the web site at [www.vanderbilt.edu/pcc](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/pcc).

**Student Health Center**

The Vanderbilt Student Health Center in the Zerfoss Building is a student-oriented facility that provides routine and acute medical care similar to services rendered in a private physician’s office or HMO.

The following primary care health services are provided to students registered in degree-seeking status without charge and without co-payment: visits to staff physicians and nurse practitioners, personal and confidential counseling by mental health professionals, routine procedures, educational information and speakers for campus groups, some routine laboratory tests that are performed at the Student Health Center, and specialty clinics held at the Student Health Center.

These Student Health Center primary care services are designed to complement the student’s own insurance policy, HMO, MCO, etc., coverage to provide comprehensive care. Students are billed for any services provided outside the Student Health Center or by the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. [www.vanderbilt.edu/student_health/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_health/)

**Opportunity Development Center**

Students with disabilities or conditions that require accommodations in educational methods or environment may receive evaluations and recommendations from the Opportunity Development Center in the Baker Building. Phone 322-4705 to schedule an appointment.

**Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan**

All degree-seeking students registered for four or more hours at Vanderbilt are required to have adequate health insurance coverage. The University offers a sickness and accident insurance plan that is designed to provide hospital, surgical, and major medical benefits. A brochure explaining the limits, exclusions, and benefits of insurance
8. Campus Resources

coverage is available to students at registration, in the Office of Student Accounts, or at the Student Health Center.

The annual premium is in addition to tuition and is automatically billed to the student’s account. Coverage extends from August 12 until August 11 of the following year, whether a student remains in school or is away from the University.

A student who does not want to subscribe to the insurance plan offered through the University must notify the Office of Student Accounts of adequate coverage under another policy. A new student must complete and return the selection/waiver card that is available at registration or in the Office of Student Accounts. This card must be submitted at or by registration for the fall or spring semester. A selection/waiver card indicating comparable coverage must be completed every year in order to waive participation in the Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan.
(www.vanderbilt.edu/student_health/)

Family Coverage

Additional premiums are charged for family health insurance coverage. Married students who want to provide coverage for their families may secure application forms by contacting the on-campus Student Insurance Representative at (615) 343-4688. (www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaaccts/g_health.html)

The Vanderbilt Student Recreation Center

The center features basketball, volleyball, badminton, a gym area, weight room, 6 racquetball courts, 25 yard pool, 2 squash courts, indoor and outdoor track, ping pong and pool tables, indoor rock climbing wall, aerobics, outdoor basketball court, outdoor intramural and sport club fields, indoor and outdoor tennis, large screen TV and refreshment area.
(www.vanderbilt.edu/CampusRecreation/)

Sarratt Student Center

The center has a cinema, art gallery, several student lounge areas, several eating facilities, including the Overcup Oak Restaurant. The Center offers a ticketmaster located on the first floor at the receptionist desk.
(www.vanderbilt.edu/sarratt/)
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Parking and Vehicle Registration

Parking space on campus is limited. Motor vehicles operated on campus at any time by students, faculty, or staff must be registered with Central Parking System located on the ground level of the Vanderbilt University Hospital Parking Garage. The phone number is (615) 936-1215. A fee is charged. Parking regulations are strictly enforced. (www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/root/vumc.php/site =Medical Center Parking)

Eskind Biomedical Library

The Annette and Irwin Eskind Biomedical Library (EBL), a unit of Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s Informatics Center, is the hub of the medical center’s information services and resources. The EBL provides access to materials to support the patient care, healthcare education, and biomedical research missions of Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

To enable information use at the point of need, the EBL provides an extensive digital library of electronic journals, books, databases and other resources, in addition to over 200,000 print volumes. To preserve biomedical history, EBL provides a unique collection of rare books, photographs and historical items in its Historical Collection, and the Medical Center Archives serves as a repository for manuscripts and institutional records that reflect the history of the medical center and the history of medicine.

The library is committed to service as well as leading edge research into information management and utilization and has developed numerous innovative programs which integrate information into workflow. These include the Clinical, Patient, and Research Informatics Consult Services which place information specialists at the patient bedside or the research bench where they identify and meet information needs.

EBL also facilitates the Vanderbilt community’s understanding of information resources and use through customized training sessions and asynchronous assistance services. In addition to fostering information use and knowledge creation within the medical center, the EBL provides a challenging yet supportive learning environment in which its staff build their service provision skills through a formal training program and engagement with the EBL’s learning culture. Additional information is available at http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/biolib/index.html

The DBMI is housed in the Eskind Biomedical Library (Director: Nunzia Giuse, M.D., MLS). When the library is closed, DBMI students are only allowed to access the library to get to the DBMI space; they are not allowed to use library space. Only books and journals that were checked out with the library, are allowed in the DBMI space. In addition, copies of journals should be made in the library and not brought to the DBMI space for making copies.
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Eskind Library Policies for Informatics Personnel

- Please use your ID to enter the library through the turnstile. Do not walk through the staff area behind the Circulation desk.

- Please do not ask EBL staff to access the 4th floor from the elevator for you. EBL staff is not authorized to do so. For safety and security reasons, only people with access cards will be permitted to enter the 4th floor after hours.

- Informatics Center faculty, staff and students are considered patrons of the Eskind Library with the same privileges and restrictions as other Medical Center faculty, staff and students.

- Please do not wonder/use the library when it is closed.

- If you bring food in, please be unobtrusive and enter from the tunnel. Drinks must be covered.

- When you enter or exit the library via the tunnel door or 1st floor back door, please make sure the door closes securely behind you.

Other Libraries

There are nine other libraries on campus. They are:

Central – Jean Alexander Heard Library
Divinity – Divinity School
Law – Law School
Management – Owen Graduate School of Management
Peabody – Peabody College
Science and Engineering – Sarah Shannon Stevenson
Special Collections and Archives – Peabody College
TV News Archive

Additional information about the above libraries is available at www.library.vanderbilt.edu/

Blair School of Music

Blair offers a concert series each year. Information about tickets and scheduled concerts is available at www.vanderbilt.edu/Blair/concertseries/con_series.html

Sports Information

If you are interested in attending Vanderbilt football games, you will need to fill out a form ahead of time, then pay and pickup your ticket the week before the season starts.
8. Campus Resources

(although it is likely you can get tickets after the season starts). Football tickets cost $20 for the season as do men’s basketball tickets. All other Vanderbilt sporting events are free with your student ID. Basketball tickets for both men and women’s games are distributed weekly at the Vanderbilt bookstore. You must pick up your ticket on a game-by-game basis. Spouses may also purchase tickets after they obtain their spouse ID. Additional information is available through the ticket office at 322-3544 or the athletic department at 322-4727. (http://vucommodores.com/)
9. Off Campus

9. Off Campus Resources
9. Off Campus

**Sports**

Nashville is also home to a AAA Baseball team—the Nashville Sounds. Tickets for Sounds games may be purchased online, through TicketMaster.

**Entertainment Information**

The entertainment venues in the Nashville area are too numerous to mention here. Two of our favorites are below. In addition, consult the Nashville Scene, or go online to http://nashville.citysearch.com

**The Bluebird Café**
4104 Hillsboro Road, Nashville, 615-383-1461

The Bluebird Cafe has gained a reputation worldwide for presenting the best original country and acoustic music seven nights a week. Performers do not generally play “cover” songs. Musicians do not jam here, and songwriters frequently are accompanied by just one guitar or piano.

As a listening room, quiet is requested at all times during a performance - which is why our slogan has become “Shhh!” You are welcome to drink and eat with us at any time, but if you are looking for an evening of conversation there are more appropriate places in Nashville. Between the sets you will undoubtedly have plenty to talk about!

New writers who have passed our audition process can be heard every Sunday night - it's a great opportunity to hear from tomorrow's hitmakers. Writer’s night on Sunday is free and we have a special guest hit songwriter as the finale every Sunday.

**Tennessee Performing Arts Center**
505 Deaderick Street, Nashville, [www.tpac.org](http://www.tpac.org), 615/782-4000

TPAC is located in the James K. Polk Cultural Center at 505 Deaderick Street in downtown Nashville, occupying an entire city block between 5th and 6th Avenues and Deaderick and Union Streets. Also housing the Tennessee State Museum, the cultural center adjoins the 18-story James K. Polk State Office Tower.

The performance venues at TPAC are Andrew Jackson Hall (2,472 seats), James K. Polk Theater (1,075), Andrew Johnson Theater (288) and War Memorial Auditorium (1,668), the historic landmark located across 6th Avenue and the plaza from the Center. Among its many operations, TPAC presents a series of Broadway shows and special engagements, and administers a comprehensive education program.

TPAC is home to five resident performing arts organizations: Circle Players, Nashville Ballet, Nashville Opera Association, The Nashville Symphony, and Tennessee
9. Off Campus

Repertory Theatre. Presenting their work on the stages of TPAC, all of these organizations are independent of the Center.

**Top 10 Ways to Show Off Nashville**
By Jonathan Flax, Citysearch Contributor

**Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art**
1200 Forrest Park Dr, Nashville, TN
The Japanese rock garden, perennial garden and wildflower garden at this lovely locale are landscape museums unto themselves.

**Robert’s Western World**
416 Broadway, Nashville, TN
At this authentic downtown honky-tonk, revelers experience kickin’ homegrown music amid the high-end leather boots lining the walls.

**Ryman Auditorium**
116 Fifth Ave N, Nashville, TN
Don’t wait for showtime to explore the mecca of Nashville live music; backstage tours are available every weekday.

**Nashville Zoo at Grassmere**
3777 Nolensville Rd, Nashville, TN
Take a break from the traffic congestion and visit this expansive pastoral setting, home to a variety of exotic animals.

**Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center**
2800 Opryland Dr, Nashville, TN
The two enormous courtyards, featuring all manner of fish and foliage, are the real attraction at this city-in-itself hotel.

**Loveless Motel & Cafe**
8400 Hwy 100, Nashville, TN
This off-the-beaten-track diner serves the city’s best Southern breakfast; do not go easy on the gravy.

**Radnor Lake State Natural Area**
1160 Otter Creek Rd, Nashville, TN
This is the place to show off Nashville’s natural beauty--take a hike.

**Chu Restaurant**
909 20th Ave S, Nashville, TN
This wildly imagined, Far East-influenced restaurant serves Nashville’s only dim sum brunch every Sunday.

**Yazoo Brewing Company**
1200 Clinton St, Ste 110, Nashville, TN
At this independent brewery, which services many hip local restaurants and bars, guests are allowed to sample the product on-site.
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Station Inn
402 12th Ave S, Nashville, TN
You never know who's going to show up and strum at this music-lovers' paradise, conveniently aloof from crowded Lower Broadway.

The Stage
412 Broadway, Nashville, TN
Do some serious toe-tapping at the biggest stage on Broadway.

Sperry's Restaurant
5109 Harding Pike, Nashville, TN
Old-school steakhouse with a few new twists.

Green Hills Grille - Nashville
2122 Hillsboro Dr, Nashville, TN
Upscale family restaurant features stellar service and healthy American fare.

Bound'ry
911 20th Ave S, Nashville, TN
A popular bar scene and a menu without borders.

The Hermitage Hotel
An American Landmark Since 1910
231 6th Avenue North Nashville TN thehermitagehotel.com

Mafiaoza's
You're Gonna Love It or ELSE...
2400 12th Ave S Nashville TN

Malls

Bellevue Center – From Vanderbilt, take I-440 West to I-40 West. Exit at Bellevue. Turn left at red light and mall will be on your left.

Cool Springs - From Vanderbilt, take I-440 East to I-65 South. Exit at Galleria Blvd.

Green Hills – Take 21st Avenue South which changes to Hillsboro Road. The mall is about ten minutes from campus.

Harding Mall - From Vanderbilt, take I-440 East to I-65 South and exit at the second Harding Place exit. Go through approximately four red lights. The mall is at the intersection of Harding Place and Nolensville road.

Hickory Hollow - From Vanderbilt, take I-440 East to I-24 East. Exit at Hickory Hollow Parkway. Go through two red lights. Mall is at the intersection of Hickory Hollow Parkway and Bell Road.

100 Oaks – From Vanderbilt, Take 1-440 East to I-65 South. Exit at Powell Avenue and take the ramp to the left that loops around to the mall.
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Opry Mills - Take I-440 East to I-40 East and exit at Briley Parkway. Exit at Opry Mills Drive.

Rivergate – Take I-440 West to I-65 North. Exit at Two Mile Pike. Go through two red lights. Mall is on the left.

**Nearby Grocery Stores**

Compton’s Foodland – 2900 West End Avenue  
Kroger – Green Hills (2131 Abbott Martin) behind the Green Hills Mall  
Harris Teeter – 2201 21st Avenue South

**Nearby Department Stores**

Target – 26 White Bridge Road  
Take West End Avenue (changes to Harding). Pass St. Thomas Hospital on left and go through approximately three lights and turn right onto White Bridge Road. Target is on the right.

Walmart - From Vanderbilt, take I-440 West to I-40 West. Exit at Charlotte Pike. Turn right. Go through two red lights and turn right.

**Movie Tickets**

There are plenty places to watch movies in Nashville. Buy your discounted tickets at Rand Hall Bookstore, 2nd floor, Cashier’s area.

**Nashville Events Web Site**

A wealth of information about Nashville: restaurants, attractions, movies, events, and nightlife is available at http://nashville.citysearch.com/

**Driver’s License and Automobile Registration**

Newcomers have 30 days from the time they establish permanent residency to obtain a Tennessee driver’s license. Newcomers must bring their out-of-state driver’s license and two forms of residency identification (i.e., utility bill, bank statement) to any licensing station located at: 6604 Centennial Blvd. (741-4560) Additional information is available at www.state.tn.us/safety/listinfo.htm

All Tennessee residents must title and register their vehicles in this state. The vehicle must pass the Nashville Vehicle Inspection Test before it can be registered. Vehicles can be registered at:
9. Off Campus

700 2nd Avenue South (862-6050)

A complete list of emission testing sites is listed at www.state.tn.us/safety/title.html and www.nashville.org/cclerk/vehicles.htm

**Voter Registration**

Registration is available by picking up a form available at any motor vehicle division or post office or by registering in person at the Davidson County Election Commission office located at 700 2nd Avenue South, Room 153 (862-8800). An online registration form is available at www.nashville.gov/vote/voter_reg.htm

**Utility Companies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Bellsouth</td>
<td>557-6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Nashville Electric Service</td>
<td>736-6900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Nashville Gas Company</td>
<td>734-0685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable</td>
<td>Comcast</td>
<td>244-5900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Metro Water Services</td>
<td>862-4600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage Collection</td>
<td>Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)</td>
<td>242-4433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>The Tennessean</td>
<td>254-5661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Bus</td>
<td>Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)</td>
<td>242-4433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercity Bus</td>
<td>Greyhound Bus Lines</td>
<td>1-800-231-2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>Nashville International Airport</td>
<td>275-1600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Students’ Code of Conduct
The Vanderbilt Honor System was instituted in 1875 with the first final examinations administered by the University. Dean Madison Sarratt summarized the system as follows: "Let every individual who contemplates entering Vanderbilt University ask himself first this important question: Am I strong enough to give my word of honor and then live up to it in spite of every temptation that may arise? If you can answer this question in the affirmative, Vanderbilt University will welcome you and will promise the cooperation of every person here in helping you realize this ideal of integrity implied in your answer."

A student's personal integrity then, as now, was presumed to be sufficient assurance that in academic matters one did one's own work without unauthorized help from any other source. The Honor System is only one of the elements provided to Vanderbilt students with which each may develop creative thinking and intellectual maturity in a fair and balanced grading environment.

The Honor System presumes that all work submitted as part of academic requirements is the product of the student submitting it unless credit is given with proper footnoting and bibliographic techniques, or as prescribed by the course instructor.

When a student makes use of concepts or words from an outside source, whether in the form of a direct quotation or of paraphrase, credit must be given to the original source for each idea by footnote or other technique acceptable to the instructor. Failure to make such an acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism. (A comprehensive explanation of plagiarism is given, below, under the heading "The Honor Code Applied to Preparation of Papers.")

Faculty members do not routinely monitor tests and examinations to apprehend violators. Instructors who remain in examination rooms are there primarily to give assistance.

Students are responsible for obtaining from their professors an explanation of the freedom they may exercise in collaboration with other students or in use of outside sources, including:

- the student's own work prepared and submitted for another course;
- assignments that permit students to discuss the assignment or to collaborate, including during group study sessions;
- all limitations placed on take-home examinations, including use of class or outside materials or discussion with classmates;
- use of examinations or other materials from previous sections of the class; and
- use of Internet resources, including proper attribution.

In the event that a student does not obtain a clear definition of the application of the Honor Code from a professor in any class, the student must assume that the Honor Council will follow the strictest interpretation of the Honor Code with respect to that class.
10. Students’ Code of Conduct

Cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise falsifying results of study is prohibited. The System applies not only to examinations, but also to all work handed in, such as papers, reports, solutions to problems, tapes, films, and computer programs, unless excepted by the instructor. The system also applies to any act that is fraudulent or intended to mislead the instructor, including falsifying records of attendance for class, for events for which attendance is required or for which class credit is given, or for internships or other work service.

Other Employment

Students are to disclose to the Director of Graduate Studies:

- Any outside employment for pay.
- Any outside activities that consume too much of the trainee’s time that they risk interfering with timely progress in the program.

Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Situations may arise in which a student believes that he or she has not received fair treatment by a representative of the University or has a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the staff or faculty affecting the student. A student who wishes to have a complaint addressed by the University should first use the following Complaint Procedure and then use the Grievance Procedure if the Complaint Procedure proves unsatisfactory. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the Office of the Provost, their faculty advisers, another member of the faculty or staff, or, in regard to complaints of unlawful discrimination, the Opportunity Development Center. Decisions of the Appellate Review Board are not subject to the Complaint and Grievance Procedure.

Allegations of Unlawful Discrimination

If a student believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, sex (including sexual harassment), religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service, that student should report the matter to the Opportunity Development Center, which will seek to assist the student with the resolution of the complaint as described below in the Complaint Procedure.

Complaint Procedure

A complaint should be directed as soon as possible to the person or persons whose actions or inactions have given rise to the complaint and not later than six months after the event. For example, if the complaint concerns a grade, the student should first confer with the course instructor. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem fairly and promptly usually within thirty (30) days, at this level. If the complaint involves allegations of sexual harassment, this step may not be appropriate. (See Harassment.) In addition,
10. Students’ Code of Conduct

in a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, the Opportunity Development Center (ODC) should be consulted as soon as possible. The Opportunity Development Center will conduct an investigation of the allegations, usually within ninety (90) work days, will issue a finding to the appropriate University official, and will seek to resolve the matter. If the ODC is unable to complete the investigation within this time period, then the ODC will contact the complainant and provide an estimated time frame for completing the investigation.

If the student is not able to resolve the complaint satisfactorily at this level, he or she may appeal the decision within thirty (30) days through the appropriate administrative channels of the academic or administrative unit, through the level of the Provost or appropriate vice chancellor. Students uncertain about the proper channels or process are encouraged to seek advice from the Office of the Provost, offices in the Division of Student Life, the office of the dean of their school, and/or their faculty advisers. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution proposed by ODC, then the student may pursue the Grievance Procedure.

**Grievance Procedure**

A student who believes that he or she has not received fair treatment, or who has a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the faculty or staff, and believes that he or she has not received appropriate redress through the complaint procedure in the preceding section within a reasonable period of time, including for complaints of unlawful discrimination investigated by the ODC, may file a written grievance with the Office of the Chancellor within thirty (30) days. Upon ascertaining that the complaint procedure has been exhausted, the Chancellor’s office shall refer the grievance to the Faculty Senate Committee on Student Affairs, usually within thirty (30) days in the academic year. For this purpose, the membership of the committee shall be augmented by three student members appointed by the Chancellor at the beginning of each academic year. The undergraduate Student Government Association will nominate students for the one undergraduate position, and student governing bodies of the professional/graduate schools will nominate students for the other two student positions on a rotating basis.

Upon receiving the grievance referral from the Office of the Chancellor, the Student Affairs Committee shall inform, in writing, both parties to the grievance that a preliminary investigation will take place. The preliminary investigation will usually be completed within thirty (30) days. After the preliminary investigation, if the committee decides that the grievance is not frivolous, it shall follow procedures necessary to ensure a fair hearing of the matter, including the opportunity for the student to present relevant evidence, to challenge adverse evidence, and to have the complaint heard by an impartial committee. Committee members may recluse themselves if they feel their objectivity is subject to question, and the grievant may request any committee member recluse himself or herself if the grievant feels a committee member will not view the grievance with sufficient objectivity. If vacancies occur, the chair of the Faculty Senate shall appoint Senate members to fill faculty vacancies and the Chancellor shall appoint students to fill student vacancies.
10. Students' Code of Conduct

The student filing the grievance may be assisted during the hearing by a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) not trained in the law and is encouraged to seek such assistance. While all parties to the grievance are free to consult with and receive advice from attorneys concerning the grievance, no party shall be represented by an attorney at the hearing. For hearings or complaints of unlawful discrimination, a representative from the Opportunity Development Center shall be present in an advisory capacity. The committee may call upon any individuals that it believes may be helpful in resolving the grievance.

The grievant and the person or persons against whom the grievance was filed shall be present during the hearing until such time as the committee is ready to begin deliberations. The student may withdraw the grievance, with the consent of the other party, at any time prior to the decision of the committee.

After each case the committee shall write its report. The report should be completed within three weeks and it shall include a statement of the committee's findings, the basis for those findings, and, if necessary, recommendations for any corrective action that should be taken. If any disciplinary action is anticipated, the appropriate University disciplinary procedures shall be followed. The report, including the vote and any dissenting statements, shall be sent to the Chancellor within one week after completion. Except as disclosures are reasonably necessary in the investigation, hearing, and final disposition of a grievance, the grievant, members of the hearing bodies, and others having knowledge of a grievance are expected to preserve the confidentiality of the grievance.

The Chancellor shall communicate his decision to the committee. In any case in which the Chancellor does not follow the decision or the recommendation of the committee, the Chancellor shall report to the committee his reasons for so doing. The Office of the Chancellor shall then promptly notify the student and the other affected persons, in writing, of the final decision, usually within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Committee's report, during the academic year.
11. Graduate Students Survival Guide

Adapted from:

“Wanda Pratt’s Graduate School Survival Guide”
in
Biomedical and Health Informatics Training Handbook
University of Washington
11. Graduate Students

The following information is taken from the University of Washington Biomedical and Health Informatics Training Handbook under the section “Wanda Pratt’s Graduate School Survival Guide.”

This guide provides concise suggestions for:

- Getting the most out of the relationship with your research advisor
- Getting the most out of what you read
- Making continual progress on your research
- Finding a thesis topic or formulating a research plan
- Characteristics to look for in a good advisor, mentor, or committee member
- Avoiding the research blues

Getting the most out of the relationship with your Research Advisor:

Meet regularly – Insist on meeting weekly or biweekly. This gives you motivation to make regular progress and it keeps your advisor aware of your work.

Prepare for your meetings – Come to each meeting with:

- List of topics to discuss
- Plan for what you hope to get out of the meeting
- Summary of completed tasks since last meeting
- List of upcoming deadlines
- Minutes from last meeting

Email your advisor a brief summary of every meeting. This helps avoid misunderstandings and provides a great record of your research progress. Include where applicable:

- Time and agenda for next meeting
- Summarize periodically task to be completed
- Maintain a personal “to do” list
- Maintain an advisor “to do” list
- Maintain a list of related readings
- Maintain a list of major topics discussed
- An agreed upon list
- List of advice you may not follow

Show your advisor the results of your work as soon as possible - This will help your advisor understand your research and identify potential points of conflict early in the process. Be sure to show them:

- Summaries of related work
- All of your research writings
- Experimental results

Communicate clearly – If you disagree with your advisor, state your objections or concerns clearly and calmly. If you feel something about your relationship is not working
11. Graduate Students

well, discuss it. Whenever possible, suggest steps they could take to address your concerns.

**Take the initiative** – You do need to clear every activity with your advisor since he/she has a lot of work to do too. You must be responsible for your own research ideas and progress.

**Getting the most out of what you read**

- Be organized
- Be efficient
- Take notes on every paper you find worth reading
- Summarize what you have read on each topic
- Read Ph.D. theses

**Make continual progress on your research**

- Keep a journal of your ideas
- Set some reasonable goals with deadlines
- Keep a to do list
- Continually update your:
  - Problem statement
  - Goals
  - Approach (or a list of possible approaches)
  - One-minute version of your research (aka the elevator ride summary)
  - Five-minute version of your research
- Discuss your research with anyone who will listen – use your fellow students, friends, family, etc. to practice discussing your research on various levels. They may have useful insights or you may find that verbalizing your ideas clarifies them for yourself.
- Write about your work
- Avoid distractions
- Confront your fears and weaknesses
- Balance reading, thinking, writing and hacking

**Finding a thesis topic or formulating a research plan**

- Pick something you find interesting – If you work on something solely because your advisor wants you to, it will be difficult to stay motivated.
- Pick something your advisor finds interesting – If your advisor doesn’t find it interesting, he/she is unlikely to devote much time to your research. He/she will be even more motivated to help you if your project is on their critical path (although this has down sides too!).
- Pick something the research community will find interesting – If you want to make yourself marketable.
- Make sure it addresses a real problem.
- Remember that your topic will evolve as you work on it.
- Pick something that is narrow enough that it can be done in a reasonable time frame.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Don’t worry that you will be stuck in this area for the rest of your career. It is very likely that you will be doing very different research after you graduate.
11. Graduate Students

Characteristics to look for in a good advisor, mentor, or committee member

It is unreasonable to expect one person to have all the qualities you desire. You should choose thesis committee members who are strong in the areas where your advisor is weak. Look for an advisor that:

- Is willing to meet with you regularly (about one hour weekly or biweekly)
- You can trust him/her to
- Give you credit for the work you do
- Defend your work when you are not around
- Speak well of you and your capabilities
- Tell you when your work is or is not good enough
- Help you graduate in a reasonable time frame
- Look out for you professionally and personally
- Is interested in your topic
- Has good personal communication skills
- Has good technical skills
- Will be around until you finish
- Is well respected in his/her field
- Has good connections for the type of job you would want when you graduate.
- Is willing and able to provide financial and computing support

Avoid the research blues

- When you meet your goals, reward yourself
- Don’t compare yourself to senior researchers who have many more years of work and publications
- Don’t be afraid to leave part of your research problem for future work
- Exercise
- Use the student counseling services
- Occasionally, do something fun without feeling guilty

Other resources:

*Getting What You Came For by Robert L. Peters:* This book contains a lot of helpful advice on getting the most out of the Ph.D. process. The sections on writing and giving presentations are particularly helpful.

*The Now Habit: A Strategic Program for Overcoming Procrastination and Enjoying Guilt-Free Play by Neil Fiore:* Since one of the biggest problems in finishing a Ph.D. is procrastination, this book should be helpful to those of you who actually get around to reading it.
12. Appendices
12. Appendices

12.1 Curriculum Samples

Curriculum Sample #1 (M.D. pursuing M.S.)

Normal Pre-requisites (remedial courses may be required)
Epidemiology
Basic Biostatistics
Computer Literacy
Intermediate-level Computer Programming skills in a standard structured or object-oriented high-level language
Networks

Year 1 – Fall
Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice
Design and Analysis of Algorithms
Research Design
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 – Spring
Mathematical Statistics
Biomedical Artificial Intelligence
Clinical Information Systems & Databases
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 - Summer
M.S. Research

Year 2 - Fall
Bioinformatics for Molecular Biology
Health Care Organization, Management & Policy
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Spring
Multivariate Statistics
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Summer
M.S. Research

Total credits: 30 (27 formal coursework)

Curriculum Sample #2 (Computer Scientist pursuing M.S.)

Normal Pre-requisites (remedial courses may be required)
Probability theory & Mathematical Statistics
High-level Computer Programming skills in a standard structured or object-oriented high-level language
12. Appendices

Networks

Year 1 – Fall
Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice
Biology
Medical Physiology & Gross Human Anatomy
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 – Spring
Biomedical Artificial Intelligence
Clinical Information Systems & Databases
Medical Diagnosis & Therapy
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 - Summer
M.S. Research

Year 2 - Fall
Bioinformatics for Molecular Biology
Health Care Organization, Management & Policy
Systems Evaluation
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Spring
Multivariate Statistics
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Summer
M.S. Research

Total credits: 30 (30 formal coursework)

Curriculum Sample #7 (M.D. pursuing Ph.D. – Clinical Systems Focus)

Normal Pre-requisites (remedial courses may be required)
Epidemiology
Basic Biostatistics
Computer Literacy
Intermediate-level Computer Programming skills in a standard structured or object-oriented high-level language
Networks

Year 1 – Fall
Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice (with Lab)
Design and Analysis of Algorithms
Systems Evaluation
Research Seminar/Colloquium
12. Appendices

Year 1 – Spring
Mathematical Statistics
Biomedical Artificial Intelligence (with Lab)
Clinical Information Systems & Databases (with Lab)
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 - Summer
M.S. Research

Year 2 - Fall
Bioinformatics for Molecular Biology (with Lab)
Health Care Organization, Management & Policy
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Spring
Multivariate Statistics
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Summer
M.S. Research
Prepare Reading List for Comprehensive Examination & have it approved

Total M.S. credits: 31 (31 formal coursework)
Year 3 - Fall
Elective 1 (Advanced Medical Informatics)
Prepare For Comprehensive Examination
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 3 - Spring
Take Comprehensive Examination
Elective 2 (e.g., Software Engineering)
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 3- Summer
Ph.D. Research

Year 4 - Fall
Ph.D. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 4 - Spring
Ph.D. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 4 - Summer
Ph.D. Research
Write Dissertation
Appendices

Year 5 - Fall
Write Dissertation

Year 5 - Spring
Submit Dissertation to Ph.D. Committee
Schedule Final Examination
Register Copies of Dissertation
Final Examination
Additionally: TA one course in any semester during Years 3 and 4 or substitute with business-related elective--Special Skills Seminars during Years 3 to 5.

Total Ph.D. credits: 72 (37 formal coursework)

**Curriculum Sample #10 (Computer Scientist pursuing Ph.D. – Clinical Systems Focus)**

Normal Pre-requisites (remedial courses may be required)
Probability theory & Mathematical Statistics
High-level Computer Programming skills in a standard structured or object-oriented high-level language
Networks

Year 1 – Fall
Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice (with Lab)
Biology
Medical Physiology & Gross Human Anatomy
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 – Spring
Biomedical Artificial Intelligence (with Lab)
Clinical Information Systems & Databases (with Lab)
Medical Diagnosis & Therapy
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 1 - Summer
M.S. Research

Year 2 - Fall
Bioinformatics for Molecular Biology (with Lab)
Health Care Organization, Management & Policy
Systems Evaluation
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 2 - Spring
Multivariate Statistics
M.S. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium
12. Appendices

Year 2 - Summer
M.S. Research
Prepare Reading List for Comprehensive Examination & have it approved

Total credits: 34 (34 formal coursework)
Year 3 - Fall
Elective 1 (Advanced Medical Informatics)
Prepare For Comprehensive Examination
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 3 - Spring
Take Comprehensive Examination
Elective 2 (e.g., Software Engineering)
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 3 - Summer
Ph.D. Research

Year 4 - Fall
Ph.D. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 4 - Spring
Ph.D. Research
Research Seminar/Colloquium

Year 4 - Summer
Ph.D. Research
Write Dissertation

Year 5 - Fall
Write Dissertation

Year 5 - Spring
Submit Dissertation to Ph.D. Committee
Schedule Final Examination
Register Copies of Dissertation
Final Examination

Additionally: TA one course in any semester during Years 3 and 4 or substitute with business-related elective--Special Skills Seminars during Years 3 to 5.
Total Ph.D. credits: 72 (40 formal coursework)
12.2 **Fall and Spring Classes**

**Fall Semester**

Instructors and their courses for the fall are as follows:

**BMIF 340-01**  
**Clinical Information Systems and Databases**  
Instructor: Dario Giuse


**Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesdays</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>3:00 p.m. - 3:55 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BMIF 320-01**  
**Healthcare Organization and Management**  
Instructor: Nancy Lorenzi

This course will provide an overview of theoretical concepts as well as the practical tools for the student to understand and work effectively with five main topic areas: (1) an overview of how healthcare organizations function to include such topics as organizational structure, work design, and organizational culture; (2) an introduction to the basics of economics and the applicability to health care; (3) an overview of healthcare policies and how they affect and are affected by the health care industry; (4) a survey of the ethical issues applied to information access and use in clinical practice, including such topics as privacy, security, and confidentiality; (5) an introduction to management of health care.

**Class Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>3:00 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. - 9:55 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**BMIF 300-01** Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice

Instructor: Judy Ozbolt

Management and transformation of health data, information, and knowledge to improve health care. Focus on information systems in clinical settings and the use of databases for outcome management. Introduction to clinical cognitive biases, formal Medical Decision Making methods, and methods for Evidence-Based Practice.

**BMIF 300-02** Lab: Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based Practice

Instructor: Judy Ozbolt

Applications and in-depth study of topics introduced in Foundations of Biomedical Informatics and Evidence-Based.

*Class Schedule*

- Mondays: 9:00 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.
- Wednesdays: 9:00 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.
- Fridays: 9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.

**Spring Semester**

Instructors and their courses for the fall are as follows:

**BMIF 330-01** Biomedical Artificial Intelligence

Instructor: Constantin Aliferis, Ioannis Tsamardinos

Networks. Open to; graduate students of Biomedical Informatics and related
disciplines/foci such as Computer Science, Biomedical Engineering, or Bioinformatics.
Prerequisites: prior coding experience in a standard procedural or object-oriented
computer language is strongly preferred. This is an intensive core course for M.S./Ph.D.
students in Biomedical Informatics. Other students should consult with the first instructor
before registering for the class.

**BMIF 330A-01A**  **Lab: Biomedical Artificial Intelligence**

**Instructor** Ioannis Tsamardinos, Constantin Aliferis

Applications, advanced projects, and in-depth study of algorithms and topics introduced
in BMIF 330-01, Biomedical Artificial Intelligence. Introduction to ML programming
techniques with MATLAB. Implementation of testing of various machine learning
algorithms.

**Class Schedule**

Mondays 10:00 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.

Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.

Fridays 10:00 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.

*Course Books:* Machine Learning, Tom M. Mitchell; Artificial Intelligence: Modern
Approach, Stuart J. Russell;

*Course Software:* Math Lab

**BMIF 310-01**  **Foundations Biomedical Informatics
and Computational Biology**

**Instructor** Erik Boczko

This survey course will present the student with an outline of some of the current
research topics and problem solving approaches in the field. Special emphasis will be
placed on algorithms and computing and students will be required to complete
programming assignments. The topic areas to be covered will include: programming and
Web tools; mathematical and statistical prerequisites; biological sequence and structure
manipulation; human genetics and gene mapping; microarray data analysis; biological
dynamics and time series analysis.

**BMIF 310A-01**  **Lab: Foundations Biomedical Informatics
and Computational Biology Laboratory**

**Instructor** Erik Boczko

Applications and in-depth study of algorithms and software introduced in Foundations of
Bioinformatics and Computational Biology.
12. Appendices

Class Schedule

Tuesdays 12:30 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.
Wednesdays 2:00 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.
Fridays 2:00 p.m. - 3:25 p.m.

Course Books: Genes and Signals, Mark Ptashne; Computational Modeling of Genetic and Biochemical Networks, James M. Bower

Independent Study

Student enrolled in an independent study must retrieve the form to complete from the Graduate School web site at www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/current_students.html

Graduate Students Taking Undergraduate Courses

If it has been agreed by the Director of Graduate Studies that additional undergraduate courses are needed to perform at the graduate level, the graduate student must complete the form from the web site at www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/current_students.html
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### 12.3 New Students: Check List

*For each student there should be an initial package of information available*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete <strong>Compliance Information</strong> - Standards of Conduct. Forms provided by administrative assistant.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete <strong>Compliance Information</strong> - Confidentiality. Forms provided by administrative assistant.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete <strong>Compliance Information</strong> - HIPAA. Forms provided by administrative assistant.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register for <strong>parking</strong> through Central Parking located in the Vanderbilt Hospital Garage. <em>Link to form</em></td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete forms for <strong>VUMC ID badge</strong> and <strong>access card</strong>. Forms provided by administrative assistant.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule thirty minutes meeting with departmental faculty member</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact your assigned <strong>academic advisor</strong> for an initial meeting</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Duncan will assist with <strong>computer setup</strong> and creating an <strong>email account</strong>.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant will provide <strong>tour of department</strong> to show where office supplies are located, fax machine, copier, and other needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill out <strong>RDF form</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit <strong>campus bookstore</strong></td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Light Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit <strong>medical bookstore</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.vanderbilt.edu">www.vanderbilt.edu</a></td>
<td>Light Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain academic schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register for classes</td>
<td>Oasis ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12.4 Students

**Current**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yindalon Aphinyanaphongs</td>
<td>MS, pursuing MD/PhD</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Aronoff</td>
<td>BS, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Berutti</td>
<td>MD, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Brown</td>
<td>MS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Carnevale</td>
<td>BS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Campion</td>
<td>BA, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuo Chen</td>
<td>MS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Denny</td>
<td>MD, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Dexheimer</td>
<td>BS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephany Duda</td>
<td>BS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nafeh Fananapazir</td>
<td>BA, pursuing MS/PhD</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Fu</td>
<td>BS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Hoot</td>
<td>BA, pursuing MS/PhD</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Jerome</td>
<td>MLIS, pursuing MPH</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Kazerooni</td>
<td>MS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddharth Pratap</td>
<td>PhD, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Raggio</td>
<td>MD, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Sanders</td>
<td>MD, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Statnikov</td>
<td>MS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Unertl</td>
<td>BS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia Thornton</td>
<td>BA, pursuing PhD/MS</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firas Wehbe</td>
<td>MD, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Weiss</td>
<td>BS, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven White</td>
<td>MD, pursuing PhD</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Xie</td>
<td>MD, pursuing MS</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fellows**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Frey</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Program/Year</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Gregg, M.D./M.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>December, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asli Ozdas, Ph.D./M.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>May, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marylyn Ritchie, M.S./Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>December, 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12.5 Student/Fellow M.S./Ph.D. Program Progress

Student Name: _________________________________ Admission Year:__________

U.S. Citizen/Permanent Resident: □ Visa Status: ______________ Expiration: ______________

Funding Source: □ NLM Other: __________________________________________

Duration: ____ Level of funding: □ Tuition □ Stipend Comments: __________________________

Terminal Degree Anticipated: □ M.S. □ Ph.D. Academic Adviser: ________________________

Forms. to be Completed for Thesis Committee and Thesis Preparation

Request for Supervisory Cmmt □

Members of Cmmt: ____________________________ Date:______________

____________________________________________________________________________

Documentation for 2 Cmmt Mtgs per year □

1st meeting date: _____________ 2nd meeting date: ______________

Comments: _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Comprehensive Examination □ Date: ___________

Thesis project proposal defense ‘informal’ □ Date: ___________

Final Project proposal approved by Cmmt □ Date: ___________

File for IBR approval □ Date: _______________

Intent to Graduate □ Date: _____________________

Schedule M.S. defense □ Date: _____________________

Comments: _______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________
Requirements Due Prior to Defense Date:

**Copy of thesis manuscript to all committee members**  □  Date: ____________ (Due 4 weeks prior to defense date)

**Corrections of thesis back to student**  □  Date: ____________ (Due 2 weeks prior to defense date)

Comments:
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

**Notify program about defense information**  □  Date: ____________ (Due 2 weeks prior to defense date)

**Editorial review of manuscript**  □  Date: ____________ (Due 1 week prior to defense)

Comments:
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

Defense of Thesis & Graduation:

Defend on scheduled date  □  Date: __________
Signed Report of Final Examination  □ Date: __________
Final revisions to manuscript  □ Date: __________

Comments:
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

**Final manuscript to thesis editor**  □  Date: __________ (Due 2 weeks prior to graduation deadline)

**Final Reading Approval**  □  Date: ____________ (Follow Vanderbilt University guidelines)

Comments:
________________________________________________________

**Thesis binding fee** ($18.00 per copy)  □  Date: __________

Submit 2 copies of final manuscript to DBMI and 1 copy of final manuscript to each committee member

Comments:
### 12.6 Graduate School Request Form for Undergraduate Credit

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO RECEIVE GRADUATE CREDIT FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL OR PROFESSIONAL COURSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (Dept.) Prefix</th>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Section Number</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Student's Name _________________________________  Date _____________________  *(Last, First & Middle)*

Student’s SSN _________________________________    Semester _____________________

Print Name of Instructor

_________________________________________________________________________________

Describe why you need to take this course as a part of your graduate program:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

List the assignments you must complete which are in addition to the work assigned to the undergraduate or professional student:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Student/Date

Signature of Instructor/ Date

Signature of Director of Graduate Studies                                  Date

Return completed form to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall, no later than the tenth day of classes (the end of the change-of-course period).
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Department of Biomedical Informatics
Request for Leave

Date: ___/___/___

Name: ________________________________

Request leave for the following reasons:

☐ Vacation

☐ Personal sick to care for family member

☐ Leave Without Pay

☐ Jury Duty

☐ Military Leave

☐ (Explain) ________________________________

Number of days requested: ______________________

From Date: ______________ Through Date: ______________

Manager Approval: ________________________________

Comments: ________________________________
## 12.8 List of Acronym

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMIA</td>
<td>American Medical Informatics Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Academic Program Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRET</td>
<td>Biomedical Research Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIO</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBMI</td>
<td>Department of Biomedical Informatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGS</td>
<td>Director of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBL</td>
<td>Eskind Biomedical Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE</td>
<td>Graduate Record Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIPAA</td>
<td>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGP</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in the Biomedical Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSS</td>
<td>International Student and Scholar Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMIA</td>
<td>Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPH</td>
<td>Master of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S.TP</td>
<td>Medical Scientist Training Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLM</td>
<td>National Library of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OASIS</td>
<td>Online Access to Student Information Systems`</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCR</td>
<td>Responsible Conduct of Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUH</td>
<td>Vanderbilt University Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUMC</td>
<td>Vanderbilt University Medical Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12.9 Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination

REQUEST TO SCHEDULE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

IMPORTANT: Prior to examination, this form with signatures of committee members should be delivered to the department or program office. The form is to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, copied for the department or program file, and forwarded to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall.

TO: Dean of the Graduate School

This is to inform you that

________________________________________________________________________
(Student's Name)

________________________________________________________________________
(Student's Social Security/I.D. Number)

in

________________________________________________________________________
(Department/Program)

is being scheduled to take his/her qualifying examination

on

________________________________________________________________________
(Date)

at

________________________________________________________________________
(Time)

in/at

________________________________________________________________________
(Location)

Members of the Committee

Please Print Name:                  Signature:

________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________
Chair

Signature:

________________________________________________________________________

Director of Graduate Studies:

______________________________________________
Signature

______________________________________________
Date
12. Appendices

12.10 Results of Qualifying Examination

RESULTS OF QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

IMPORTANT: Immediately after the examination, this form with signatures of committee members should be delivered to the department or program office. The form is to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, copied for the department or program file, and forwarded to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall.

TO: Dean of the Graduate School

This is to inform you that

(Student’s Name)

(Student’s Social Security/I.D. Number)

Passed ☐ Failed ☐

the qualifying examination on ____________________.

(Date)

Student’s Major: _______________ Minor: _______________

Members of the Committee

Please Print Name: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

,Chair

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Director of Graduate Studies: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________