

## NCS -GENETICS PROGRAM PRACTICES

Questions 1A, 1B - Communication with Potential Doctoral Students

Questions 2A, 2B – Admission

Questions 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D – Orientation and Advisement

Questions 4A, 4B – Social Interactions

Questions	Answers	
1A	When potential graduate students contact your department for information, who handles the inquiries? (Please provide the title rather than names)	Director of Graduate Programs
1B	What type of information is usually sent in response to such inquiries?	URL for departmental website; brochure on departmental graduate program; brochures on training grants
2A	Who in your department makes the decision about which applicants to admit (or to recommend for admission)? (Please provide the title rather than names).	The final decision is made by the Director of Graduate Programs after Admissions Committee members have reviewed the application and made recommendations. In some cases we will interview the student before making a decision on admission.
2B	What criteria are used in making this decision?	Grade point averages from previous degrees, grades in specific courses, GRE scores, statement of interest, research experience and reference letters.
3A	How does your department orient new students to graduate study?	The department has a 1.5-day orientation just before classes start for fall semester. The orientation covers general information about the department and program requirements as well as short research presentations from faculty. A detailed Genetics student handbook is distributed at orientation. Students also attend a half-day university orientation for new students.
3B	Who handles initial course advisement for new doctoral students, and how is that person selected?	Director of Graduate Programs (DGP). For the past twenty years the Department Head has served as the Director of Graduate Programs. If not, the Department Head would select the DGP.
3C	Describe the process by which a student selects or is assigned a dissertation chair.	Students are required to rotate through a minimum of three research programs before selecting an advisor. Following the three rotations, the student discusses the

		rotations with the Director of Graduate Programs and indicates which person they have selected for their advisor. Following this the student confirms that the faculty member is willing to accept them into their program. If so, the student then informs the other rotation advisors in person about their decision and thanks them for sponsoring them for a rotation period.
3D	Can students in your department change dissertation chairs? If so, how is that change accomplished?	Yes. The student confers with the Director of Graduate Programs about the reason for wishing to change dissertation chairs, and possible alternatives. The Director typically brokers the move to another advisor and ensures that funding for the student is available (for example, in cases where the student has been supported on the advisor's grant).
4A	Other than formal coursework, does your department offer, sponsor, or support activities designed to foster social support and/or collaborative learning among doctoral students? (E.g., study groups, student organizations, student-student mentoring programs) If so, please describe.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Our students have a very active Genetics Graduate Student Association (GGSA). The co-Presidents of the GGSA interact with the Director of Graduate Programs and also attend faculty meetings as student representatives.</li> <li>2. Students are given an opportunity to serve on all standing departmental committees as well as special task forces.</li> <li>3. The graduate students sponsor and organize a yearly research symposium - the 29th annual symposium was held in February 2005.</li> <li>4. All students are required to take a professionalism and ethics course in their first semester, and we now also offer a second professional development course that emphasizes written and oral communication.</li> <li>5. Students are given opportunities to meet with every departmental seminar speaker and invite their own speakers. Students also participate in journal clubs that are</li> </ol>

		<p>run by faculty or involve only students.</p> <p>6. At the request of the Director of Graduate Programs, our students recently development an instrument for assessment of the departmental teaching experience.</p>
4B	<p>Does your department hold regular social activities in which students can interact informally with faculty members and other students? If so, please describe</p>	<p>Yes. We typically have six major departmental social events during the academic year which students, staff, postdocs and faculty attend: 1) a "kick off the fall semester" party at the department head's home in August; 2) a fall party at a faculty member's home (usually October), 3) a winter holiday potluck party in the department (December), 4) a lunch and party associated with the annual student symposium (February), 5) a party associated with new student recruitment at a student home (February or March), and 5) a spring party either in the department or at a local establishment. In addition to these there are outings to sports events (professional ice hockey games and Triple A league baseball games) each fall and spring semester organized by the social committee and a standing get-together the third Friday of every month after work at a local establishment. Students also organize their own social events through the Genetics Graduate Student Association.</p>