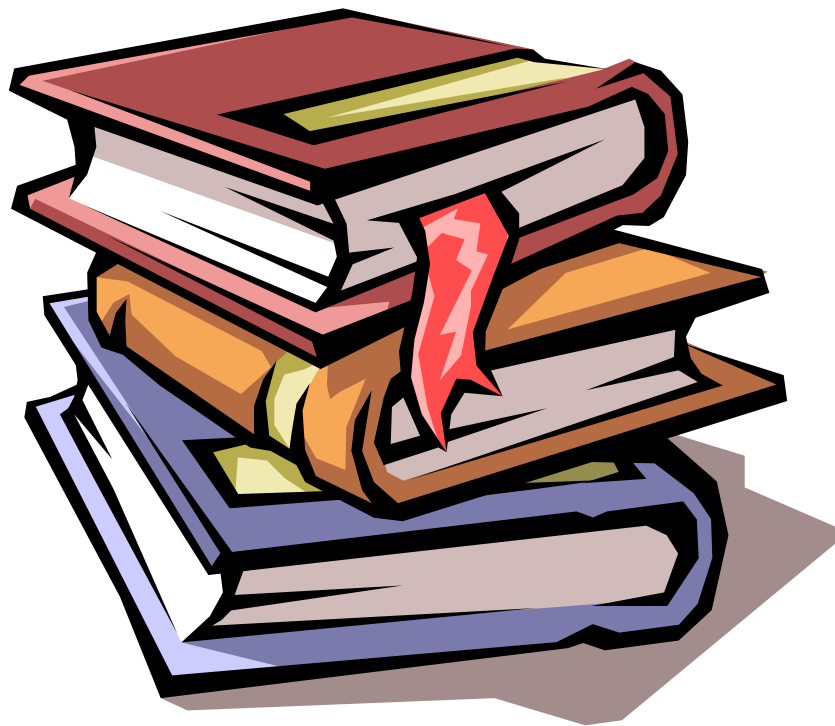




# **STUDENT ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**



**School of Graduate Studies and Research**

**2011**

## **NOTICES**

Meharry Medical College is an EOE/AA employer and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, color, national origin, handicap, veteran or immigrant status in its admissions, employment and education programs or activities. Inquiries concerning the College's non-discrimination policies may be referred to the Office of the General Counsel, S.S. Kresge Learning Resources Center, (615) 327-6102, or the Affirmative Action Officer, Office of the President, (615) 327-6904.

The information in this manual is current and accurate as of August 2011. The college reserves the right to change prerequisites for admission, programs of study, courses, requirements for graduation, fees, policies, academic programs, lecturers, faculty, teaching staff and any other matter described in the manual without prior notice.

This manual does not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant, student or faculty member and Meharry Medical College. The College reserves the right to request or require the withdrawal of any student who does not exhibit the personal or professional qualifications prerequisite for his or her chosen discipline of study.

The college provides the opportunity for students to increase their knowledge by providing programs of instruction in the various disciplines and programs through faculty who, in the opinion of the College, are trained and qualified for teaching at the college level. However, the acquisition of knowledge by any student is contingent upon the student's desire to learn and the application of appropriate study techniques to any course or program. As a result, the college does not warrant or represent that any student who completes a course or a program of study will necessarily acquire any specific knowledge or skills or will be able to successfully pass or complete any specific examination for any course, degree or license.

Revised 8/2011 SOGSR

## FOREWORD

This Graduate Student Academic Policies and Procedures Manual contains a brief overview of the policies and procedures that govern your admission and matriculation in the Graduate Programs at Meharry Medical College. The procedures and steps for the completion of dissertations, theses, and comprehensive examinations as well as institutional policies on such issues as academic honesty, appeal of academic actions and student refunds are also included. This document is by no means comprehensive, nor does it attempt to deal with special situations that may arise during your matriculation in the Graduate Program. Your mentor, Department Chairperson, Program Director, Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) Associate Dean and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies are available to assist in interpreting the rules and regulations of your program. Our aim is to assist in your transition from undergraduate to graduate education and make that transition smooth. In addition, you will find faculty members accessible to discuss academic issues with you.

Please read this manual carefully with special attention to important events such as the formulation of your *Committee on Instruction* for the Ph.D. or Thesis Committee for the MSPH, *Admission to Candidacy* for the Ph.D., and the procedures and deadlines for the submission of your thesis or dissertation. The aforementioned are important benchmarks that are key to the completion of your graduate studies.

I look forward to working with each of you in order to ensure that you maximize your potential to attain your career goals.



Maria de Fatima Lima, Ph.D.

Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research

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## **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

### **TRANSFERRING COURSE CREDIT**

#### ***Doctoral Program***

After a doctoral student begins the major emphasis phase, he or she may petition their department to receive credit for graduate work done at other accredited institutions or from this institution for courses taken before admission to the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SOGSR) provided that the total number of credits transferred for both core courses and advanced courses does not exceed nine. Grades earned on transferred work must be equivalent to "B" or better; dissertation credit is not transferable. The Director of Graduate Studies for each program requests in writing to the Dean that the credits be accepted for transfer. After review by the faculty teaching the equivalent course, the Dean then writes a letter to the records office that the credits be applied on the student's Meharry transcript. Grades earned in courses at other schools prior to admission to Meharry are not included in computations of a student's average nor entered on the Meharry transcript; however, grades earned in graduate school courses at Meharry before the student matriculates (e.g., post-bac and, joint programs, etc.) are computed in the student's GPA.

#### ***MSPH and MSCI Programs***

Students enrolled in the MSPH program may receive transfer credit after approval by the Director; up to six credit hours of course work may be transferred.

#### **Other Conditions for Transfer Course Credit:**

Correspondence or Extension courses cannot be transferred for credit. Course(s) taken on a Pass-Fail or Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory basis are not eligible for transfer credit. Course credit earned in a Professional School such as a School of Law, Medicine, Dentistry, or Divinity may not be transferred for graduate degree purposes. Exceptions to this rule are courses cross-listed as Graduate School courses which carry graduate credits at the institution where taken. Students seeking the Ph.D. degree in addition to the M.D. degree may receive graduate credit for certain approved courses in the Medical School at Meharry, and a B or better must be achieved in these courses.

## **ENROLLMENT SPECIFICATIONS**

### **Medical Clearance**

Each new student must submit a completed medical report form to the Office of Admissions and Records. A returning student who has not registered for more than one academic year must submit a new medical report form.

### **Enrollment Status**

A full-time student must register for a minimum of nine semester hours during the fall and spring semesters and for a minimum of six hours during the summer semester. During the dissertation phase of the Ph.D. Program, and in special circumstances, a student may be considered full-time even though he or she has registered for less than nine credit hours of dissertation research. A student in the MSPH or MSCI programs may be considered full-time by registering for less than nine hours of thesis research, only after having completed the required course work and externship. The minimum number of credit hours a student can register for and still be considered full-time in the dissertation phase (Ph.D.) or thesis phase (MSPH or MSCI) is one.

### **Attendance**

No student is allowed to attend a class for which he/she is not officially registered by the Office of Admissions and Records. No credit is given for course work taken before official registration. Unexcused absences in excess of 20 percent of the scheduled classes may result in a failure in the course. A Dean's excuse may be granted for personal illness, death of a close relative, financial exigencies, etc. If a Dean's excuse is granted, the student will not be penalized for work missed during his or her absence from class, although departments may require make-up for the work missed. Requests for Dean's excuses are made in the Office of the SOGSR and appropriate documentation is required at that time.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

Grades for didactic courses taken for graduate credit are A, B+, B, C+, C, F, S, U, IP and I. Grades for thesis research in the Ph.D. program are S and U; grades for thesis research in the MSPH or MSCI programs are letter grades. Grade point averages (GPA) are calculated on the basis of A=4, B+=3.5, B=3,

C+=2.5 C=2, F= 0. S and U grades are not computed into students' GPA and are not converted to A, B+, B, C+, C, or F grades when students complete the requirements for degrees. All final grades shall remain on the student's permanent transcript. Students receiving a D grade in an off campus course because of cross-registration will receive a grade of F.

The grade of "I" (Incomplete), indicates that the student has satisfactorily completed at least three-fourths of a course, but that for legitimate reasons a small fraction of the work remains to be completed; or that the student's record indicates that he or she can obtain a passing grade, but lacks a specific requirement such as the final examination, because of illness or some other unique or extraordinary circumstance beyond the student's control. A student receiving an "I" must complete the requirements for the course to remove the "I" by the end of the next semester the course is offered. If the requirements are not completed within the specified time, no credit will be given and the Office of Admissions and Records will automatically record the final grade as "F".

The symbols "WV" and "WA" indicate that the student "Withdrew Voluntarily" or was "Withdrawn Administratively by the Dean." The symbols "WP" and "WF" indicate that the student "Withdrew Passing" or "Withdrew Failing," respectively. These symbols are used only when the student has withdrawn after at least six weeks of attendance in a course during the fall or spring semester or after two weeks during the summer.

The "IP" (In Progress) is awarded for certain courses that are continuous over more than one semester and, as such, are not finally evaluated until the conclusion of the sequence. Final grades are given in such courses only at the end of the final semester of the course sequence. A record of academic progression, however, shall be reported in the Office of Admission and Records at the end of any given semester using the designation In-Progress (IP). Quality points will be calculated using the total hours of the course.

### **Academic Standing**

A student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 to remain in good academic standing. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 may be dismissed or given up to one calendar year to raise his or her GPA back to 3.0; during this

period the student is said to be on academic probation.

A student whose GPA does not reach 3.0 by the end of a designated period of academic probation may be dismissed from the SOGSR per the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee and approval by the Dean. In addition, if, in the judgment of the Evaluation Committee, a student fails to make satisfactory progress towards the completion of the degree or to demonstrate sufficient promise in the discipline, the student may not be allowed to continue in the SOGSR. In any academic year, students must pass 70% of coursework (21hrs) with a grade of "B" or higher. A graduate student may become academically ineligible to continue in the SOGSR if he or she receives a grade of "F", or receives more than three grades of "C", depending on his/her academic standing. Receipt of a second "F" grade will result in automatic dismissal. If in any semester, a student enrolled in the MSPH program receives a grade of "C" in two courses, then those courses also must be repeated and a grade of "B" or better must be received in each course. First year Ph.D. students who receive a "C" in a core course must repeat the course and receive a "B" or better before being allowed to take advanced courses in their program. When a course is repeated, the first grade will remain on the student's transcript and be calculated as part of the student's grade point average. Students are allowed to repeat a course only once.

### **Adding or Withdrawal From Course(s)**

If a student wishes to *add or withdraw* from a course(s), he or she should get the appropriate Form from the Office of Admissions and Records. The student is required to get the approval of their respective Department Chairperson or DGS and final approval from the Graduate Dean before returning the signed approval form to the Office of Admissions and Records. A student may add a course prior to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of classes and prior to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> week of classes during the summer session. A student may receive a grade of "W" if he/she withdraws from a course prior to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> week of classes during the regular semester or prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes during the summer session. However, grades for courses progressed beyond this time period will be recorded on the official record as "WF" or "WP". First-year Ph.D. students will not be allowed to withdraw from the Core Curriculum.



### **Leave of Absence and Withdrawal**

A *Leave of Absence* is an interruption of the normal course of study requested by a student and requiring prior approval by the Graduate Dean. A student's *Leave of Absence* shall not extend beyond one calendar year. The official date of leave shall not ante date the date of the student's request. An official *Leave of Absence* form must be processed and can be obtained from the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who fails either to register or to obtain an approved *Leave of Absence* by the end of registration during a given semester will be regarded as having withdrawn and must apply as a new student to resume study. A *Leave of Absence* from the college is given only to students who are in good academic standing. Any other interruption in the normal course of study constitutes a withdrawal. At the discretion of the Dean, a student may be required to take an Administrative *Leave of Absence*. A student who has obtained an approved *Leave of Absence* may return to school by informing the SOGSR in writing before the expiration of the leave. The student will be required to register during the next semester after his/her *leave* expires. If the student does not resume his/her program at this time, has withdrawn from Graduate School or has not registered for two consecutive semesters, he/she must also reapply to the Graduate School. Provided the student left in good standing, in these situations he/she needs only to fill out a new application (fee waived), write a statement that includes why he/she should be reinstated and have his/her former preceptor write a letter of recommendation. These documents will be reviewed by the SOGSR Admissions Committee who will then make a recommendation to the Dean.

A student in the Ph.D. program who has not been approved for a *Leave of Absence* and has not registered for 2 consecutive years will not be considered for reinstatement or be awarded a Ph.D. degree.

A withdrawal is a permanent cessation of graduate study. If a student withdraws, he or she must reapply to Meharry as a new student and be considered for admission by the SOGSR Admissions Committee to resume graduate work (see above). If a student receives a medical withdrawal, he or she will be required to present medical clearance before being readmitted. A student withdrawing without presenting to the Director of Admissions and Records written permission from the Dean forfeits all claims for credit or

refund.

### **Ph.D. Graduate Student Leave**

**Vacations and holidays.** Students will receive a total of 12 vacation days per calendar year. Students shall continue to receive stipends during vacations and Meharry holidays. At Meharry, as at all other academic institutions, the time between semesters is considered an active part of the training period.

**Sick leave and other leave.** Students may continue to receive stipends for up to 15 business days of sick leave per year. Under exceptional circumstances, this period may be extended by the Dean in response to a written request from the mentor, countersigned by the Chair or DGS. Sick leave may be used for medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth.

**Parental leave.** Students may receive stipends for up to 30 business days of parental leave per year for the adoption or birth of a child. Either parent is eligible for parental leave. The use of parental leave requires approval by the mentor and SOGSR Dean.

**Terminal leave.** A period of terminal leave is not permitted, and payment may not be made from grant funds for leave not taken.

**Unpaid leave.** Individuals requiring extended periods of time away from their research training experience, that is, more than 15 business days of sick leave or more than 30 business days of parental leave must seek approval for an unpaid *Leave of Absence* (see section on *Leave of Absence*).

**Documentation of leave.** Vacation and planned sick leave must be requested in writing to the mentor and DGS at least 5 business days prior to the leave. Notification of unexpected leave (sick or emergency) must be made to the mentor and/or DGS as soon as possible. The mentor and DGS will be responsible for maintaining records and accounts of leave. The College approved *Request for Leave* form will be used for both vacation and sick leave.

This form can be found on the Meharry website under Administration. Click on Human Resources (HR) then HR Forms/Tools/Resources then *Leave Request Form*. An example of the form is on page 66. Failure to comply with these policies will result in reduction of pay, per the unaccounted time.

### **Graduate Student Business Travel**

All graduate students (Ph.D., MSPH, and MSCI) who are traveling on official school business regardless of funding source must submit a *Travel Authorization* form to the SOGSR Dean's Office. All required signatures should be obtained on the form and copies provided to the mentor, PI/Program director, DGS/Department Chair and SOGSR Dean's office at least 15 business days prior to travel.

### **APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION**

All graduate students anticipating graduation must complete a Diploma Application Card. Cards are available during fall registration and may be picked up from the Office of Admissions and Records. The deadline for receipt of the card is shown in the College's Admissions and Records Calendar. Provided that no use of college faculty time and/or facilities is required, a student need not be registered in the semester in which the degree is to be awarded, unless the thesis or dissertation is defended and/or submitted to the SOGSR during the same semester, since submission constitutes a significant use of College's time and facilities. Master's and doctoral degrees are awarded in May, October, and December. Formal commencement exercises are held in May.

### **Graduation Clearance**

In order to receive a degree, prospective graduates must complete the following steps, prior to being issued a Clearance Form:

- Submit a letter from the Program Director, or DGS informing the Dean that all degree requirements have been completed and submit five error-free copies of the dissertation (Ph.D.) or thesis (MSPH or MSCI) to the Dean's Office;

- Complete the Graduate Program Self-Assessment Student Questionnaire and return it to the Dean's Office;
- Complete and return to the SOGSR the National Research Council Survey of Earned Doctorates (Ph.D. graduates only); and
- Complete the Exit Survey

The Graduation Clearance Form is given to the student by the Dean's Office after the above paperwork is completed. This form requires the signatures of the institutional personnel listed below who will certify that the student has cleared their area for graduation.

- Dean/Associate Dean
- Student Services Director
- Supervisor of Postal Services
- Library Director
- Exec. Director of Alumni Relations
- Director of Student Financial Aid
- Treasurer
- Safety and Security

## **Ph.D. PROGRAM**

### **Doctoral Program**

To receive the Ph.D. degree a student must (a) complete at least 40 hours of graduate course work; research courses do not count toward this requirement; not more than nine credit hours of graduate courses taken at other institutions may be credited toward the forty hours (Grades earned in courses at other institutions prior to admission to Meharry are not included in computations of the student's average); (b) pass qualifying examinations prepared by his or her major emphasis program; (c) complete a dissertation which meets the approval of his or her Committee on Instruction, Department Chair, DGS and the Graduate Dean; [d] published or having accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal, a manuscript based on the dissertation research of which the student is the first author; and (e) successfully defend the dissertation in a

public seminar. (Note: The requirements above are the minimal stipulations by the SOGSR; the major emphasis programs may present additional requirements.)

### **CORE PHASE**

The Ph.D. program is divided into three phases: (a) the core phase; (b) the major emphasis; and (c) dissertation phase. The core phase consists of a curriculum of courses that gives the students a basic foundation in Biomedical Sciences and prepares them for laboratory research. This curriculum occupies the first two semesters of graduate work.

#### ***Advanced Placement***

A student may attempt to obtain an exemption from one or more of the core courses by requesting permission from the course coordinator, in writing, to take an advanced placement examination. If the course coordinator grants the request, the instructors in the course will prepare and administer an examination. If the student's performance meets or exceeds the minimum pass level established by the program offering the courses, the student will be (1) exempted from the core course; (2) receive a grade equivalent to the numerical value of the examination; and (3) receive a number of credit hours equal to the number of credit hours ordinarily awarded for that core course.

#### ***Faculty Preceptor***

During the core phase the new graduate student should begin the process of selecting a faculty preceptor—the person who will guide the student through the remaining years of graduate school, and in whose laboratory the student will receive research training. The preceptor must be selected by the end of the first semester following completion of the core. The faculty preceptor must be a regular graduate faculty, an appointed or an adjunct faculty member who is active in research. The preceptor has primary responsibility for guiding the student through all phases of graduate study, and should represent the student's best interests in a variety of academic and administrative situations.

### **RESIDENCE**

Graduate students in the Ph.D. program must remain in residence until they successfully complete the candidacy examination. To be in residence a student

must register for at least nine (9) credit hours during the fall or spring semester, and at least six (6) credit hours during the summer semester.

### **TIME LIMITS**

#### ***Ph.D. Program Milestone Timetable for Completion of the Degree in 5 Yrs***

<b>First year</b>	Successfully complete core courses Identify lab and preceptor
<b>Second Year</b>	Form a Committee on Instruction (COI) Successfully complete discipline-based courses Present at Student Research Day Have a COI meeting in the Spring Prepare for candidacy exam Prepare F31 grant application or other fellowship Present journal clubs and departmental seminars
<b>Third year</b>	Successfully complete candidacy exam Present at Student Research Day Submit abstract to local or national meeting Have COI meetings in Fall and Spring Have a funded F31 pre-doctoral fellowship or other fellowship Present journal clubs and departmental seminars Present works in progress annually Have a preliminary draft of a manuscript
<b>Fourth year</b>	Continue with dissertation research Present at Student Research Day Submit abstract to national meeting Complete experiments and write first manuscript for publication Have a COI meeting in Fall and Spring Present journal clubs and departmental seminars Present works in progress annually

<b>Fifth year</b>	Submit and have the manuscript(s) accepted in peer-reviewed journals(s)
	Present at Student Research Day
	Submit abstract to national meeting
	Submit applications for post-doctoral position
	Present journal clubs and departmental seminars
	Present works in progress annually
	Have a COI meeting in Fall and Spring
	Write and defend dissertation

All requirements for the Ph.D. must be completed within seven years after admission to the SOGSR. If a student has been *Admitted to Candidacy* but has not completed his/her studies within the six-year period: (1) the student may be given up to two semesters to finish the Ph.D., or (2) the student may be issued a terminal Master's Degree. If such action is taken and the student does not meet the new deadline, the student may be dropped from the SOGSR. When a student exceeds the seven-year limit the Director of Graduate Studies shall recommend to the Dean which action should be taken. The Dean's decision is considered final. A student's program of study cannot extend beyond 8 years.

No support for tuition, fees or stipend will be afforded to Ph.D. students in the Graduate School after completion of the seventh year of studies in the program. This includes slots and tuition shortfalls provided by Graduate School Grants.

***Procedure for Terminal Masters:***

1. If a student fails the qualifying exam after two attempts, he/she can be recommended for a terminal Masters.
2. If a student passes the qualifying exam but fails to progress in the dissertation research phase, he/she can be recommended for a terminal Masters.
3. Students in situation 1 or 2 must complete a body of work equivalent to a Masters Degree Thesis. The research project will typically include one or two specific aims and the work must be completed within three years. Similarly to a Ph.D. student, the Master's student is required to write a thesis and formally present a public seminar during regular

working hours. However, the seminar is not a public defense. Approval of the body of work by the COI is required in order for the Evaluation Committee to recommend receipt of the degree.

### **MAJOR EMPHASIS PHASE**

The major emphasis phase begins immediately after the student completes the core curriculum. During this major phase, the student selects a preceptor and Committee on Instruction, completes program course requirements, and conducts dissertation research. The major emphasis phase ends when the student passes qualifying examinations for *Admission to Candidacy*. The student must accumulate at least 40 hours of graduate course-work, including the credit hours awarded for core courses. Programs may require more than this minimum. Credit for dissertation research courses does not count toward this total.

#### ***Committee on Instruction (COI)***

The COI consists of five or more faculty members including the faculty preceptor, who chairs the committee. At least three members of the committee must be faculty members from the major emphasis program and at least one must be from another program at Meharry or from an institution other than Meharry. The COI should be broadly representative and include faculty members who work on research problems other than those of the preceptor's laboratory. The COI has broad responsibility to oversee the student's graduate studies and to aid the preceptor in assuring the student's progress. Specifically, the COI monitors the student's progress at its meetings, provides advice on curriculum and research, determines eligibility for the qualifying examination, and approves the completed dissertation for content, style and format conformity. The student, in consultation with the faculty preceptor, assembles an initial list of proposed members of the COI. The members are confirmed and a COI form with their names and signatures is submitted to the Chair of the Department or the DGS who then signs the Form. The form is then given to the Dean for approval. Copies of the form will be kept by the faculty preceptor, other COI members, and the Graduate Dean. The COI must be formulated and approved by the end of the first year; otherwise, the student will not be permitted to register unless the major emphasis Department Chairperson or DGS submits a written request to the Graduate Dean for



his/her approval of a one-semester extension. The COI must meet at least once per semester; the faculty preceptor must report to the COI on the student's academic progress and must submit a plan of study for evaluation by the COI. The plan must include all the required and elective courses identified for the student, and a preliminary plan of research that the preceptor has approved. Written minutes of all COI meetings must be kept by the preceptor who also submits copies to the program DGS, and the Office of the SOGSR each semester.

### ***Admission to Candidacy***

*Admission to Candidacy* recognizes the achievement of a significant milestone in the career of a doctoral student. A student is *Admitted to Candidacy* after he or she has passed the qualifying examination and has completed all course work (40 didactic credit hours) required by the major emphasis program. The student's GPA must be at least 3.0 to take the qualifying examination. A student may attempt to pass the program qualifying examination not more than twice. If a student does not pass the examination after two attempts the DGS must recommend either (a) that the student be dismissed from the SOGSR; or (b) that the student be permitted to earn a Master's Degree. In either case the DGS must submit the recommendation to the Graduate Dean who will present it to the Evaluation Committee for approval. The Graduate Dean must notify the student in writing of the decision of the Evaluation Committee. A student who is *Admitted to Candidacy* will complete a Candidacy Form, which requires the signatures of the Chair of the COI and the Department Chair or DGS. The transcripts for students *Admitted to Candidacy* will contain the statement "*Admitted to Candidacy date.*" All requirements for candidacy must be completed by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The student who does not achieve candidacy will have six months to address this deficiency. After this time, if the student has not achieved candidacy he/she will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

A student in the Ph.D. program may apply to Medical or Dental School at Meharry after being *Admitted to Candidacy* and remain in the SOGSR while the application is being processed. If a graduate student has not been *Admitted to Candidacy*, the Office of Admissions and Records will not accept his/her application to Medical or Dental School unless the student withdraws from the SOGSR and waits one calendar year before applying.

## **DISSERTATION PHASE**

The dissertation phase begins after the student has been *Admitted to Candidacy* for the Ph.D. degree. The student is then designated a *Candidate for the Ph.D. degree*. During this phase the student completes his or her dissertation research and writes a dissertation, which describes an original research project carried out by the student that contributes new knowledge to the field of study. A student then defends his/her dissertation in a public seminar once the following requirements have been met. 1) A full-length manuscript based on the student's dissertation research, of which the student is first author, is published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal aligned with the student's area of specialty. 2) The journal should be indexed in Pub Med. 3) A completed draft of the dissertation is approved for defense by the COI.

### **Public Seminar and Defense of Dissertation/Thesis**

The student must successfully defend the thesis research in a public seminar presented on a weekday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and it must be widely publicized. The student should allow at least one month for completing the steps involved in preparing for the public defense. This process is as follows:

1. COI members are given at least two-weeks to read the dissertation after the student in consultation with his/her preceptor has agreed upon an acceptable draft for review.
2. The preceptor then schedules a COI meeting for approval of the dissertation for defense by the student, and with information from the Graduate School Office and the student with regards to a tentative defense date and time.
3. The preceptor contacts the DGS a minimum of two weeks in advance of the proposed student's defense date to:
  - a. Inform the DGS that the student is ready to defend the dissertation by completing and submitting the *PhD Dissertation Defense Application Form* with signatures from all the COI members,
    - i. The date, time and room (Utmost Bound) for the defense
    - ii. The title of the dissertation
    - iii. Copy of the dissertation abstract

4. The DGS writes a letter to the SOGSR requesting the student's defense. The information in #3 is included in the letter, which must be received in the Dean's Office at least two-weeks prior to the student's defense.
5. The SOGSR will confirm the availability of the date, time, and room for the defense with the DGS and the preceptor.
6. The Dean's Office will prepare the flyers for advertisement of the defense and coordinate the distribution of the flyers on campus. This should be done at least one week before the scheduled defense date.
7. The student's defense consists of a 35-45 minute presentation followed by questions from the COI first, and then the audience.
8. The COI evaluates the student's defense.
9. The chair of the COI provides the DGS with the *Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form* signed by all members of the COI.
10. A student passes his/her dissertation defense and a dissertation or thesis is accepted only upon approval by at least two-thirds of the members of the COI. If the student fails the defense, he/she will be allowed a retake.
11. The vote of the COI is considered by the SOGSR to be final.
12. After the defense, the DGS must notify the Graduate Dean in a letter and send a copy to the Department Chair stating that the defense was satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
  - a. The *Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form* is submitted with the letter to the SOGSR.

The deadlines for public defenses and there respective graduation dates are listed in the following table:

<b>Public Defense Deadline</b>	<b>Graduation (Degree) Date</b>
April 15*	May
May 15*	June
July 15	October
October 15	December

\*Students may participate in Commencement (See page 16)

### **Dissertation and Thesis Submission**

Regulations concerning the format and style of the dissertation/thesis are described in the *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations* available from the SOGSR and must be followed in order to receive the Dean's approval. The SOGSR staff checks the dissertation/thesis for compliance with the *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*, quality of reproduction, and other matters of format and style. The dissertation/thesis may be returned to the student if it does not comply with all requirements.

The student must submit five error free copies of the approved final dissertation or thesis to the SOGSR by April 15 for May graduation; May 15 for June graduation; July 15 for October graduation; and October 15 for December graduation. The original approval page of each copy must bear the original signatures of the Departmental Chairperson or Program DGS, preceptor or thesis chairperson, COI or thesis committee. The Dean examines the dissertation or thesis and signs it if it meets his/her approval. An approved dissertation or thesis denotes the Committee's approval of content and compliance with the *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*. The candidate has then met all the SOGSR academic requirements for the Doctoral or Master's Degree. The Graduate Dean then presents the candidate's name to the Evaluation Committee and the Board of Trustees for their approval. After the Board of Trustees approves the student for graduation, the Ph.D. or Master's Degree is awarded.

The final date for submission of the five error free copies is the last Friday in April, May, July, and October. The SOGSR will bind the documents and will distribute one copy to the major emphasis department, one to the medical library, one to the preceptor, one to the Graduate Dean's office and one to the graduate.

### **Participation in Commencement**

Students in the Ph.D. Program have the option of participating in the May Commencement if they defend their dissertation or thesis after the published deadlines of April and May and prior to Commencement. Students must have a complete written and approved dissertation or thesis. The DGS for each

student's Program will petition the Graduate Dean on behalf of the student. The mentor and the COI for the student must concur with this decision as expressed in a written letter to the DGS.

## **M.D./Ph.D. PROGRAM**

### ***Admission***

Students enrolled in the MD/Ph.D. program matriculate in the School of Medicine for the first two years of their training in the institution. It is expected that students interested in enrolling in the M.D./Ph.D. program participate in summer research with a Meharry Medical College faculty member during the summer between their first and second years and after their second year of Medical School. During their second year in the School of Medicine, they will complete a formal application to the Graduate School which will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee of the Graduate School. After successful performance on the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) Part I, students will begin their research training inclusive of graduate level courses.

### ***Course of Study***

M.D./Ph.D. students will follow a Ph.D. curriculum inclusive of core courses. M.D./Ph.D. students may be given an opportunity to test out of the first semester core curriculum at the beginning of their first-year of graduate training.

### ***Program Completion***

To satisfy the Ph.D. phase requirements, M.D./Ph.D. students must:

- 1) complete 40 hours of graduate coursework. Medical school courses will be accepted when:
  - a) they are part of the core curriculum of their Ph.D. program of choice;
  - b) at the discretion of the training program and the COI.
    - i) The COI decides which School of Medicine courses are appropriate to be transferred according to each student's training, after the MD/Ph.D. student completes the core curriculum. The chair of the COI must write a letter to the Graduate School listing the following for all of the courses:

- 1) Course name
- 2) Course number
- 3) Number of credits
- 4) Grade in the course (must be a B or better)

2) successfully pass a Ph.D. comprehensive exam at which time they will become a Candidate for the Ph.D. Degree

3) have a first-authored paper of their original research accepted or published in a peer-reviewed journal

4) write and defend a dissertation

Once these requirements are completed, the M.D./Ph.D. students are allowed to return for their clerkships to finish their Medical Degree requirements. M.D./Ph.D. students will receive their dual degree at the same time during Commencement.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The SOGSR and the Departments of the College offer financial assistance in the form of fellowships, traineeships, service appointments such as teaching assistantships, graduate assistantships, and research assistantships for students enrolled in the Ph.D. Program. All inquiries concerning the availability of such assistance should be addressed to the Dean, the Departmental Chairperson and/or advisors of the intended major area.

Ph.D. training is a full-time activity. Therefore, students receiving a stipend or fellowship are not permitted to hold outside employment. Violation of this regulation could lead to loss of the fellowship.

#### ***Emergency Loan Program***

Graduate students may receive emergency loan assistance from the college's loan funds and the Graduate School's emergency funds. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid at 615/327-6826 or the graduate school dean at 615 327-6533 for additional information.

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH (MSPH) PROGRAM**  
**Department of Public Health Practice (DPHP)**

**MSPH Program**

To receive the MSPH degree, a student must complete the required course work including an externship and either a thesis or a comprehensive examination. If the student selects the thesis option, his/her curriculum must include research courses and a thesis that meets approval of the student's Thesis Chairperson and Committee, Department Director, and the Graduate Dean, which must be submitted and successfully defended prior to graduation. The completion of the curriculum consisting of 45 credit hours of approved course work, 400-hour externship and a thesis or comprehensive examination leads to the MSPH in Public Health.

**Advisor**

Students will be advised by staff and faculty. The Academic Program Administrator (staff) will help the student on matters pertaining to coursework and other academic issues, career planning, externship opportunities, fellowships openings, and other duties described in the job description. During the fall semester, each first-year MSPH student will be assigned a faculty advisor. This assignment is made by the Director of the MSPH Program. The assigned faculty will inform the student of the major requirements and steps toward graduation, keeps track of the student's progress toward, and up to graduation, and offers assistance as needed. This assistance by faculty to a student could result in the faculty acting as a role model to include that of a mentor. For a student doing a thesis as his/her culminating experience, both faculty and staff advisors may assist the student in identifying a Thesis Committee Chair and other Thesis Committee members. The Thesis Committee advises the student on the progress of the thesis to include its timeliness, steps, approaches, and quality of the thesis. The Chair takes the lead in providing advice.

## **CURRICULUM PHASES**

The curriculum for the MSPH Program consists of three phases:

**Phase I** generally consists of those semesters in which the student completes all the public health core courses and begins his/her elective courses. The faculty advisor will inform the students about all core courses. For a full-time student this usually includes the first two semesters. The completion of this phase provides the student with the essential courses for the preparation of his/her externship and for the student who selects the thesis as his/her culminating work.

**Phase II** involves the completion of an externship experience in which students may become involved in public health experience as research, policy formulation, health services delivery, community services, etc. This phase usually occur during the summer months after the first and second semester of academic work.

**Phase III** consists of those semesters in which the student 1) completes his/her core courses, 2) completes elective courses, and 3) completes either a comprehensive examination or a thesis. For a full-time student this usually includes the third and fourth semesters.

For a full-time student this curriculum usually takes 2 years. However, all of the requirements for the MSPH degree must be completed within 5 years after admission.

### **Externship Site Approval**

The DPHP identifies approved sites for externships. The externship covers the spectrum of public health opportunities including research, health services delivery, policy formulation and community service. The externship provides students with direct opportunities to apply the didactic skills learned in the classroom to real world situations in the organizational environment of a research institution, health care agency, community health clinic, public health organization or other health care entity. To be approved, a site must satisfy the required list of competencies including: (1) providing a suitable preceptor with a



master's degree or above within the organization willing to work with a student for the 400 hours of required externship assignment, and (2) determining whether there is an appropriate fit between the Organization's goals and the Department's goals.

### **Culminating Requirements**

The thesis or comprehensive examination is the culmination of the graduate training in the DPHP. The thesis must meet the standards of the Graduate Program and be approved by the Thesis Chairperson, Thesis Committee, and Director of the MSPH Program with respect to experimental design, interpretation of data, and general scientific competence; it must also meet the SOGSR standards for format and style. Students selecting the comprehensive examination option must pass the comprehensive examination developed by the MSPH Faculty that has been approved by the Director of the MSPH Program and the Dean of the SOGSR.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive examination requires that the student demonstrate his/her mastery of the competencies (knowledge, skills, and practices) learned in the MSPH program. It is a one-day exam during which the student integrates her/his knowledge, skills and practices learned in various courses of the MSPH program in essay form to a specific health-related problem. Additionally, the student must answer specific questions from specific courses. The date and time of the exam is announced in advanced each semester by the director of the MSPH program.

### **Thesis Committee**

For the student that selects the thesis option, he/she must select a Thesis Committee Chairperson from the DPHP Graduate Program faculty no later than the Friday of the last full week in September of the Theses Research and Evaluation class. The Committee Chairperson should have some expertise in the area in which the student is interested in exploring. In addition to the Chairperson, the student must select at least two other faculty to serve on the Thesis Committee. At least one of these two additional faculty must be a member of the DPHP faculty or a Meharry faculty with expertise in the area on which the thesis concentrates. If a non- Meharry person is selected for the

Committee, he/she must have expertise in the area on which the thesis concentrates and be approved by the Director of the MSPH Program. Individuals agree to be on the student's Thesis Committee by signing the Thesis Committee form thereby acknowledging their understanding or agreement to learn the responsibilities of a Thesis Committee member and to carry out the responsibilities. All Thesis Committee members for a student must be approved by the Director of the MSPH Program and the Dean of the SOGSR. The Director of the DPHP is an ex-officio member on all students' Theses Committees.

### **Thesis' Concept Paper and Proposal**

A student must prepare a concept paper to present to potential members of his/her thesis committee. This concept paper is no more than 2 double-spaced pages that must contain an introduction, objectives, review of literature, methodology and references. If necessary, references may be on one additional page. When possible, the concept paper should include the student's mentor and contact information. The purpose of the concept paper is to give the reader a short overview of what, why, and how the research is to be conducted and to encourage the reader to be a member of the student's thesis committee.

After the thesis committee has been formed, the student works with his/her committee to develop a 2-4 double spaced proposal (longer if thesis committee dictates) to be presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval.

This proposal topic may be slightly altered or different from the one presented in the concept paper. Once approved by the thesis committee, the proposal is submitted to the Meharry Medical College IRB in addition to the other IRB requirements. It is to contain an introduction, problem statement, aims (goals), objectives, hypothesis (if any), literature review, methodology, and references. If necessary, references may be on one additional page. This proposal should be clear and complete so that members of the IRB committee have a good understanding of the research project of the student.

### **Public Seminar and Defense**

The student must successfully defend the thesis research in a public seminar presented on a weekday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and it must be widely publicized. Thus, the student must work with the Thesis Committee Chair and

submit the title, date, plus abstract and chapters 1-5 of the thesis to the MSPH Director two weeks before the defense. All members of the Thesis Committee must agree that the student is ready to publicly defend. The process for this defense is as follows:

1. Thesis Committee members agree, after they have read and approved the thesis that the student is ready to defend.
2. Thesis Committee with information from the student determines the tentative defense date.
3. Thesis Committee Chair contacts MSPH Director a minimum of two weeks in advance of the proposed student's defense date to:
  - a. Inform the Director that the student is ready to defend thesis by completing and submitting the *MSPH Thesis Defense Application Form* with signatures of all committee members,
    - i. Provide the Director with the requested date, time, room (Utmost Bound) and,
    - ii. Provide the Director with the title, abstract of the thesis, and Chapters 1-5.
4. MSPH Director confirms the availability of the date, time and room for the requested defense with the SOGSR.
5. The Director will inform the Thesis Committee Chair about the availability of the date, time, and room for the defense.
6. If the date, time, and room are available for the defense as requested, the MSPH Director will provide the following information to the Dean's Office:
  - a. The date, time and room for the defense,
  - b. The title of the thesis,
  - c. Copy of the thesis abstract,
  - d. Chapters 1-5
7. The Dean's Office will prepare the flyers for advertisement of the defense and coordinate the distribution of the flyers on campus,
8. Prior to the defense, the student will obtain from the SOGSR the thesis defense evaluation form to give to the Thesis Committee chair for the defense.
9. Student defends the thesis.
10. Thesis Committee evaluates student's defense.

11. The Committee Chair provides the Director with the score of the defense on the *Quality of the Thesis Defense* form signed by all members of the Thesis Committee.
12. After the student has completed writing the thesis, the Committee uses the *Quality of Written Thesis* form to evaluate the written thesis.
13. The Chair of the Thesis Committee provide the Director with the score of the written thesis on the *Quality of Written Thesis* form signed by all members of the Thesis Committee

The decision of the Thesis Committee is considered by the SOGSR to be final with approval of the MSPH Director and Dean. The deadlines for public defenses and their respective graduation dates are listed in the table below.

Public Defense Deadline	Graduation (Degree) Date
April 15*	May
May 15*	June
July 15	October
October 15	December

\*Students may participate in Commencement (See page 25)

### **Thesis Submission**

Regulations concerning the format and style of the thesis are described in the *Guide to Thesis Preparation Master of Science in Public Health* available from the SOGSR and must be followed in order to receive the Dean's approval. The SOGSR staff checks the thesis for compliance with the *Guide to Thesis Preparation Master of Science in Public Health*, quality of reproduction, and other matters of format and style. The thesis may be returned to the student if it does not comply with all requirements.

After a satisfactory defense the student must submit five error-free copies of the approved final thesis. The original approval page of each copy must bear the original signature of the MSPH Program Director, and Thesis Committee members. An approved thesis denotes the Committee's approval of content and compliance with the *Guide to Thesis Preparation Master of Science in Public Health*. The Graduate Dean signs the thesis after verifying its compliance with the SOGSR requirements.

### **Academic Requirements Fulfilled**

When the student has completed his/her academic requirements which include courses, externship with appropriate Grade Point Average plus the culminating options of either the thesis or comprehensive examination, the candidate has then met all the SOGSR academic requirements for the Master of Science in Public Health degree. The Graduate Dean then presents the candidate's name to the Evaluation Committee and the Board of Trustees for their approval. After the Board of Trustees approves the student for graduation, the Master's degree is awarded.

### **RESIDENCE**

A master's student must spend at least two (2) semesters in residence.

### **TIME LIMIT**

All requirements for the MSPH degree must be completed within five years after admission to the SOGSR.

### **Participation in Commencement**

Students in the MSPH Program have the option of participating in the May Commencement under special circumstances. These circumstances are: 1) the student defends his/her thesis after the published deadlines of April and May and prior to Commencement; 2) the student passes the comprehensive exam after the published deadlines of April and May but prior to Commencement; 3) other circumstances as deemed worthwhile by the Chair of the Thesis Committee, the Thesis Committee, and the Director of the Program. The Director of the Program will make a formal petition to the Graduate Dean on behalf of the student. The Chair of the Thesis Committee for the student must concur with this decision as expressed in a written letter to the Director of the Program.

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Student Financial Aid Office at Meharry Medical College helps students obtain resources to finance their education. Financial assistance comes from federal, state, private and institutional sources, and may be awarded in the form of loans, scholarships, grants or work-study. A Student Financial Aid

Handbook giving the types of financial assistance available along with the requirements, limitations and obligations for each program is available in the Office of Student Financial Aid.

Students must apply annually for financial assistance and can obtain application materials from the Student Financial Aid office after January 1. All application materials must be received in the Student Financial Aid office by the deadline date of the year to secure funds by the beginning of the next academic year (August). To apply, applicants must complete the Meharry Medical College Application for Student Financial Assistance and the Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GAPSFAS) form.

To be eligible for financial assistance, a student must be accepted for enrollment as a full-time student and demonstrate satisfactory academic progress through graduation. To receive federal funds, students must also demonstrate financial need and meet citizenship requirements.

***Emergency Loan Program***

Graduate students may receive emergency loan assistance from the college's loan and the graduate school emergency funds. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid at (615) 327-6826 or the Graduate School Dean's Office (615) 327-6533 for additional information.

## **CLINICAL RESEARCH EDUCATION FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT (CRECD) PROGRAM**

### **MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN CLINICAL INVESTIGATION (MSCI)**

The program known as the Clinical Research for Education and Career Development (CRECD) focuses on training minority candidates and awards a Master of Science Degree in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) after completing the two-year program. The goal of the Program is to expand the cadre of well-trained minority investigators devoting their careers to clinical research especially for projects focusing on health disparities. Trainees accepted into the Program originate from current Meharry faculty and doctoral students along with a defined national recruitment effort to attract additional skilled trainees to the Institution.

Program candidates must be doctoral candidate or have a doctoral degree and be able to have sufficient time to commit to the course of studies. Candidates must also be suitable to receive funding from the NIH and thus must be citizens or permanent U.S. residents.

### **PROGRAM LEADERSHIP**

A full-time Director assisted by a Co-Director and Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) administers the CRECD/MSCI Program. The CAC reviews the curriculum, the progress of each trainee and serve to evaluate applications for matriculation. An External Advisory Board (EAB) meets yearly to provide oversight to the Program.

### **THE CURRICULUM**

The Program is designed to implement a curriculum combining core didactic and elective classes along with an intensive research project overseen by each trainee's Mentoring Committee. The curriculum efficiently integrates selected courses from the Meharry Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) program and the Vanderbilt University Master of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) and Master in Public Health (MPH) programs. A unique program identity has been created for the Meharry CRECD program to foster interest in research addressing health disparities and health issues disproportionately affecting minority and underserved populations. This has been accomplished by the

development of new core courses and seminars. They include: Health Disparities (3 hours); Culture and Health: An Ethnographic and Qualitative Approach (3 hours); Research Ethics (2 hours); and Clinical Research Methodology (3 hours). These courses are offered as electives in the Meharry MSPH program and Vanderbilt MSCI and MPH programs.

**Course Requirements**

Courses will be scheduled over the two-year period, with most of the core courses in year 1. The basic research skills provided by the core curriculum will be augmented by elective courses that allow trainees to differentiate into specific areas of clinical research. These additional skills are necessary for success as an independent investigator. Two tracks, one for Patient-Oriented Research involving the mechanisms of human disease, and another for Health Services Research (HSR)/Epidemiology have been outlined. In these tracks, elective courses will be recommended (selected) to meet the individual knowledge and skill requirements of the trainee and allowing for pursuit of a wide variety of areas of scientific inquiry.

The total course curriculum with core courses, elective courses, and individual tracks are listed below with a minimum of 36 hours required for graduation.

**Track 1**

*(Patient-oriented Research)*  
 Core Courses (27 hours)  
 Pharmacokinetics [4 hours]  
 Measuring P & P Results [2 hours]  
 Genetic Analysis [2 hours]  
 Additional Electives (1 hour)

**Track 2**

*(Health service research/Epidemiology)*  
 Core Courses (27 hours)  
 Biostatistics II (4 hours)  
 Epidemiology II (4 hours)  
 Additional Electives (1 hour)

**CORE Curriculum**

The Clinical Research Education and Career Development (CRECD) program at Meharry Medical College provides a core didactic curriculum that is rigorous, scientifically sound, and grounded in adult learning theory. The curriculum initiates required core courses in the first year. The core curriculum teaches the fundamentals of clinical research including biostatistics (introductory), epidemiology (introductory), molecular medicine and grant writing. Additional



core classes, designed for this program, address health disparities and related issues and include: *Health Disparities*, *Clinical Research Methods*, *Research Ethics* and *Culture and Health*. The aim is to provide the essential skills needed to develop solid hypotheses, conceptualize research ideas and methodology and understand fundamentals of data interpretation and statistical analysis. It also allows trainees to comprehend new concepts in cellular and molecular medicine needed for translational research and develop skills needed for grant writing and manuscript preparation.

### **Electives**

The elective courses allow the trainees to select areas of study necessary for their specific interest and include: Biostatistics (advanced), Epidemiology (advanced), Medical Writing for Clinical Investigators, Drug and Device Development, Environmental Health, Behavioral Methods, Health Economics, Health Finance, Clinical Economics Decision Analysis, Genetic Analysis of Complex Human Traits, Pharmacokinetics, Measuring Pharmacological and Physiological Results, Program Policy Evaluation, Cancer Epidemiology, Maternal and Child Health, Pharmacoepidemiology, Infectious Diseases and Vaccines and Clinical Trials.

### **Research Experience**

All CRECD trainees are be required to participate in an on-going, mentored clinical research project to gain research experience and insight into the collaborative processes involved in being a part of a research team Meharry Medical College and Vanderbilt University (through the Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance). A list of on-going clinical research opportunities and NIH biosketches for principal investigators are presented to trainees early in the first year of the program and opportunities provided for them to meet with principal investigators. These meetings allow for discussion of details of the clinical research study, the stage of project development and the trainees' potential role and goals from participation in the project. Efforts are made to match on-going clinical research experience with the trainees' area of clinical research focus and interest.

Trainees are encouraged to attend the numerous seminars at both Meharry Medical College and Vanderbilt University.

### **Clinical Research Project**

All CRECD trainees are required to develop and design a clinical research project to gain research experience and insight into the collaborative processes involved in being a part of a research team. During the first year, each trainee designs a research project and subsequently performs the clinical research after contemplating an area of research, and outlining a proposed research study with the assistance of the Director and the Mentoring Committee. Mentors are selected from the wealth of faculty at Meharry Medical College and Vanderbilt University. The Program Director assists the trainee to obtain mentors that have expertise in clinical research and interest in a pertinent discipline of medicine. The members of this Committee meet with the student on a frequent basis to provide expertise in the conduct of clinical research, provide specific resources such as statistical methodology and serve to review the continuing conduct of the trainee's research activities.

### **Mentoring Committee**

The mentoring process is considered a key component for the development of successful and independent clinical investigators through the Meharry CRECD program. The Program Director and Co-Director assist trainees with designation of a mentoring committee by the end of the third month. The committee consists of three individuals chosen from program faculty, clinical research principal investigators, members of the Curriculum Advisory Committee, Advisory Council, and other ad hoc experts (in research content and/or methodology) as required.

The committee structure is designed to provide the trainees with mentors who have the appropriate expertise to support and nurture the trainees' research content areas, research methods, and general academic career. These mentors facilitate and reduce barriers toward successful implementation and completion of the research project. They improve the potential cultivation of long-term relationships and optimize accomplishment of mentoring objectives.

Thus, the key roles of the mentors and specific objectives of the mentoring process are: 1) Professional Socialization (obtaining access to key people and resources, understanding local and national academic environments, and developing role clarity), 2) Role Modeling (teaching by example in the areas of

research, clinical care, and administration), 3) Nurturing (generation of enthusiasm and confidence, serving as a sounding board, short and long term career planning, reality testing, counseling, providing professional and personal moral support, 4) Teaching (developing specific knowledge and/or skills, providing constructive feedback and motivation) and 5) Advocacy (sponsorship/opening doors, protecting time, and collaboration or association with a proven track record).

All potential mentors are given a CRECD program description, mentoring objectives and guidelines, and requested to submit a letter of commitment should they be chosen by the trainees. Opportunities for interaction with potential mentors are arranged during the first two months of the program. Those identified as mentors receive further orientation to the goals and objectives of the program and a system for on-going communication with the Program Director and/or Co-Director is developed.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENT**

The following requirements are necessary for successful completion of the Meharry CRECD Program leading to a Master's of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI):

- 36 credit hours (27 hours core curriculum and 9 elective hours)
- Endorsement of mentoring committee
- Scientific presentation of research project at local or national meeting
- Participation in on-going clinical research project
- Develop and conduct original, mentored research project
- Preparation of manuscript suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed medical journal
- Endorsement by Program Director

For graduation, each trainee must successfully complete a minimum of 36 credit hours of work. The culmination of the Program and a requirement for graduation is a formal public seminar together with a research paper, suitable for publication, that is reviewed and approved by each candidates Mentoring Committee and by the Program Director.

#### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Trainees are provided a stipend for partial salary with the remaining covered by their Department. Trainees commit substantial time to the program but can still continue their routine clinical work although on a reduced level. This may vary depending upon the year of the student, and also whether they are in Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the program.

## **SELECTED COLLEGE POLICIES**

### **IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

At the time of registration, students must present proof of immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, varicella and polio as well as an updated Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster within the last six years (good for ten years in usual circumstances). Documentation of a tuberculosis skin test (PPD-purified protein derivative) within the last year should also be provided.

Existence of positive PPD may require a chest x-ray. Immunization against Hepatitis B must also be presented at the time of matriculation or may be obtained through the Meharry Family Practice Center. Students that do not provide proof of documented immunity must obtain the proper immunizations to continue matriculation. Costs for all immunizations are provided at the student's expense and are not covered by most insurance policies.

Graduate students do not receive TB test on an annual basis. However, when circumstances dictates, those at risk may be required to have a skin test for tuberculosis. This testing will be at the student's expense.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

All students are subject to the regulations of the college's Honor Code. Instances of suspected plagiarism, cheating on examinations, or other violations of the Student Honor Code, should be reported either to the office of the General Counsel or the Office of the Dean, SOGSR.

Plagiarism consists of presenting the writing, data, or ideas of another, as one's own without acknowledgment by citation or other appropriate and accepted means. Plagiarism constitutes a grave and fundamental violation of personal integrity and professional ethics. The Student Disciplinary Committee reviews allegations of plagiarism. When an instructor determines that a student has committed plagiarism he or she informs the Program Director, DGS and department chair. In consultation with the instructor and chair, the graduate dean then writes a letter to the president outlining the charge and summarizing the evidence. The college president decides whether to refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee. If the president decides not to submit the charge

before the committee, he or she instructs the graduate dean and the chair how to proceed. If the president does place the charge before the Disciplinary Committee, the chair of that committee arranges a hearing. The committee's recommendation is transmitted to the president, who decides to accept, modify, or reject it; the president informs the student, graduate dean, chair, and instructor of that decision. Appropriate penalties for plagiarism may include assigning an automatic C or F grade in a course and/or dismissal from the SOGSR. Also, altering data to make them confirm or contradict a hypothesis or fabricating results for an experiment without ever conducting it constitute grave and fundamental violations of personal integrity and professional ethics. Allegations of fraud are reviewed and acted upon by the Disciplinary Committee. Appropriate penalties for fraud include dismissal from the SOGSR and, if the data has been published, a published retraction.

### **Data Gathering, Storage, Retention**

A common denominator in most cases of alleged scientific misconduct has been the absence of a complete set of verifiable data. The retention of accurately recorded and retrievable results is of utmost importance for the progress of scientific inquiry. A scientist must have access to his/her original results in order to respond to questions including, but not limited to, those that may arise without any implication of impropriety. Moreover, errors may be mistaken for misconduct when the primary experimental results are unavailable.

## **REVISED PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND APPEAL OF ACADEMIC ACTIONS**

(Effective: December 9, 2008)

(This document supersedes all previously published procedures governing academic actions involving students)

A student's academic status is determined by the appropriate Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee.

The process is as follows:

1. The responsible faculty awards definitive grades. The instructor or course committee designates a grade for the student and submits it electronically to the Office of the Registrar.
  
2. The Registrar (or his/her designee) receives all grades from each of the Schools and provides them to the appropriate Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC), which consists of members of the teaching faculty appointed by the Dean. The Dean of the School concerned determines the number and mix of each SEPC.
  
3. The appropriate SEPC recommends an academic status for each enrolled student based on the School's academic policies. The Office of the Registrar records the recommendations. If SEPC makes a dismissal recommendation, the Associate Vice President (AVP) for Enrollment Management will notify the appropriate Academic Affairs Dean of the SEPC recommendation within 24 hours. The Academic Affairs Dean will then notify the student of the dismissal recommendation, in person and in writing, within three (3) working days. The student will be required to sign for the letter.

4. The AVP for Enrollment Management will also notify the Financial Aid Office of the dismissal recommendation for closer monitoring of future disbursements and continued eligibility for federal financial aid.
5. If a student is recommended for dismissal, they will be invited to appear in a dismissal hearing with the appropriate School's Ad Hoc Dismissal Committee where they can present their case and respond to questions from the Committee. The School's Dean in consultation with the Academic Affairs Dean will establish the Ad Hoc Dismissal Committee's membership. The dismissal hearing must occur within ten (10) working days of the date of the written notification to the student. Failure to appear for the hearing will be interpreted as acceptance and confirmation of the dismissal recommendation. For the hearing, the Committee will accept, either in person or in writing, up to three expressions of support for the student. This is not a legal proceeding. Therefore, representation by legal counsel is not permitted. The Committee will then deliberate and make a decision. The Dean can decide to dismiss or allow a student to return detailing specific curricular and/or behavioral requirements and stipulations. The Dean's decision will be communicated by phone within twenty-four (24) hours, with the student required to pick-up and sign for the written decision letter within three (3) calendar days.
6. If a student is dismissed, they may appeal the dismissal decision to the Dean of their respective School. However, the basis for the appeal must be a compelling reason such as 1) bias or 2) failure to follow due process on the part of the SEPC or Ad Hoc Dismissal Committee. A student must notify the Dean's Office within five (5) calendar days of the date of the dismissal notification letter if they wish to appeal. The Dean will hear the appeal based on the claim of compelling reasons, bias or failure to follow due process within ten (10) calendar days. The Dean will not rehear the case itself, but will evaluate the merit of the appeal claim. The Dean can either uphold or overturn the dismissal decision. The Dean will inform the Executive Vice



President/Provost and General Counsel of their final decision before it is communicated to the student. All decisions at the Dean's level are final and must be communicated to the student, appropriate School Academic and/or Student Affairs Dean, Office of the Registrar, Treasurer's Office, and Financial Aid within five (5) calendar days.

7. A student will continue to be enrolled, or eligible to be enrolled, throughout the dismissal hearing and appeals process until all appeal rights have been exhausted. Financial Aid and Training Grant Directors (such as T32 training grants in graduate school) will closely monitor the potential financial impact on the student to ensure their needs are met and reserves the right to establish a special disbursement schedule for living expenses. Financial Aid and Training Grant Directors will also protect the College's interests and compliance with federal regulations to ensure that if the dismissal recommendation is upheld, the student will not have been over-awarded financial aid.
8. If the dismissal recommendation is upheld, the effective date of the dismissal will be the hearing or final appeal date, whichever is later, and the College's refund policies would apply as of that date.

Failure to comply with these requirements shall waive and terminate any further rights the student may have under this procedure.

## **POLICY ON STUDENT STATUS AND REFUND**

### **Determination of a Student's Status**

A student is classified as full-time if he/she is properly registered in the Office of Admissions and Records and is pursuing a course of study which will lead to a terminal degree or certificate from Meharry Medical College in accordance with College Policies and Procedures.

Full fees and appropriate tuition are due and payable on or before the day of registration. However, the Dean may defer a student's payment of tuition on the day of registration if the following conditions have been met: 1). The student has been awarded a loan, 2). The student presents proof of pending scholarship aid (in an amount equal to or greater than the tuition due) that has been processed through the Office of Student Financial Aid prior to the day of registration. 3). The student signs a promissory note agreeing to a specific payment plan. Deferred tuition must be paid prior to subsequent registration.

Students who are allowed to register under the deferment provision are required to pay tuition upon notification of his/her check in the Treasurer's Office.

Students who are required by the faculty to repeat a course(s) must pay full fee charges during the fall semester in question, but their tuition will be prorated in accordance with the number of hours repeated for the year. Students enrolled during the summer session will pay on a prorated basis only if the course(s) they take is/are being repeated; such charges are payable when the student registers for the summer session. Students who fail to register and pay the appropriate charges shall not be awarded credit for the course(s) in question.

A student who is not repeating any courses, but who is required to pursue a modified program of study will do so by approved direction from the respective Dean of the School concerned. Such students must pay all appropriate fees, but his/her tuition will be prorated in accordance with the number of hours carried.

Students who are admitted to take specific predetermined courses are not in pursuit of a degree or certificate from Meharry Medical College and shall not

receive credit for courses taken toward a degree/certificate from Meharry. Their enrollment shall automatically terminate upon completion of the course(s) concerned. Such students will pay a prorated tuition appropriate to the number of hours taken and their payable fees shall be designated based upon their circumstances or enrollment.

**Student Refund Policy (Excluding Post-2 Clinical Year Students)**

Meharry Medical College will refund tuition and fees according to the following schedule if the student meets the eligibility requirements:

**Fees**

Fees are refundable in full on or before the last day of registration if a student officially withdraws from the College. After the last day of registration, there is no refund of fees. Students are not entitled to refund of tuition or fees paid by third parties- such will be refunded to the agency concerned.

**Tuition**

Refundable tuition for each semester shall be governed by the following schedule if a student officially withdraws from the college, from official registration in a course(s), or takes a leave of absence; except that students on third party payments shall not be entitled to tuition refunds. Such will be refunded to the agency concerned.

**Period of Enrollment Percent of Refund**

First and Second week	90%
Third and Fourth Week	70%
Fifth and Sixth Week	50%
Seventh and Eighth Week	25%
Ninth and over	0%

**Eligibility for and Disbursement of Refunds**

Before refunding any tuition or fees, the Office of the Treasurer shall examine all student financial obligations to the College, i.e., tuition, fees, rent, dental storeroom, bookstore, library, etc., as well as matured and/or past due loans.

Promised student financial aid cannot be considered in determining eligibility

for refunds; therefore, requests for refunds can be approved only for the amount of cash receipts and/or other credits in excess of charges as shown in the student's account.

Disbursement forms are prepared by the Office of the Treasurer upon official notification from the Office of Admissions and Records that a student has withdrawn from the College. Ten working days after an application for refund has been made, the check should be in the Treasurer's Office for distribution.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

The Meharry Counseling Center officially opened its doors in the Fall of 1988. The goal of the Counseling Center is to develop and maintain a healthy and supportive campus environment that is conducive for maximum personal and academic growth. The Counseling Center staff is available to offer personal counseling, health-related referrals, and consultation with students, faculty and staff. The Counseling Center is the place to come when you want to talk about your concerns including:

relationship problems  
family  
self-esteem  
stress  
grief  
pregnancy  
suicide  
weight problems  
loneliness  
school adjustments  
substance abuse  
rape

You can talk about all these things and more at the Counseling Center. Don't wait for a problem to become unmanageable. The Meharry Counseling Center is here to serve you.

### **Confidentiality**

All counseling sessions are strictly confidential. This means that no faculty, staff, student, friend, or family member will have access to a student's private session(s) with his/her counselor.

### **Cost**

All services at the Counseling Center are free and considered a part of services provided to students at Meharry.

**Records**

The only records kept of individuals who come to the Counseling Center are statistics indicating the number of students and the type of service(s) rendered. There are no permanent records kept of names of students or the content of counseling sessions.

**Location and Hours**

The Counseling Center is located on the lower level of the Rolfe Student Center Building. The Counseling Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Walk-ins are accepted. All counseling sessions are conducted by a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Tennessee.

**Staff**

Rhonda Cunningham-Burley, Ph.D., Director  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
Phone: 615-327-6371  
Email: [rburley@mmc.edu](mailto:rburley@mmc.edu)

Sharda Mishra, Ph.D.  
Licensed Professional Counselor  
Licensed Senior Psychological Examiner  
Phone: 615-327-6156  
Email: [smishra@mmc.edu](mailto:smishra@mmc.edu)

Joyce Shannon  
Administrative Assistant  
Phone: 615-327-6915  
Fax: 615-327-6311

## **INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

This policy is intended to set forth Meharry Medical College's institutional position as it relates to sexual harassment. This is the official sexual harassment policy for the institution and applies to all administrative officers, faculty, staff, students, and persons seeking employment and doing business with Meharry Medical College.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct that will not be tolerated by Meharry Medical College. It interferes with appropriate relationships between supervisors and subordinates or teachers and students by unfairly exploiting the power inherent in a faculty member or supervisor's position. Meharry Medical College will not tolerate behavior by any member of the institutional community that creates an unacceptable working or educational environment.

### **Definition**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a course, program or activity; (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment or educational decision affecting an individual; or (3) Such conduct has the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for working or learning.

### **Examples of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment includes any sexual attention that is unwanted. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Direct or implied threats that submission to sexual advances will be a condition of employment, work status, promotion, grades or letters Or recommendations;
- Direct proposition of a sexual nature;

- Subtle pressure for sexual activity, such as repeated or unwanted stares;
- Conduct intended to discomfort or humiliate that includes comments of a sexual nature or sexually explicit statements, questions, innuendoes or jokes;
- Suggestive or inappropriate communications, notes, letters or other written materials displaying objects or pictures which are sexual in nature that would create a hostile or offensive work or learning environment;
- Sexually suggestive or obscene gestures;
- Attempted or actual kissing, fondling, pinching, or other inappropriate touching, such as brushing against the body;
- Remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothing or body or remarks about sexual activity or speculations about previous sexual experience;
- Physical assault.

### **What You Do If You Are Harassed**

- Clearly communicate to the harasser that the attention is unwanted.
- Keep a record of what happened.
- Report harassment to the Affirmative Action Officer, or appropriate institutional administrative or academic officer.

### **Consensual Relationships**

No faculty member or other instructional personnel shall engage in an amorous relationship with a student who is enrolled in a course being taught by the faculty member or whose academic work is being supervised by the faculty member, even when both parties involved appear to have consented to the



relationship. Such relationships may easily be perceived as promoting or showing inappropriate favoritism to student(s) based on non-meritorious considerations and has a chilling effect on student learning.

Relationships between faculty and students outside the instructional context may also prove problematic, particularly when the faculty member participates in decisions that may reward or penalize students. Such relationships are also discouraged.

### **Complaint Procedures**

Complaints of a violation of this policy should be brought to the attention of the Affirmative Action Officer (AAO), a member of the Sexual Harassment Advisory Committee, or to any academic or administrative officer. The person receiving the complaint will counsel the complainant as to the options available under this Policy, including referral to AAO or other appropriate institutional representative, for help in resolving the complaint informally; or help in drafting a formal complaint.

An **informal** complaint is one that does not require an investigation and can be resolved between the AAO and the parties involved.

A **formal** complaint is one that requires a written complaint from the complainant and an actual in-depth investigation, including interviews with complainant, alleged harasser, and witnesses.

### **Investigation Of Complaints**

All complaints, **informal** and **formal**, shall be immediately forwarded to the AAO in the Office of the President. The AAO will consult with the institution's General Counsel and the appropriate institutional academic or administrative officer to determine the appropriate method for investigating the complaint.

The purpose of the investigation is to ascertain that an actual violation of this Policy has occurred. Investigations shall include the following:

An interview with the complainant to determine the facts upon which the complaint is based. This meeting should be used to find out the **“who, what,**

**when and where”** of the complaint. Any evidence of or witnesses to an alleged incident should be obtained during the interview.

An interview with the accused to inform him/her that a complaint has been made against him/her. The complainant should not be identified, but if the alleged harasser knows the identity of the complainant, it should be made clear that no retaliatory action will be tolerated.

In a formal complaint, interviews with any other persons believed to have pertinent/factual information or knowledge of the alleged Policy violation.

The person investigating the complaint will take steps to ensure confidentiality of all parties involved.

The accused shall have a full opportunity to respond to all allegations.

If it is concluded that there is a reasonable basis for believing that a Policy violation has occurred and a negotiated settlement cannot be reached, formal action will be taken. The AAO will inform the complainant and the accused of the results of the investigation and actions to be taken to resolve the complaint.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Complaints and cases of sexual harassment will be dealt with promptly. Any member of the institutional community found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be disciplined. Disciplinary action for violation of this Policy shall include and not be limited to any of the following courses of action, as appropriate, based on the severity of the violation:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning and reprimand with letter being placed in employee's, student's or contractor's official file, and appropriate counseling
- Suspension
- Termination of employment or contractual relationship, expulsion

**Confidentiality**

Every effort shall be made to protect the privacy of all parties involved. Such efforts are intended to protect the complainant and any witnesses from retaliation and to assure that the rights of the accused are protected. All parties involved in sexual harassment complaints should be cautioned about discussing the case outside of the resolution process.

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **DRESS CODE**

Personal attire should be reflective of professionalism. Students in the School of Graduate Studies, at all levels of education and training, are expected to maintain a proper professional image in their behavior and personal appearance at all times. Tardiness, drawing attention to oneself, or any other display of behavior which is likely to disrupt a lecture or the learning experience is impermissible. Hair is to be neatly groomed and clean. Nails are to be neatly trimmed and clean. Males are not to wear hats or bandanas inside any Meharry or affiliate facility. Students are expected to wear clean, appropriate apparel (shirts, pants, dresses, skirts, etc.) and shoes to all academic activities and when visiting any of our affiliate institutions. **Unacceptable attire** for students include short (mini) skirts, tee shirts with inappropriate inscriptions, halter tops, midriffs, excessively low-cut necklines, tank tops, spaghetti straps, sweat bands, over-sized sagging pants/jeans/shorts caps or hats, and rubber thongs.

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

No food, drinks, or chewing gum is allowed during class time. This policy differentiates class time (when a room is used for lecture and teaching) from classroom (when a room is used for presentations, thesis defense etc). In an authorized recreational event, all trash is to be placed in appropriate receptacles. No unauthorized furniture or tables should be brought into the room except for demonstrations/laboratory purposes.

### **Cell Phones**

**Phones are required to be turned off during class time and placed out of sight. During break time, you can check your messages.**

### **Lap Tops**

**Lap tops can be used for class activities or taking notes at the discretion of the instructor. Otherwise, lap tops are not to be used for email or surfing the internet during class.**

## **ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES**

It is the responsibility of every faculty member to monitor adherence to the above guidelines. If problems cannot be resolved at this level, then referrals should be made to the Dean's Office. Students will be suspended from classroom activities until such time as they comply with these policies.

## **POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION**

In instances of suspected or asserted discriminatory behavior or treatment on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, disability, or national origin, contact the Affirmative Action Office or the Dean.

## **POLICY ON SMOKING**

As an institution committed to providing quality in its health care services and health professional education, Meharry tries to provide an environment, which is conducive to good health. Accordingly, as of January 1, 1989 all campus buildings are considered "smoke free". No smoking will be allowed inside any building on campus. Smoking will be allowed outside of buildings as long as it does not create a hazardous condition.

The only exception to this policy will be when a physician determines that smoking is a necessary part of a patient's therapy. In such cases, the patient will be allowed to smoke within the confines of his/her assigned room, subject to reasonable supervision by the nursing staff. Permission for smoking in these cases must be documented by the attending physician on the patient's chart.

The sale of any and all tobacco products is prohibited on the campus of Meharry Medical College.

## **POLICY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

### **Introduction**

Much has been written in the press recently about the prevalence and effects of substance abuse in our society today. While we are not aware of widespread alcohol or drug abuse at Meharry Medical College, it would be naive to assume that no problems exist. Each student has a responsibility to pursue his/her

academic endeavors in a safe and conscientious manner. In order to ensure that this responsibility is met, students must be free from the effects of alcohol and other performance impairing substances. The institution has instituted this policy to address the risk of substance abuse at the college and to make certain that high quality academic achievement and integrity are maintained.

### **Purpose**

Meharry Medical College regards substance abuse (alcohol and chemical dependencies) as an illness, which responds to medical treatment. Hence, the policy on substance abuse seeks to allow a student suffering from this illness the opportunity to receive careful consideration and referral for treatment of alcoholism and/or chemical dependency.

### **Definition**

**College Premises** are all areas in which the College (including its various programs, departments or services) operates including, but not limited to its property, College owned or leased equipment, privately owned vehicles entering, leaving or parked on College property, or in use on its property (lockers, desks, sidewalks, buildings, equipment, work space, land, storage facilities, etc.).

**Illegal Drugs** include, for the purpose of this policy, such things as narcotics, hallucinogens, depressants, stimulants or other substances that can affect or hamper the senses, emotions, reflexes, judgments or other physical or mental activities; and controlled medication not prescribed for current personal treatment by a licensed physician in a medical setting to address a specific physical, emotional or mental condition.

**Alcohol and chemical dependencies** are defined as illnesses in which a student's use of alcohol or other chemicals interferes with his/her academic, and/or clinical performance, interpersonal skills and relationships.

### **Policy**

1. When a student is suspected of having an alcohol or chemical dependency problem, it will be discussed with the Student Affairs Office in the respective school and/or the Counseling Center. As with any apparent medical problem, the student should be referred to a physician. A professional evaluation will

determine whether or not the student has an abuse problem and requires treatment.

2. When a student's performance is unsatisfactory and it has been medically determined that alcohol or chemical dependency is at least partly the cause, the student must accept referral and agree to a program of treatment. Continued unsatisfactory performance may result in the student being relegated to an administrative leave of absence with re-evaluation required prior to reinstatement.

3. Failure to follow through with referral for medical evaluation and/or treatment shall be cause for appropriate disciplinary action. Information will be treated as confidential.

4. It shall be the responsibility of each student who observes or has knowledge of another student who is in a condition which impairs his/her ability to perform academically, who poses a hazard to the safety and welfare of others or is otherwise in violation of this policy, to promptly report that fact to the Student Affairs Office in the respective school and /or Counseling Center.

5. Any student who is present on campus or at an affiliated institution in an intoxicated condition as a result of the illegal use of drugs or due to alcohol consumption, shall be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including dismissal.

6. The off campus use of alcohol or illegal drugs which results in impaired academic performance, or interpersonal relationships, may be grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal.

7. The illegal use, sale or possession of narcotic or controlled substances while on college and/or hospital premises are grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal. The criminal conviction for the illegal sale of narcotics, drugs or controlled substances while off campus, is also grounds for discipline up to and including dismissal.

8. Where there is reasonable suspicion of violation of the policy, and at the

discretion of the institution, vehicles, lockers, pocketbooks and/or related personal items may be searched without prior notice to ensure an environment free of illegal drugs or alcohol. Any student found to have illegal drugs in their possession, will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The College reserves the right, within limits prescribed by the law, to test employees and prospective employees for the illicit use of drugs and alcohol. The College also reserves the right to investigate and search employees and their personal effects while on college premises when there is reason to suspect drug use or alcohol misuse under the terms of this policy.

Employees are subject to clinically accepted physical or behavioral tests (urinalysis, blood tests, etc.) that may be deemed appropriate by the College to detect the presence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other prohibited substances.

Any employee who, as a result of testing, is found to have identifiable traces of prohibited or unreported drugs or other intoxicating substances in his or her system, regardless of when or where these substances entered his or her system, will be considered in violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action including discharge.

Employee consent will be sought before personal effects will be searched. Employees refusing to cooperate in any investigation, search, screening test or found to be in possession of illegal drugs or other prohibited items will be subject to immediate discharge.

Independent contractors and visitors found to be in violation of the College rule in these matters will be banned immediately from the College premises and will be prohibited from having future access to College premises. This provision should not be construed to apply to patients or other individuals receiving treatment at the College.

The institution earnestly solicits the understanding and cooperation of all students in implementing the policies set forth herein. Questions regarding this policy and its application should be directed to the Student Affairs Office in



the respective school and/or the Counseling Center, with assurance that inquiries will be kept confidential.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND APPEAL OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

Effective: November 17, 1993

This document supersedes all previously published policies governing disciplinary actions involving students)

1. The Student Discipline Committee and its chairperson shall be appointed by the President. Appointments of members of the committee shall be for a two-year term, except the student member who shall be appointed annually by the President of the Pre-Alumni Association.
2. The Student Discipline Committee reviews charges or breaches of the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of Meharry Medical College by a student relating to all non-academic matters.
3. Any person may inform any member of the Student Discipline Committee of an allegation of a breach of a rule, regulation, policy, and/or procedure of Meharry Medical College within the jurisdiction of the Student Discipline Committee.
4. The Student Discipline Committee shall determine whether the allegation or charge is governed by the procedures for Review and Appeal of Disciplinary actions governing non-academic matters. If the Student Discipline Committee determines that the allegation or charge is governed by the Procedures for Review and Appeal of Disciplinary Actions, the chair shall send to the accused student a written notice of a hearing before the Student Discipline Committee.
5. The student shall receive notice of the scheduled hearing no later than 72 hours before the hearing. The student may request additional time, which will be considered by the Discipline Committee. In any case the hearing must be held within 10 working days after notification.
6. In the event of a challenge of whether a matter should be governed by the procedure for review and appeal of academic actions, procedure for review and appeal of disciplinary action, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall have

sole responsibility for determining which procedure shall govern. Any such challenge must be submitted in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs no less than 24 hours before the scheduled hearing.

7. The student shall have the right to be present at the hearing, to present witnesses, and to rebut the evidence against him/her or to have a Meharry Medical College student or faculty member accompany him/her. Legal counsel may be present but may not participate in the hearing

8. The hearing will be an informal one, not governed by technical rules of evidence as employed in a court of law, but the Student Discipline Committee may accept any information it deems pertinent to the charges made.

9. The Student Discipline Committee shall render its decision based upon the evidence presented at the hearing.

10. The standard for determining whether the student has breached a rule, regulation, policy or procedure and is therefore subject to a disciplinary action shall be whether there is a preponderance of the evidence to support the Committee's decision. The burden of proof shall be upon the College.

11. The Student Discipline Committee shall maintain a record of the hearing pending final determination of the charges against the student.

12. The Student Discipline Committee shall notify the student of its decision in writing by certified or registered mail at the address as maintained in the Office of Admissions and Records, within fifteen days.

13. A student may appeal the decision, on the grounds as set forth in the following paragraph, by writing a letter of appeal to the President or Dean no later than 72 hours from receipt of the decision of the Student Discipline Committee.

14. The President or his designee reviews the decision of the Student Discipline Committee, and notifies the student by certified or registered mail at the student's address as recorded by the Office of Admissions and Records. The

President shall also inform the Dean of the student's school and the Office of Admission and Records.

15. At his discretion, the President may request that the student and/or the Student Discipline Committee provide additional information prior to issuing a final decision.

16. The decision of the President or his designee is final. The student shall be notified of the President's decision in writing no later than fifteen days from the receipt of the student's appeal.

17. The student shall be allowed to continue in the academic program during the proceedings unless circumstances exist that poses a threat to himself/herself or others.

18. Breach of rules, regulations, policies and procedures governed by the disciplinary procedure shall include but are not limited to:

- a. furnishing false information to the College with the intent to deceive;
- b. knowingly giving false information or testimony during the investigation or hearing of a disciplinary matter;
- c. forgery, alteration, destruction, damage or misuse of College documents, records, or identification;
- d. physical abuse of any person on College - owned or controlled property; or conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person;
- e. theft;
- f. unauthorized use of or entry to College facilities and/or unauthorized possession of keys to College facilities;
- g. failure to comply with directives of College officials acting in the performance of their duties;

- h. violation of written College policies and regulations as stipulated herein or as announced by authorized personnel;
- i. violation of the terms of probation;
- j. an attempt to commit or to be accessory to the commission of any act in violation of other standards of conduct Academic Policies & Procedures;
- k. breach of any municipal, state or federal laws, rules, regulations, ordinances on college property;
- l. breach of rules of any institution while on rotation at that institution; and
- m. breach of recognized ethical and professional standards applied to student area health professional schools.

19. The Student Discipline Committee's sanctions may include expulsion, suspension from one or more classes for a specific or indefinite period of time, probation, reprimand, and restriction of privileges. The Student Discipline Committee may use its discretion in requiring alternative disciplinary actions.

## **STUDENT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT: HONOR CODE**

### **PURPOSE:**

The Student Code of Professional Conduct and Honor of Meharry Medical College is promulgated so that student academic affairs are conducted under the highest standards of individual responsibility. The Student Code of Professional Conduct and Honor promotes personal honor and integrity, in the best traditions of the health sciences professions. The Honor Code promotes academic honesty and integrity in the classroom, laboratory, clinics and other academic endeavors. The Honor Code requires students to uphold its principles of fairness, professionalism, and ethical behavior; and it also provides procedures to adjudicate alleged violations. By their pledge to subscribe to and uphold this Honor Code, Meharry Medical College students assume the responsibility for the implementation of the Honor Code, and their own academic and professional honesty and integrity. Students are required to sign the honor code pledge at Meharry Medical College. Faculty and staff also have a responsibility to participate in the implementation, enforcement, and application of the Honor Code.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

By direction of the President, the Vice President for Policy Management and Legal Affairs shall ensure compliance with this policy.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Code of professional conduct-A series of principles and rules that govern professional interactions. Such principles include both obligatory and desirable components. Obligatory behaviors refer to necessary professional behaviors which are required by ethical principles and which form the foundation of professional practice, teaching, and learning. Desirable professional behaviors refer to components which enhance professional excellence. Honesty is a central element of each component.

Exoneration-committee clearance of alleged violations.

Suspension-temporary exclusion from academic, research and/or clinical activities.

Probation-period of time in which behavior must remain free of violations prior to reinstatement or removal of restricting conditions.

Reprimand-written censure for specified college regulatory violations.

Restriction of Privilege-loss or diminution of academic, research and/or clinical activities for a prescribed period of time.

**POLICY:**

Meharry Medical College reserves the right to reprimand, require withdrawal, or to dismiss any student for unprofessional conduct or behavior. Among the behaviors which may lead to disciplinary action are: cheating, deception, sexual harassment, fraud, destruction of property, substance or alcohol abuse, and criminal activity.

**SPECIFICATIONS:**

Accusations involving students will be transmitted in writing to the College's Student Discipline Committee. Any individual may inform any committee member of alleged violations. Immediate action may be taken for emergency infractions/violations until a formal disciplinary hearing can be conducted. The Committee will review referred cases and take appropriate action. Students may appeal any discipline committee action by written communication to the President of the College. The procedures for review and appeal of disciplinary actions are published in the Policies and Procedures Manual of each school/department.

As members of the College academic community, students are subject to the obligations and responsibilities which accrue to them by virtue of this membership. The demonstration of appropriate conduct and exercise of applicable responsibilities is expected.

Students, faculty, staff and/or test administrators must report observed violations to a member of the school Honor Council, in accordance with Honor Code procedures. Any alleged violation shall be immediately reported by the President of the Honor Council, or Faculty Advisor, to the principal clinician or scientific investigator after the alleged violation is received.

Breach of rules, regulations, policies and procedures governed by the disciplinary procedure shall include, but is not limited to:

### **1. FURNISHING FALSE INFORMATION**

It shall be a breach of conduct for any student to intentionally:

- furnish false information to the College with the intent to deceive, forge, or in any way alter or falsify documents or evidence required for admission to the College.
- give false information or testimony during the investigation or hearing of a disciplinary matter.
- forge, alter, destroy, damage or misuse College documents, records, or identification.
- present, the work of another individual or source as one's own concepts or ideas;
- submit for credit any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or that is being submitted to another course or assignment;
- falsify or alter any institutional, research, and/or academic record or make use of such forged or altered records;
- remove or destroy information related to patient treatment or one's own academic or clinical work; and
- file false charges or accusations against another individual.

### **2. THEFT OR MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS**

It shall be a breach of conduct for any student to intentionally engage in the following:

- theft, destruction, or damage of intellectual or informational property of the College or an affiliate's property;
- theft or misappropriation of school funds;



- theft, destruction, or damage of College property;
- theft, destruction, or damage of the property of another person;
- theft of supplies, property, equipment or examinations.

### **3. BREACH OF RULES**

**Breach of recognized ethical and professional standards applicable to health professional schools includes, but are not limited to, the following:**

- unauthorized entry to College facilities and/or possession of keys to College facilities.
- failure to comply with directives of College officials acting in the performance of their duties.
- violation of written College policies and regulations.
- violation of the terms of probation.
- attempt to commit or to be accessory to the commission of any act in violation of this or other standards of conduct.
- breach of any municipal, state, or federal laws, rules, regulations, ordinances on College property.
- breach of rules of any institution while on rotation at that institution.

### **4. PHYSICAL ASSAULT**

Physical assault of any person on College-owned or controlled property, or conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person will be considered a breach of conduct.

### **5. EXAMINATION DISHONESTY**

Any use of unauthorized assistance during an examination constitutes dishonesty and represents unacceptable examination behavior. Examples of examination dishonesty include: communication with another student in any

manner during an examination; copying material from another student's examination; permitting a student to copy from an examination; use of unauthorized books or notes; falsification/misrepresentation of academic or clinical performance; impersonation of another student at any examination or other form of academic work; interference with an instructor's administration of an examination, giving and/or receiving aid during an examination.

## **6. IMPROPER PATIENT CARE**

Improper patient care includes, but not limited to, the following:

- failure to provide care for assigned patients or to carry out assigned activities.
- failure to respect patient and/or professional confidentiality.
- unsupervised patient care.
- provision of patient care or conduct of professional activities when physical, mental, or emotional factors may compromise adequate care or results.
- willful disregard of patient care/other directives from supervising faculty.
- rendering of patient care or other professional activities when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

## **7. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is prohibited by College policy and by law. The complete policy on sexual harassment is presented in The College Policy Manual, and each year the policy is distributed to all students and employees of the College.

## **8. SUBSTANCE/ALCOHOL ABUSE**

The following behaviors constitute conduct code violations:

- possession of illegal drugs/substances.
- sale of illegal drugs/substances.
- drunken or disorderly conduct on the campus or affiliate site.

## **HONOR COUNCIL**

### **Composition**

The Honor Council shall consist of at least two voting representatives and one alternate from each class of his/her respective school. The alternate will have a voice but no vote except when serving in the absence of a voting representative from their particular class. Both voting representatives and alternate representatives shall attend regular Honor Council meetings. The Honor Council president shall preside over all regular meetings and Honor Council hearings. The executive officers (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer) of each class are governed by the Honor Code, and those of the Pre-Alumni Association Council, are ineligible to be members of the Honor Council.

### **Election of Members**

Each class shall elect its Council representative within four weeks of the first day of the beginning of classes in the first academic term. Council members shall serve a term of one academic year and may be re-elected at the discretion of a class. It is recommended that Honor Council representatives be re-elected, if their previous performance has proven satisfactory, to provide continuity.

The SOGSR consists of students pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Public Health, Master of Science in Clinical Investigation or a Doctorate of Philosophy. The enrollment period of M.S.P.H. and MSCI students is about two years, and five to seven years for Ph.D. students. This differs from the enrollment period of medical and dental students (four years), thus the class designations for the School of Graduate Studies & Research differs from those assigned in the School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry. Due to this fact, two representatives and one alternate shall be elected from the M.S.P.H. and MSCI students and two representatives and one alternate shall be elected from the Ph.D. students to serve on the Honor Council.

An Honor Council representative or their alternate from a particular class may be removed at the discretion of that class, and a new representative or alternate shall be elected from that class to serve on the Honor Council. It is recommended that Honor Council representatives be retained throughout an academic year.

**Vacancy**

If any Council member is, for any reason, unable to sit in judicial capacity at a hearing, the respective class shall be represented by their elected Honor Council alternate representative, who assumes all the regular powers of a Council member for the duration of that hearing.

In the event of a vacancy occurring in the Honor Council, the particular class in which the vacancy occurs shall elect a replacement within four weeks of the vacancy. To provide continuity, it is recommended that the alternate representative be selected to fill a vacancy and that a new alternate be elected.

**Faculty Advisor**

One faculty advisor, with voice but no vote, shall be selected annually by the dean of the respective school. The advisor attends all proceedings of the Honor Council unless the accused student requests the absence of the faculty advisor during the hearing.

**Quorum**

A quorum of two-thirds of the currently elected representatives, or their designated alternate, will be required to be in attendance for proceedings concerning an honor code violation. A quorum may be established regardless of class distribution or alternate status.

**Voting**

Each representative, or an alternate that has assumed the responsibilities of a representative, shall have one vote. A majority vote of the panel is required for each decision. The president of the council may not vote except when it is necessary to break a tie.

**PLEDGE OF THE HONOR CODE**

All Meharry Medical College students are bound by this Honor Code and pledge to act in accordance with the highest principle of ethical and professional conduct. These principles condemn any act of dishonesty relating to the academic, clinical, research, and professional program at Meharry Medical College.

I have read carefully the honor code of Meharry Medical College and understand its meaning and significance. I agree to abide by this Honor Code while a student at the College and agree to accept all of its implications without reservation.

Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Meharry Medical College Request for Leave

EMPLOYEE REQUESTING LEAVE \_\_\_\_\_  
Print

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual Leave

Time Period Requested (first day) through (last day)	Number of Days	Number of Hours
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## Sick Leave

*(To be completed only for expected sick leave)*

Time Period Requested (first day) through (last day)	Number of Days	Number of Hours
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## Other Leave

**LEAVE TYPE:**

- Bereavement      Family Relationship \_\_\_\_\_
- Jury Duty (Attach Subpoena)
- Leave Without Pay (Attach Justification)
- Maternity Leave
- Military Leave (Attach Orders)
- Family Medical Leave (FML) forms are available in Human Resources. Do not use this form to request Family Medical Leave.

Time Period Requested (first day) through (last day)	Number of Days	Number of Hours
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## Information Below Must be Completed

If a Supervisor, who will take charge in absence?		(Signature of Designated Person)	
Employee's Signature			Date
Approved: Immediate Supervisor			Date
Approved: Dean/Vice President (if required)			Date
Annual Days Available	Verified	Sick Days Available	Verified

(Please use this form to request leave *prior* to requested date.)