

# College of Biological Sciences Graduate Programs

## Academic Probation and Suspension/Discontinuation

Each University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences (CBS) graduate program must maintain the milestones and academic standards that graduate students in that program must meet in order to remain in good academic standing. These milestones and standards must be detailed in each program's graduate student handbook. At a minimum, in CBS graduate programs, academic standards include completing required and elective coursework with at least a 3.0 GPA and according to the program's timeline, identifying an advisor according to the program's timeline, passing written and oral preliminary examinations according to the program's timeline, and meeting expectations for research progress and actively working on research in the lab/field.

Students must meet their graduate program's milestones and academic standards in order to remain in good standing as a student in the program. In addition, students must meet the University of Minnesota expectations for performance standards and progress in a [master's degree](#) or [doctoral degree](#) program.

### **If a student fails to remain in good academic standing:**

- Notify the student in writing, specifying the issues; reiterating the graduate program, CBS, and University expectations for meeting milestones and for performance standards and progress; and detailing the specific milestones and standards not met.
  - Ideally, the student will be notified in writing at several points, so that they are aware of concerns regarding their progress and performance in the program. Programs should be vigilant about maintaining records of all communications with students regarding their progress and any concerns regarding their progress.
- Provide at least one semester for the student to rectify the issues, outlining specific steps they must take, with regular deadlines and meetings with the advisor and director of graduate studies during the semester.
- Use the scholarly work agreement template to detail the plans for addressing the issues and concerns, including clear benchmarks and deadlines. The scholarly work agreement must be signed by the student, advisor, director of graduate studies, and CBS associate dean for graduate students and postdocs, and submitted to the College of Biological Sciences graduate programs college coordinator. The student should be actively involved in developing the scholarly work agreement.
- Ensure that the scholarly work agreement clearly informs the student that they must meet the stipulations in the scholarly work agreement in order to continue in the

graduate program or to continue in their current degree objective (i.e., switching to the master's track might be acceptable for some doctoral students).

- During this period, the student may not drop any course or withdraw from the university without the approval of their graduate advisor and the graduate program.
- Progress on the requirements stipulated in the scholarly work agreement must be documented, using the table in the scholarly work agreement.
- At the conclusion of the semester, the advisor, director of graduate studies, and CBS associate dean for graduate students meet to reassess the milestones stipulated in the scholarly work agreement.
- If the student has not met the terms of the scholarly work agreement:
  1. Allow more time for the student to meet, as warranted, and document a plan by adding new to the scholarly work agreement;  
OR
  2. Place the student on academic probation, notifying them of this in writing.
- While on academic probation, the student:
  1. is not permitted to re-enroll (a registration hold will be placed on their account), and
  2. will either be advised to take a leave of absence, suspended/discontinued from the program, or advised to switch to a master's track within the graduate program.
- Inform the student in writing of the next steps.

## **Next steps options**

### **1. Leave of absence**

#### **Eligibility**

A leave of absence may be appropriate for the following reasons:

- Physical or mental health concerns
- Family obligations (birth or adoption of a child, caretaking responsibilities, etc.)
- Financial concerns
- Military service (see [military leave](#))
- Academic reasons (reconsidering degree objective, academic struggles, etc.)
- Career opportunities

#### **Not eligible**

Students are not eligible for a leave of absence if any of the following are true:

- It is their first term at the University. (LOA not allowed in first semester. Instead change term of admission to a later term.)
- They are currently on academic suspension.
- They do not intend to return to the University (see [withdraw](#)).
- They are admitted or plan to enroll in a degree program at another institution.

## **2. Suspension/Discontinuation**

A student will be suspended/discontinued if at the end of the scholarly work agreement term (semester), their cumulative GPA is below 3.000, or the conditions of their scholarly work agreement are not fulfilled.

The DGS and CBS associate dean for graduate students and postdocs will write a suspension/discontinuation letter to the student, outlining the grounds for suspension/discontinuation, and send this to the student, copying their advisor and the CBS graduate programs college coordinator.

### **Consequences**

When suspended/discontinued, a student is no longer in their academic program and cannot register for courses at any University of Minnesota campus.

### **Appealing suspension/discontinuation**

A student may appeal suspension/discontinuation decisions in writing by following the CBS Graduate Programs Appeals Process for Suspension/Discontinuation.

## **Re-admission and returning to the University**

A student's re-admission to the University and their CBS graduate program will not be automatic. They must be able to demonstrate that they can succeed within their academic program or that the circumstances causing their academic hardship have changed.

- Prior to re-admission, the student must develop a new scholarly work agreement in conjunction with their advisor and director of graduate studies, detailing specific milestones and deadlines that must be met in order to remain in the program.
- This re-admission scholarly work agreement must be approved by the CBS associate dean for graduate students and postdocs and submitted to the College of Biological Sciences graduate programs college coordinator.
- This re-admission scholarly work agreement must include a final deadline for meeting all scholarly work agreement requirements.
- If the student has not met the terms of the re-admission scholarly work agreement by this final deadline, the student will be suspended/discontinued from the program with no option for appeal or re-admission.

## **Misconduct**

If a student is found, after an investigation by the University, to be in violation of academic, scholarly, or research integrity or guilty of interpersonal or sexual misconduct, a student will be suspended/discontinued from their CBS graduate program and from the University.

The DGS and CBS associate dean for graduate students and postdocs will write a suspension/discontinuation letter to the student, outlining the grounds for suspension/discontinuation, and send this to the student, copying their advisor and the CBS graduate programs college coordinator.