

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

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This document defines the governance of the two graduate degree programs of the Federated Department of Biological Sciences of Rutgers-Newark (RU-N) and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Biology, and the Masters of Sciences (M.S.) in Biology. Graduate Faculty status and rights are defined in a separate document, as are the guidelines for student progression, admissions and academic requirements.

1. Program Directors

All program procedures and committees are overseen by two Graduate Program Directors, one from RU-N and one from NJIT. They are appointed according to their respective department by-laws.

The responsibilities of the Program Directors include the following:

- Tracking student progress.
- Maintaining a database of student and funding information.
- Maintaining all documents defining program governance and timelines.
- Overseeing and guiding all matters related to student advising, recruitment and admissions, and curriculum review.
- Soliciting qualified Graduate Faculty volunteers to appoint to the Recruitment and Standards Committees or as M.S. Program Coordinators, in consultation with the Department Chairs.
- Appointing Graduate Faculty volunteers to *ad hoc* committees, including Qualifying Exam Committees, Dissertation Committees, and committees for specific program matters.
- Calling and chairing regular Graduate Faculty meetings, and soliciting online votes.
- Assisting the Chairs with course scheduling and the assignment of Teaching Assistant duties.
- Assisting in any efforts to secure extramural funding to support the mission of the programs.
- Reporting program performance and all other matters related to the program to the Graduate Faculty and the appropriate university entities.

Each Director will serve as the liaison to the respective university entities. At NJIT, these are the Office of Graduate Studies and its Vice Provost, the NJIT Committee on Graduate Education, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Research at the College of Science and Liberal Arts. At RU-N, these are the Deans of the Graduate School, and members of the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, Newark (FASN).

The Directors will make executive decisions based on policies approved by the Graduate Faculty. Policy changes shall require a vote by the Graduate Faculty, and the Directors shall make every effort to recognize when matters require a vote. If there is persistent disagreement between the Directors about matters that do not in themselves warrant external input, conflicts shall be resolved by the Graduate Faculty.

If deemed necessary and justified to the Graduate Faculty, the Directors can serve on any of the committees they oversee.

2. Graduate Faculty Meetings and Voting Procedures

The Directors will call regular Graduate Faculty meetings to discuss all ongoing matters, typically two per semester. Meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. Quorum is the presence of a majority of Graduate Faculty with voting rights. Simple majority of the voting faculty present decides all votes. Non-voting Graduate Faculty Members and Student Representatives are invited to attend and can contribute to discussions. However, they may be asked to leave the room if sensitive matters need to be discussed, for example pertaining to specific students or faculty members. The Directors will distribute the minutes of the meetings for approval by email before the next meeting. Approved minutes will also be available to Associate and Affiliate Members and all graduate students, with sensitive matters redacted as necessary.

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For agenda items that the Directors expect to be non-controversial, they may solicit votes per email or through online forms. They will set a reasonable time period to solicit feedback and amendments. During that period, questions and minor concerns can be discussed by email, but if it transpires that a more in-depth discussion is needed, the Directors shall forego soliciting online votes and move the item to the next meeting agenda. In addition, any Full Member can move to postpone discussion and voting until the next Graduate Faculty meeting. If seconded, this will automatically move the item onto the next meeting agenda. After the discussion period, the Directors will set a reasonable time period to solicit votes. If the majority of the Full Members votes by the deadline, the vote will be recorded as an appendix to the last Graduate Faculty meeting minutes.

3. Executive Committee

As defined elsewhere, matters that pertain to effort and funds assignments are the prerogative of the Department Chairs. They make the final decision about applicant admission with TA funding, and make teaching assignments for TAs and faculty. They also have to approve membership on standing committees of faculty nominated by the Program Directors. As these decisions require coordination with the Graduate Directors, the Program Directors and Department Chairs shall meet regularly as the Executive Committee to discuss such matters.

4. M.S. Program

4.1. M.S. Program Coordinators

Minimally two Graduate Faculty members serve as M.S. Program Coordinators, one from NJIT and one from RU-N. The directors shall solicit qualified Graduate Faculty member volunteers and appoint them in consultation with the Chairs. The M.S. Program Coordinators help to properly advertise and promote the program. They advise M.S. Students in their course work and in selecting potential mentors for the thesis work, and track their progress. Whenever helpful or necessary, the M.S. Program Coordinators from both universities should coordinate their activities. However, primary advisory function is limited to students enrolled at the university that employs each coordinator. M.S. Program Coordinators report to the Program Director at their university and, when called upon by the Directors, to the Graduate Faculty. They can be asked to substitute for the Program Directors in their roles as liaisons to respective university entities.

4.2. M.S. Thesis Committees

The M.S. Program Coordinators approve M.S. Thesis Committees, in accordance with prerequisites and procedures established in the specific M.S. Program guidelines for student progression.

5. Ph.D. Program Committees

5.1. Standing Program Committees

For Standing Committees, the directors shall solicit qualified Graduate Faculty volunteers and appoint them in consultation with the Chairs.

5.1.1. Recruitment Committee

The committee shall consist of two Graduate Faculty members from NJIT, and two from RU-N. All three program tracks shall be represented. The Recruitment Committee works with the Program Directors to properly advertise the program. It vets and ranks the applications of prospective students and organizes both remote and on-campus student interviews. It does so in consultation with the Graduate Faculty, particularly members in whose work applicants have declared a special interest. To solicit feedback, the Recruitment Committee makes all application materials available to all Graduate Faculty members and collects evaluations from Graduate Faculty members who conducted applicant interviews. It coordinates with the Student Leadership to involve students in the applicant campus visits and collects their feedback. Finally, the Recruitment Committee submits its recommendations to the Executive Committee.

5.1.2. Standards Committee

The committee shall consist of three Graduate Faculty members, representing the two universities and the three different program tracks. The Standards Committee advises students and tracks their progress from the time of admission to the

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completion of the Qualifying Exam, with the goal of helping them to succeed. The Standards Committee meets with students each semester to evaluate coursework and research progress, and to provide advisement on course selections, first-semester mentoring, laboratory rotations, and identifying potential Dissertation Advisors. It shall make every effort to coordinate advising with the Mentoring Semester Advisors, Rotation Advisors, and prospective Dissertation Advisors.

5.2. Ad hoc Program Committees

The Program Directors appoint Graduate Faculty volunteers to serve on *ad hoc* committees such as Qualifying Exam Committees, Dissertation Committees, and committees for specific program matters.

5.2.1. Qualifying Exam Committees

The Program Directors appoint Graduate Faculty volunteers to serve on the Qualifying Exam Committees, based on the relevant expertise for each student's proposal. Committee makeup, charges, and function follow the prerequisites and procedures established in the Ph.D. Program guidelines for student progression.

5.2.2. Dissertation Committees

The Program Directors approve Dissertation Committees nominated by the Ph.D. Student. Committee makeup, charges, and function are in accordance with general rules at either university and follow the prerequisites and procedures established in the Ph.D. Program guidelines for student progression.

6. Curriculum

There shall be no standing curriculum committee. Instead, each program's and track's constituent Graduate Faculty shall periodically review the curricula. Changes to the core requirements of any track, or of the program as a whole, need approval by the Graduate Faculty with Full Member status. New courses (with unique course numbers) need Department Chair and Program Director approval, as well as approval from the University Committee on Graduate Education (NJIT) or the FASN and/or Graduate School followed by the Area Committee and Executive Council (RU-N). As all new course approvals require a written rationale of why the course is needed and how it fits into the program, that information should be shared by email with the whole Graduate Faculty to solicit feedback before submission to the university committees. Special Topics Courses (without a unique course number) only need approval by the Department Chair at the university they will be offered at. However, as a courtesy, the courses should be announced by email to the whole Graduate Faculty, and their syllabi shared.

7. Student Representatives

The Graduate Students are encouraged to elect representatives for various functions, including students who serve as liaisons to the Program Directors and attend Graduate Faculty meetings. In addition, student representatives should organize the colloquium series, and serve as social coordinators for department and student events. All student representatives shall meet regularly with the Directors, minimally once per semester.

8. Program Assessment

The Directors will provide a written annual report to the Graduate Faculty and students, detailing program performance statistics and other matters, typically during the Fall Semester. Additional assessment activities may be carried out as required by the higher administrations of either RU-N or NJIT.

The student representatives shall conduct an annual survey (typically in the Fall) to solicit an evaluation of the programs from the student body. The outcomes shall be presented at a Graduate Faculty meeting, typically in the Spring.

9. Academic Integrity and Scholarly Ethics

All students, faculty and staff associated with the Graduate Programs in Biology are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and scholarly ethics. As a guide to academic integrity and scholarly ethics please refer to the following sites:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

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<http://erm.rutgers.edu/departments/rutgersEthics.html>

<http://www.njit.edu/doss/code-Student-conduct-article-11-university-policy-academic-integrity/>

<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>