

**DEPARTMENT OF
VETERINARY PATHOBIOLOGY
GRADUATE STUDIES
HANDBOOK**

2015-2016

<http://vetmed.tamu.edu/vtpb>



**VETERINARY MEDICINE
& BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**
TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY

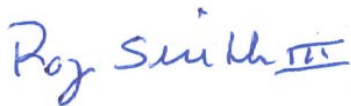
HOWDY!

We welcome you to the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology graduate program in the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University. We are pleased and proud that you chose our program in which to pursue your graduate education.

We hope that your experience here will be rewarding. We endeavor to provide a welcoming and friendly educational environment. Our doors are always open, so please feel free to drop by any time if you have questions, need assistance, or would just like to chat!

We look forward to meeting you.

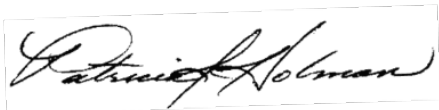
Sincerely,



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DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY PATHOBIOLOGY

The Department of Veterinary Pathobiology (VTPB) is located within the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University.

Address for GPS:

408 Raymond Stotzer Pkwy
College Station 77845

VTPB Main Office (979) 845-5941
<http://vetmed.tamu.edu/vtpb>

VTPB Main Office Enter here and turn right down hallway with portraits. Continue through atrium into adjoining building. Turn to right, then to left and continue to the end of the building to **VMS Room 119**.



We are here!

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY PATHOBIOLOGY

GRADUATE PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The Department of Veterinary Pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University (TAMU) offers programs of graduate instruction and research leading to the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Science (Thesis and Non-Thesis options). In addition, Doctor of Philosophy degrees are offered through interdisciplinary programs, such as Genetics, Toxicology, and Neuroscience. It is expected that the successful applicant to our programs will have a strong background in biology and/or veterinary medicine.

Pathobiology encompasses all the disciplines associated with human and animal disease processes. The Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences or the PhD in Veterinary Pathobiology may be earned in the core disciplines of pathology (clinical or anatomical and primarily geared toward those applicants holding DVM degrees) or microbiology (bacteriology, virology and parasitology), as well as in cell biology, genetics, immunology, metabolic diseases, toxicology, diagnostics and vaccine development. A Master of Science degree with a focus in laboratory animal medicine is also offered, during which students gain practical hands-on experience in the Comparative Medicine Program. Although geared mainly towards the DVM residency program in Comparative Medicine, other applicants interested in laboratory animal medicine are welcome to apply.

The Department's large and diverse faculty allows for an interdisciplinary approach to graduate training. Departmental research strengths include the host/pathogen interface in infectious diseases, cardiovascular disease research, molecular genetics, genomics, metabolic disease, cell biology, neuroscience, vaccine development, avian/wildlife disease and conservation. The department's clinical diagnostic support services and residency programs in anatomic pathology, clinical pathology, comparative medicine, and clinical microbiology provide the opportunity for students to address clinically relevant problems and to identify and develop new animal models of disease. Students enroll in core and targeted courses and participate in laboratory rotations, seminars, and journal clubs. The program is structured but with flexibility to allow tailoring to the needs of the individual student. The overriding goal is that upon completion of the program, the student will have developed the skill set that facilitates successful integration into the scientific community.

A major strength of the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology lies in the number of diverse, yet overlapping, research programs. Members of the Graduate Faculty are often associated with more than one program, such as joint appointments or via the interdisciplinary programs. Additional information on the Department may be found at our website at <http://vetmed.tamu.edu/vtpb>.

Financial Information

The below figures are based upon 2015/2016 enrollment and are subject to change for later academic years. Full-time student status in graduate programs in the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology **requires** enrollment in a minimum of 9 credit hours in the Fall and Spring semesters, and 6 credit hours in the Summer term.

2015-2016 - Graduate Fall and Spring Costs

<i>Scroll Table Left and Right</i>		
	Resident*	Non-Resident*
Tuition & Fees	\$6,726	\$13,872
Loan Fees	146	146
Room & Board	10,950	10,950
Books & Supplies	1,066	1,066
Travel	622	1,150
Personal Expenses	2,574	2,574
Total	\$22,084	\$29,758

*Amounts are based on 9 credit hours per semester at Texas A&M University, College Station. Cost varies by academic college. Detailed information regarding tuition and fees at Texas A&M University is available from [Student Business Services](#). Federal, state and institutional aid cannot exceed this cost.

- **International Students**

Incoming international students should anticipate additional first time fees when beginning their graduate program, estimated at \$750-\$1500 (these are **approximations and are subject to variation**).

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Program Description

The PhD in Veterinary Pathobiology degree requires completion of 96 credit hours post-baccalaureate or 64 credit hours post-DVM from an AVMA accredited program or post-Master of Science (with thesis), and completion of a research project and dissertation. The time required to qualify for the PhD varies with the ability, academic preparation and background of the student, and with the particular program.

The student is mentored during his/her graduate program by an advisory committee composed of the student's major professor (chair of the committee) and at least three other members of the graduate faculty, one of whom must be from outside the Department (a faculty member with a joint appointment with another department may qualify as the "outside" member). Generally the major professor will most closely mentor the student and the student's research will be conducted in the major professor's laboratory.

The VTPB PhD degree program is designed to give the student a thorough and comprehensive knowledge base in his/her discipline and training in methods of research, culminating in a dissertation. The degree plan includes 5 credit hours of required didactic core coursework. Additional coursework that will be included in an individual student's program is decided by the student and the student's advisory committee in accordance with the Departmental guidelines described below. Additional coursework may be required by the student's graduate committee/Department or requested by the student depending on the student's academic background.

Degree Plan Coursework Requirements (64 credit hours/96 credit hours)

- 1) 5-credit hours of requisite coursework for all students
 - a. VMID 686 Scientific Ethics, 1 credit hour. Taught in Spring semester of even-numbered years [i.e., 2016]
 - b. VTMI 681 Seminar (1 credit hour)
 - c. Statistics or Bioinformatics (STAT 651 or equivalent, 3 credit hours)
- 2) 9-credit hours (minimum) graded graduate coursework within discipline
- 3) 3-credit hours (minimum) of graded graduate coursework outside of discipline
- 4) Additional 600-level coursework as determined by student, committee and/or Department (a limited number of 300- or 400-level courses may be allowed)

Additional Requirements

- 1) Preliminary exam upon completion of coursework (see pages 19-20)
 - a. Schedule 2½ years (30 months) after beginning program.
 - b. Only in exceptional cases will the time period be extended.
- 2) Attend departmental seminar, 11:30 a.m. Tuesday each week as announced.
- 3) Hold annual committee meeting in January-March of the Spring semester that must include:
 - a. Formal Power Point presentation of research project accomplishments to committee
 - b. Completed Annual Evaluation Form (Appendix I), signed by student, mentor, and committee. The original signed copy is placed in the student's file in the departmental graduate coordinator's office.
 - c. Optional - Additional committee meetings may be held at the discretion of the student and/or mentor.
- 4) Fulfill dissertation research requirements
 - a. All necessary research compliance training and documentation must be completed prior to beginning bench work that involves infectious agents, blood, humans, samples from humans, animals, samples from animals, or recombinant DNA. This may include training in:
 - i. Institutional Biosafety
 - ii. Blood Borne Pathogens
 - iii. Occupational Health
 - iv. Animal Use Protocols
 - v. Laboratory Safety
 - b. Research proposal and research compliance approvals (page 18)
 - c. Conduct research
 - d. Write dissertation
 - e. Defend dissertation
- 5) Show proof of acceptance of 2 manuscripts from dissertation research for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals by graduation (see page 14 for authorship requirements)
- 6) Give VTPB research exit seminar (may be in parallel with dissertation defense)

See page 12 for VTPB Scholastic requirements

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

Students in the Interdisciplinary PhD programs whose committee chair is a member of the VTPB faculty are obligated to comply with the VTPB requirements listed below to be eligible for awards or financial assistance from the Department.

- 1) Attend weekly VTPB departmental seminar (waivers may be granted on an individual basis by the Department during semesters in which the student is enrolled in program-specific seminar)
- 2) Hold annual committee meeting in the Spring semester (Jan-March) in which the following are accomplished:
 - a. Formal Power Point presentation of research project accomplishments to committee during the annual meeting
 - b. Complete Annual Evaluation Form (see forms in appendix), signed by student, mentor, and committee. The original signed copy is turned in to the Graduate Program Coordinator before the end of the Spring semester (Note – the Department will accept a copy of the forms required by the interdisciplinary program in lieu of the VTPB forms)
- 3) Present research seminar to the Department at the end of program.

See page 12 for VTPB Scholastic requirements.

MASTER OF SCIENCE

The Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences degree is offered as either a Thesis Option or Non-Thesis Option program. The Master of Science with a focus on laboratory animal medicine is offered as Thesis Option only through the Comparative Medicine Program.

Biomedical Sciences – Thesis Option

Programs leading to the Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences are tailored to the individual needs of each student. The student develops his/her degree program and requirements in consultation with his/her major professor and graduate advisory committee and may develop a program in any of the research focus areas of the Department. The Thesis Option Master of Science degree requires completion of 32 credit hours and completion of a research project and thesis. The time required to qualify for the Master of Science degree varies with the ability, academic preparation and background of the student, and with the particular program. In general terms, the program is a minimum of 2 years of study, with a maximum of 7 set by Texas A&M University.

Coursework Requirements

The Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences-Thesis Option coursework (see **Degree Plan for MS – Thesis Option** below) includes 5-credit hours of requisite coursework as listed below and the balance tailored to the individual needs of the student. Training in biochemistry is strongly encouraged.

- VMID 686 Scientific Ethics, 1 credit hour. Taught in Spring semester of even-numbered years [i.e.; 2016]
- VTMI 681 Seminar (1 credit hour)
- Statistics in Research (STAT 651, 3 credit hours), or other Statistics or Bioinformatics course as recommended by the student's advisory committee.

Additional Requirements

1. Attend weekly departmental seminar (register in VTMI 681 Seminar for credit for exit seminar the semester graduation is anticipated)
2. Hold annual committee meeting in January to March of each Spring semester
 - a. Formal Power Point presentation of research project accomplishments by the student to committee at the annual meeting
 - b. Annual Evaluation Form must be filled out by student, mentor, and committee complete (see forms in appendix) and signed. The original signed copy is placed in the student's file in the departmental graduate coordinator's office.
 - c. Optional - Additional meetings may be held at the request of the student and/or mentor.
3. Fulfill thesis research requirements
 - a. Gain appropriate Research Compliance and Biosafety (RCB) approval for your proposed research project
 - b. Write and submit research proposal including compliance certifications
 - c. Conduct research project
 - d. Write thesis
4. Submit at least one first-author paper based on research completed during Master of Science program to a peer-reviewed scientific journal
5. Present exit research seminar to the Department at the end of program.
6. Defend thesis research
7. Submit final copy of thesis to Texas A&M University Thesis Office

Degree Plan Guidelines for MS – Thesis Option (32 credit hours)

- 1) At least 18 credit hours 600-level didactic coursework
 - a. A maximum of 6 credit hours 300- or 400-level coursework may be substituted on the recommendation of the student's graduate committee
 - b. Registration for undergraduate coursework requires permission of the Department Head and the CVM Office of Research and Graduate Studies.
- 2) No more than 12 credit hours total in any combination of the following categories:
 - a. No more than 8 hours of 691 Research and/or 684 Professional Internship combined
 - b. No more than 8 hours of 685 Directed Studies
 - c. No more than 3 hours of 690 Theory of Research
 - d. No more than 3 hours of 695 Frontiers in Research
- 3) A maximum of 2 hours of Seminar (681). **VTPB requires 1 credit hour in VTMI 681 Seminar in the last semester to present the exit seminar covering the MS research project.**
- 4) No credit by correspondence courses, continuing education courses, or extension courses.
- 5) Optional
 - a. Up to 3 credit hours may be applied to the degree for graduate coursework at another institution for 3 weeks' duration or less, at 15 contact hours/week (see TAMU Graduate Catalog for specifics).
 - b. Transfer graduate credit from another university may be allowed, up to 10 hours (certain restrictions apply, see TAMU Graduate Catalog for specifics). **See page 12 for VTPB Scholastic requirements.**

Biomedical Sciences – Non-Thesis Option

The non-thesis Master of Science degree program requires a minimum of 36 semester credit hours. The specific coursework undertaken by the student is determined by departmental requirements and the student's advisory committee. The student must successfully complete all assigned coursework and pass a final comprehensive examination in order to obtain their degree (**see page 12 for VTPB Scholastic requirements**).

- Non-stipend, non-fellowship program.
- No research project requirement for this program.

Degree Plan for MS – Non-Thesis Option (36 credit hours)

1. At least 20 hours 600-level didactic coursework
 - a. A limited number of 300- or 400-level coursework credits (TAMU allows up to 9 credit hours) may be substituted on the recommendation of the student's graduate committee

- b. Registration for undergraduate coursework requires permission of the Department Head and the CVM Office of Research and Graduate Studies.
2. Combined credit-hours of a-d below cannot exceed 25% of the total credit hour requirement (9 credit hours).
 - a. No more than 2-credit hours of 684 Professional Internship
 - b. No more than 8 hours of 685 Directed Studies
 - c. No more than 3 hours of 690 Theory of Research
 - d. No more than 3 hours of 695 Frontiers in Research
 - e. No 691 (research) credits may be used.
3. A maximum of 2 credit hours of Seminar (681).
4. No credit is allowed by correspondence courses, continuing education courses, or extension courses.
5. Optional (see TAMU Graduate Catalog for specifics).
 - a. Limited credit hours may be applied to the degree for graduate coursework at another institution
 - b. Transfer graduate credit from another university may be allowed, up to 12 hours or 1/3 of the total hours of the degree plan

Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences -Thesis Option with a focus in Laboratory Animal Medicine

Coursework Requirements

1. 12-credit hours of requisite coursework for all students
 - a. VPAT 601 Comparative Pathology/Animal Models (credit 4)
 - b. VPAT 653 Diseases of Laboratory Animals (credit 3)
 - c. STAT 651 Statistics in Research I (credit 3)
 - d. VTMI 681 Seminar (credit 1)
 - e. VMID 686 Scientific Ethics (credit 1)
2. Additional credit hours to total 32
 - a. Didactic coursework electives
 - b. No more than 12 credit hours total in any combination of the following:
 - No more than 8 hours of 691 Research and/or 684 Professional Internship combined
 - No more than 8 hours of 685 Directed Studies
 - No more than 3 hours of 690 Theory of Research
 - No more than 3 hours of 695 Frontiers in Research

For **further details** to satisfy the degree requirements, see page 8 Biomedical Sciences-Thesis Option.

See page 12 for VTPB Scholastic requirements.

VTPB POST BACCALAUREATE NON-DEGREE SEEKING CLASSIFICATION (G6)

Post baccalaureate non-degree seeking classification may be sought by students with a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education who desire advanced training but do not desire to seek a degree or may lack the academic background to qualify for the VTPB graduate programs. In order to be considered for admission as a G6, the applicant must be sponsored by a faculty member who agrees to mentor the student. The Admission process is as described above for graduate programs in VTPB.

The progress of the post baccalaureate non-degree seeking student is reviewed by his/her mentor and by the Department at the end of each semester. The student must maintain **at least a 3.000 grade point average (GPA) on all coursework attempted** to remain eligible to register. Maintaining a 3.000 GPA does not guarantee admission to the graduate program. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Admission to post baccalaureate non-degree status does not establish eligibility for admission to degree-seeking status. If subsequent admission into the Department's graduate degree program is granted, a **maximum of 12 credit hours** earned in G6 status may be applied to the student's degree plan, at the discretion of the Department and the student's graduate advisory committee.

Academic Requirements for Students in G6 Status

The Department of Veterinary Pathobiology requires, at a minimum, 9 credit hours of rigorous coursework with earned grades of B or A completed in one semester to qualify the student to be considered for admission to a degree-seeking program. The stipulations are decided on a case by case basis and may be more stringent. For G6 students in probationary status (those entering G6 status with GPA less than 3.0), Departmental approval of the proposed coursework prior to registration is required. Post baccalaureate non-degree status normally is not available to international students due to visa restrictions.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Thesis- or Dissertation-Based Programs

The following requirements must be met to qualify for an advanced degree from the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology. All students must agree to abide by these requirements and are required to sign an agreement at the onset of their graduate program (**see forms in appendix**).

I. VTPB Scholastic Requirements

- 1) A grade point ratio (GPA) of 3.0 must be maintained on all 300- and 400-level undergraduate and all 600-level coursework completed at TAMU and eligible to be applied toward a graduate degree, whether or not it is on the degree plan.

- a) S/U grading is not allowed for 300/400 level coursework on the degree plan.
- b) Graduate coursework not on the degree plan may be taken S/U.
- c) Graduate courses 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, and 695 are graded S/U only.
- 2) Only grades of A, B, and S are acceptable for graduate degree plan credit**
 - a) A course MAY NOT be petitioned off a degree plan due to failure to earn a B
 - b) A C or lower grade must be absolved by repeating the course at Texas A&M University and achieving a grade of B or higher.
 - c) The original grade remains on the TAMU record, but is NOT included in the calculation of the cumulative or degree plan GPA.
- 3) A student is considered scholastically deficient if either the cumulative or degree plan GPA drops below a 3.0 (**See VTPB Probation Policy, page 21**).
 - a) A student may be dropped from the graduate program if the minimum GPA is not attained upon repeating a course at the next available offering (See website student-rules.tamu.edu for TAMU procedures for dismissal)
- 4) Continuous enrollment (Fall, Spring and Summer semesters) is required for any of the VTPB graduate programs.
- 5) Full time student status comprises 9 credit hours in both the Fall and Spring semesters and 6 hours in the Summer (generally the 10 week summer session) and is required unless otherwise stated in special circumstances.
- 6) TAMU Residence requirement
 - a) MS student must complete 9 resident credit hours during one regular semester or one 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University.
 - b) PhD (96 hour) student must complete one academic year (two long semesters or one long semester plus the ten week summer session) plus one semester in full time enrollment at TAMU.
 - c) PhD (64 hour) student must complete one academic year in full time enrollment at TAMU.

II. Annual Committee Meeting Requirement (see required form in Appendix)

It is each student's responsibility to schedule and hold an annual committee meeting between January 1 and March 30 to keep the advisory committee abreast of his/her progress. These meetings were implemented to ensure graduation in a timely and successful manner. With the approval of the Graduate Advisor, students unable to meet with their committee during this time may schedule their meeting at an alternate time. All graduate students must meet in the first year of their program. Please be aware that failure to comply with the annual committee meeting requirement will result in a registration block.

III. Maintain Graduate Student Forms (available in appendix and online at the VTPB website under "academics").

Annual Graduate Student Evaluation Form: The top section is to be completed by the student prior to the annual committee meeting (II above). All committee members

present at the meeting are to sign and make comments as appropriate on the form. The completed, signed original form is to be filed in the VTPB graduate student office. All committee members should be in attendance. Conference call meetings or SKYPE are acceptable.

MS or PhD Graduate Student Record Form: This form contains an itemized list of all the requirements that must be met for matriculation. It is to be kept on file in the VTPB graduate student office. As each item is completed, it is to be dated and initialed by both the student and the student's committee chair. At the final thesis/dissertation defense, each of the committee members will sign the completed form to confirm that all the requirements have been met.

IV. Seminar Attendance Requirement. All students are required to attend ALL weekly departmental seminars on Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. The purpose of this requirement is to expose you to multiple disciplines and approaches outside your field. If you have a class conflict, notify the Graduate Advisor. Students are strongly encouraged to attend seminars presented by graduating students that are given outside of the regularly scheduled time and to take advantage of the many seminars presented at TAMU. See **Seminar Policy, below.**

V. Publication Requirement. To graduate with an MS, you must have one manuscript submitted to a peer-reviewed journal by graduation. An acknowledgment from the journal or a manuscript ID number must be provided as proof. To graduate with a PhD, a minimum of 2 peer-reviewed publications is required. The manuscripts must be published or accepted for publication prior to graduation. The 2 publications must be on your PhD work while enrolled in a degree-seeking program at Texas A&M University. Submission of a manuscript is not sufficient and manuscripts on research completed prior to enrollment in the VTPB PhD program do not count toward your publication requirement. You must be first author on at least one of the manuscripts and it is strongly encouraged that you be first author on both. If you are not first author on both, you must show significant intellectual and technical contribution as judged by the VTPB Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC). This is the VTPB requirement; your mentor and/or committee may require more.

VI. Give Departmental Exit Seminar (enroll in VTMI 681, 1 credit, the semester you will give your presentation). All graduate students must present a minimum of one seminar on their research. MS seminars (25 min) and PhD seminars (50 min) are given in the final semester of the program.

VII. Meet All Texas A&M University Requirements. You **must** meet all University requirements as outlined in the graduate catalog and summarized above (pages 12-14). A full-time graduate student receiving support must enroll in 9 credit hours per semester. A maximum 12 hours is allowable for Fall and Spring semesters based on Office of Graduate and Professional Studies rules.

VTPB SEMINAR POLICY

1. Attendance at the weekly VTPB departmental seminar (at present scheduled at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday) is mandatory for all VTPB graduate students and all VTPB supported Teaching Assistants, regardless of their departmental affiliation.
2. All VTPB graduate students are required to enroll in VTMI 681 Seminar for the final semester of their program and give an exit seminar on their graduate research project.
3. Students may substitute another seminar for a VTPB seminar for no more than 2 per semester at their committee chair's discretion.
4. Interdisciplinary students are exempt only during semesters that they are officially enrolled in another seminar course.
5. DVM residents are expected to attend, unless exempted as deemed appropriate by their supervisor.
6. Excused absences may include:
 - a. Classes that meet at the same time as seminar
 - b. Medical reasons that meet university criteria for excused absences
 - c. Attendance at scientific conferences
7. Three unexcused absences will be allowed each academic year.
8. Failure to comply will result in a registration block being placed on the student. In order for the block to be lifted, the student, the student's committee chair, and the VTPB Graduate Advisory Committee will meet to determine appropriate action to be taken.

A QUICK PRIMER FOR HOW TO GET THROUGH

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Know the specific degree requirements set by the University, the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, and the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology.
- Familiarize yourself with the Texas A&M University Student Rules (online at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>).
- Enroll in the appropriate classes to fulfill the coursework requirements on the approved degree plan.
- Maintain the appropriate standard, academic, ethical, and in bench science, to continue in graduate studies.

Residence Requirement

It is expected that a graduate student will “devote most of his/her time and energy to graduate studies under the direction of the major professor and the advisory committee” (Texas A&M University Graduate Catalog).

The residence requirements for graduate degrees are intended “to ensure that the student has an opportunity to benefit from the advantages of a university environment. These advantages include accessibility of library, laboratory and other physical facilities, and also the opportunity to participate in seminars and a variety of cultural activities. Equally important to the graduate student are the advantages of becoming acquainted with the faculty and other students on a personal and a professional basis.” In addition, this ensures “that the faculty have the opportunity to properly evaluate the student and his or her development to guide and direct his/her studies and to determine competency” (Texas A&M University Graduate Catalog).

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

Students in the MS program must complete 9 credit hours during one regular semester to satisfy the residence requirement.

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Students who enter the doctoral degree programs with baccalaureate degrees must spend two academic years in resident study on the main campus at College Station. Students who hold Master's degrees when they enter doctoral degree programs must spend one (1) academic year in resident study on the Main Campus. In either case, one (1) academic year beyond the first year of graduate study must be in continuous residence on the Main Campus of Texas A&M University at College Station. One academic year may include two (2) adjacent regular semesters or one (1) regular semester and one (1) adjacent 10-week summer session. To satisfy the continuous residence requirement, the student must complete a minimum of nine (9) credit hours per semester or 10-week summer session for the required period.

Degree Plan Submission and Approval

1. In your first semester of study decide on the members of your advisory committee in consultation with your mentor. At least one member must be from outside the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology (faculty with joint appointments may qualify as the “outside member” unless serving as chair). MS committees must have at least 3 members, including your mentor who will serve as the Chair of your committee. PhD committees must have at least 4 members, including your mentor who will serve as the Chair of your committee.
 - a. All Chairs or Members must be on the TAMU Graduate Committee Faculty.

- b. A Members list is found at the OGAPS website.
 - c. Faculty not on the Graduate Committee Faculty may be nominated to appointment by his/her home department or by VTPB regardless of their home department.
 - d. Non-TAMU faculty may be nominated to the Graduate Committee Faculty.
 - e. All nominees must provide personal information to TAMU Human Resources in order to obtain a UIN. Persons not assigned a UIN are not eligible to serve on the Graduate Committee Faculty.
2. After formation of your committee, meet with your committee Chair/Mentor and committee and fill out a draft degree plan (guidelines are available at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/degreePlanGuidelines.doc> or see page 7-8, 10-12 above).
3. VTPB coursework requirements include graduate level Statistics or Bioinformatics course, Scientific Ethics, and Seminar 681 (last semester of your program when you will present your exit seminar).
4. Meet with Ms. Kathie Smith in the VTPB Graduate Office (VMS 119E) or the Graduate Advisor Dr. Patricia Holman (VMA 318) to check plan for compliance to TAMU and VTPB regulations.
5. Committee members should be consulted for their approval of your final proposed degree plan before it is submitted to OGAPS.
6. Submit degree plan to OGAPS.
 - a. MS students must submit their degree plan within two long semesters of enrollment or be blocked for third semester registration
 - b. PhD students must submit their degree plan within four long semesters of enrollment or be blocked for their fifth semester registration
7. Committee members will receive notice from OGAPS that they have a degree plan to approve (the subject line says "On-line degree plan submitted")
 - a. The site address to go to: <http://ogsdpps.tamu.edu> when you receive notification.
 - b. Once there, click on "faculty" on the first page, which will take you to a log-in page.
 - c. You need to use your NEO ID and password.
 - d. This will get you to the page listing what is awaiting your approval. Click on approve or disapprove, which is at the bottom of the page after the degree plan.
 - e. The chair of the student's committee needs to approve it before the approval of other members will be allowed.
 - f. After the chair and members approve it, then the department approves it (Department Head or Graduate Advisor).
 - g. The Graduate Advisor may proxy approve for members IF AND ONLY IF contacted by the committee member and so requested.

General TAMU Information – Degree Plan

1. Degree Plan Definition – a list of courses to be applied to a particular degree.
2. The degree plan is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies via the online Automated Degree Plan Submission System.
3. Changes in the OGAPS approved degree plan may be made by petition to OGAPS.
4. Additional coursework may be required by the student's committee to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation.
5. 100- and 200-level undergraduate courses may not be used toward a graduate degree.
6. Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable (coursework may not be used to satisfy requirements for more than one degree).
7. Courses listed on the degree plan are subject to "time limits" (see above section).

Exceptions - Exceptions to the above rules may be requested by petition to the Office of Graduate Studies. Each petition will be considered on its own merit by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such petitions require the signatures of the student, all committee members, and the department head. Specific forms for petitions must be used and are found at ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentForms.htm.

Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a description of your proposed research and defines the scientific problem you will study. It should state your hypothesis and explain the rationale or approach and the methodology you will use. The proposal is basically an agreement between you and your advisory committee regarding the research expectations you must complete in order to meet the research degree requirement.

In general terms, the proposal should be organized according to NIH Grant Guidelines and should include four sections: 1) Hypothesis and specific aims, 2) background and significance, 3) experimental design and methods, and 4) literature cited. The format and length may vary depending on your advisor's instructions. It is very helpful later to take the time early to compose a complete literature review. This may then be used as part of your thesis/dissertation and that part will be done except for updating when you begin that document. Your committee should receive a double-spaced copy of your proposal so there is room to write comments and suggestions. The final copy of the proposal to be filed with the OGAPS will be a single-spaced document.

If you are conducting research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards, and recombinant DNA, you must check with the Research Compliance Division, Office of the Vice President for Research at 979-845-8585 to ensure that you have met all compliance documentation and requirements. Appropriate documentation must be submitted to OGAPS with the proposal. Additional information may also be obtained at <http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/>.

PhD Preliminary Examination

The Preliminary Examination is to satisfy the student's graduate advisory committee that the student has mastered "the subject matter of all fields in the program" and possesses an "adequate knowledge of the literature in these fields and an ability to carry out bibliographical research." The exam is given after the student is within 6 credit hours of completing all of the coursework on the degree plan.

Preliminary exams have two parts, written and oral, that must be completed in a time period of 3 weeks. The written exams are scheduled before the oral exam, with each member of the committee allowed 1-2 days for his/her part. The student should discuss the preliminary exam with the respective committee members beforehand as to format for the writtens and general expectations. An individual member may choose to waive a written exam.

The oral exam is held after completion of the written exams and is mandatory.

Guidelines for Preliminary Examination

1. The date of the exam must be no earlier than within 6 weeks of completion of all formal coursework on the degree plan.

It is strongly encouraged that the test be taken no later than the end of the semester following the completion of the formal coursework on the degree plan.

1. The examination is composed of written and oral sections unless otherwise recommended by the student's committee and approved by the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. The time span from the first written examination to the oral may be no more than 3 weeks.
3. The written part of the examination will cover all fields of study included in the student's degree plan.
 - a. Each committee member is responsible for administering a written examination in his/her particular field.
 - b. Two or more members may give joint written exams.
 - c. Written exams may be waived by individual committee members.
 - d. The written exams must be completed and reported as satisfactory to the major professor before the oral exam can be held.

The procedure for the Preliminary Examination

Two forms (found at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentExams.htm>) are needed:

1. **Checklist** completed and signed by Major Professor and Department Head (or intercollegiate faculty chair) prior to the examination.
2. **Report Form** turned in after the exam.

The steps that must be taken (<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentStepsPreliminary.htm>):

1. Establish an advisory committee and submit a degree plan to OGAPS no later than 90 days prior to the preliminary examination.
2. Complete English language proficiency requirements (if applicable) and coursework detailed on degree plan.
3. Student and chair review eligibility requirements for the preliminary exam using the "[Preliminary Examination Checklist](#)" several weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examination. MUST BE APPROVED BY MAJOR PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT.
4. Student checks availability of committee members several weeks before the proposed date of the preliminary examination.
5. Student prepares and submits any petitions found necessary by the review of the eligibility requirements AT LEAST 3 WEEKS BEFORE THE PROPOSED DATE OF THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION. Petitions must be approved by major professor, advisory committee, and department head.
6. When exam date is determined the department may announce schedule approved by major professor and department head.
7. Chair submits the [Report of the Preliminary Examination and the Preliminary Examination Checklist](#) to OGAPS within 10 working days of the scheduled oral examination and at least 14 weeks prior to the final examination date.
8. Office of Graduate Studies notifies the student and chair of any actions necessary to rectify any deficiencies following review of the submitted paperwork.

Thesis/Dissertation

The thesis or dissertation expectations should be discussed with the student's advisor and committee. Generally the student will work most closely with the advisor in writing the document. Students are strongly encouraged to work closely with the Thesis Office in order to produce a thesis/dissertation that meets the requirements of the Thesis Office.

Thesis/Dissertation Defense

The final step is your Thesis or Dissertation defense. At the time of your defense, you will present your research in a seminar, followed by an oral examination by your committee. Your seminar may be presented in conjunction with the VTPB Departmental seminar, if scheduling allows, followed by examination by your committee. Interested faculty may attend the oral examination with your permission but must excuse themselves during deliberations.

Academic Probation Policy

- 1) University regulations require that a graduate student maintain a 3.0 GPA for ALL courses taken for credit at Texas A&M University, whether or not the course is listed on the degree plan.
- 2) Students who fail to maintain a 3.0 GPA are placed on academic probation and blocked from registration by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- 3) Students on academic probation must meet the following criteria to remain in the VTPB graduate program:
 - a) Earn at least a B in all didactic coursework attempted while under probation.
 - b) Retake any courses with grades of D or F (or C if on degree plan – see page 12).
 - c) Attend all class sessions, complete all class assignments, and take all exams.
 - d) Increase their overall GPA to a 3.0 by the end of a one-year probationary period.
- 4) Students on academic probation are not eligible for stipend support by VTPB funds.

Academic Dishonesty

The Texas A&M University Aggie Code of Honor states, “An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

<http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Descriptions/Cheating> defines Academic Dishonesty as:

“A broad category that includes intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials or assistance in completing an exam or assignment.

Fabrication/Falsification - Two closely linked behaviors involving making up, modifying, or manipulating information or university documents.

Multiple Submissions - This misconduct is based on a student reusing material from an assignment in one class for another without pre-approval by the instructor.

Plagiarism - The most common type of misconduct reported to the Honor System Office, this is using someone else's intellectual content (ideas, words, pictures, etc.) with giving appropriate credit or attribution.

Complicity - Often overlooked, this is the 3rd party violation of intentionally helping or enabling someone else to commit academic misconduct.

Abuse and Misuse of Access and Unauthorized Access/Violation of Departmental or College Rules/University Rules on Research - These areas may be reported to the Honor System Office but will often involve breaking other university rules or laws and may be reported through other departments and subject to additional sanctioning.”

More information available through links at: <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Descriptions/>

VTPB Departmental Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All graduate students are expected to embrace professional integrity values. Sanctions for academic dishonesty may include a failing grade for an exam or assignment, a score of zero for the exam or assignment, dismissal from the course, assignment of F or F* for the course grade, and/or dismissal from the graduate program.

VTPB Departmental Policy on Plagiarism

- Inform and educate on first offense. Remediation may be negotiated, such as allowing the student to re-do the assignment or re-take an exam. In such cases, a reduction in the grade may be made.
- Punitive action will be taken on subsequent violation. Sanctions may range from receiving a score of zero on the assignment or exam with no remediation allowed, receiving an F* grade for the course, or dismissal from the program. Regardless of the sanction imposed, the Department will file a violation report with the Honor System Office, as per Texas A&M University policy.
- Note that the University DOES NOT differentiate between intentional and unintentional plagiarism.

Plagiarism Defined (from <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Descriptions/Plagiarism.aspx>)

“The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.”

Examples:

- Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., failing to credit author/sources used in a work product). This may be carelessly, knowingly, or intentionally.
- Using another's exact wording without indicating the information as a quote.
- Changing a few words in a sentence to disguise or hide the intent to plagiarize.
- Inadequately paraphrasing or summarizing ideas from a source in a way that still uses the original author's exact words, phrases, sentence structure, or organization of ideas without appropriate citation or quotation marks.
- Failing to cite the World Wide Web, databases and other electronic resources if they are utilized in any way as resource material in an academic exercise.
- Inadequately citing work that does not clearly indicate what ideas or words were taken from another source.
- Misrepresenting information as common knowledge when it is actually someone else's intellectual work.

Tips to Students for Avoiding a Plagiarism Violation (from <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Descriptions/Plagiarism.aspx>)

- Trust in your own work. You are at the university to learn and your instructor does not expect you to write like the premier authority on a topic.
- It is usually acceptable to seek help with writing papers from the University Writing Center or other tutoring services. Keep in mind a good tutor will point out problems with your writing but will not rewrite it for you. If someone does try to rewrite sentences or sections of a paper for you, then they may have done the same for someone else and their rewrites may show up as plagiarism.
- Understand what type of citation style you are supposed to be using.
- Save time to pre-check your turnitin.com report and make corrections if needed. Follow up on any exact matches to make sure they really are casual or common phrases, such as "In this paper." Even a 2% match can be plagiarism if the words are someone else's intellectual creation. If your instructor has not enabled you to pre-review your assignment ask for it.
- Understand what Common Knowledge really is. Just because it is widely available, such as being on the internet, does not mean it is common knowledge. Common knowledge includes generally known facts such as the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, basic historical information (e.g. George Washington was the first President of the United States.) etc., and does not have to be cited.
- Keep good notes of what sources you are consulting and any information you are actually using from different sources. Software like One Note, RefWorks, or EndNote can help you manage citations.
- All graphics, design products, and visual aids from another creator used in academic assignments must reference the source of the material.
- If you have questions or are uncertain about your understanding of plagiarism and how to cite work correctly, talk to the instructor."

Additional information on graduate student admission, financial assistance, matriculation requirements, coursework, etc. may be accessed at the following websites:

<http://vpr.tamu.edu>

http://catalog.tamu.edu/pdfs/GRAD_catalog13_14.pdf

<http://ogs.tamu.edu/>

APPENDIX

**Graduation Requirements for the
Department of Veterinary Pathobiology Graduate Program**
STUDENTS SHOULD NOT ANTICIPATE GRADUATING UNTIL REQUIREMENTS I-VI ARE MET

I. Publication Requirement

To graduate with an MS, you must have one submitted manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal. To graduate with a PhD, a minimum of 2 peer-reviewed manuscripts published or accepted for publication **prior** to graduation is required. The 2 publications **must** be on your PhD work while enrolled at Texas A&M University. Submission of a manuscript is **not** sufficient and manuscripts on research completed prior to enrollment in the VTPB PhD program **do not** count toward your publication requirement. You must be **first author** on at least one of the manuscripts and it is strongly encouraged that you be **first author on both**. If you are not first author on both, you must show significant intellectual and technical contribution as judged by the VTPB Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC).

II. Annual Committee Meeting Requirement (see required form VI below)

All graduate students are required to hold an annual committee meeting between **January 1 and March 30** to keep your committee abreast of your progress. These meetings were implemented to ensure your graduation in a timely and successful manner. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in blocking of your registration. With the approval of the Graduate Advisor, students unable to meet with their committee during this time may schedule their meeting at an alternate time. MS students must meet in the first year of enrollment. PhD students are required to first meet in their second year of enrollment; a meeting in the first year is optional.

III. Seminar Attendance Requirement.

All students are **required** to attend **ALL** weekly departmental seminars on **Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.** The purpose of this requirement is to expose you to multiple disciplines and approaches outside your field. If you have a class conflict, notify the Graduate Advisor. Students are **strongly encouraged** to attend seminars presented by graduating students that are given outside of the regularly scheduled time.

IV. Give Departmental Exit Seminar (enroll in VTMI 681 – 1 credit).

All graduate students must present a minimum of one seminar on their research. MS seminars are generally 30 min long; PhD seminars are 60 min.

V. Meet All Texas A&M University Requirements.

You **must** meet all University requirements as outlined in the graduate catalog. A full-time graduate student should enroll in 9 credit hours per semester. The maximum allowable hours for Fall and Spring semesters is 12 based on current Office of Graduate Studies rules. More than 12 hours requires special permission granted through the Dean's office of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biosciences.

VI. Maintain Graduate Student Forms (available online at the VTPB website under "academics")

Annual Graduate Student Evaluation Form: The top section is to be completed by the student prior to the annual committee meeting (II above). All committee members present at the meeting are to sign and make comments as appropriate on the form. The completed, signed form is to be filed in the VTPB graduate student office.

MS/PhD Graduate Student Record Form: This form contains an itemized list of all the requirements that must be met for matriculation. It is to be kept on file in the VTPB graduate student office. As each item is completed, it is to be dated and initialed by both the student and the student's committee chair. At the final thesis/dissertation defense, each of the committee members will sign the completed form to confirm that all the requirements have been met.

Your signature below indicates that you understand and accept the requirements of the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology Graduate Program.

Student Name Signature Date

Committee Chair Signature Date

VTPB Graduate Advisor Signature Date

Annual VTPB Graduate Student Evaluation and Progress Report

Revised 2011

This report must be completed each year (minimum requirement one committee meeting per year held between January 1 and March 30) by the student and the student's major advisor and committee members, each completing the appropriate sections. The completed, signed report will be placed in the student's permanent file in the Office of the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology (VMS 119).

Name: _____ Major: _____
Advisor: _____

Date of entry into VTPB program: _____ Date of Committee Meeting: _____

ATTACH THE FOLLOWING TO THIS FORM:

1. Written report to be completed by the Student:

- a. **Annual Effort Report for the past year.** Include coursework, research efforts, presentations, and manuscripts (submitted or published). You may include any other efforts that contribute directly to your graduate education and/or program. Submit this to your Major Advisor 2 weeks before your scheduled committee meeting.
- b. **Current CV** (including contact information).
- c. **Deterrents or Problems Affecting Progress.** Describe anything that impeded your progress during this past year (e.g. illness, class not offered, research problems, etc).
- d. **Goals and Plans for Next Year.** Thoroughly outline your goals for your graduate program for the next 12 months. Include coursework, research aims, methodology for your research aims, and any anticipated presentations or publications.

2. Formal PowerPoint presentation of research progress to be given by the Student

Committee should provide constructive critique of the presentation as well as content

3. Written report to be completed by the Major Advisor:

Assessment of Student Progress during the past year. Evaluate the student's performance over the past year based on the student's report to you and your own observations. You may affix this information as an addition to this form if needed.

a. Coursework

b. Research

Understanding the literature

Hands-on ability

Designing experiments including ability to follow-through on a line of experiments

Analyzing results

Troubleshooting

c. Writing

Laboratory notebook

Proposal

Presentation

Manuscript

4. To be completed by the Committee (attach additional pages if necessary):

a. Assessment of Student Progress: * b. Assessment of Student Plan for next year:

[] Satisfactory * [] Satisfactory
[] Unsatisfactory * [] Unsatisfactory

b. Plan of Action

c. **Plan of Action to Correct Unsatisfactory Progress.** Clearly state the expectations for the coming year and how the student must correct deficiencies. A committee meeting in 6 months as a follow-up is strongly advised.

d. **Plan of Action to Correct Unsatisfactory Plan for coming year.** Clearly state how the student must proceed in order to present a satisfactory plan. Provide a list of recommendations to the student for a satisfactory plan of work for the coming year. A committee meeting in 6 months as a follow-up is strongly advised.

4. Signatures

Committee Chair

Co-Chair or Member

Member

Member

Member

Member

I have read and understand the comments provided by my committee:

Student Signature

Student Name (please print)

UIN

Date

M.S. Graduate Student Record

Instructions: The following form is to be completed by the student and major advisor and kept in the student's file in VMS 119. It is designed to monitor the progress of the student and to ensure that all requirements are met for graduation. At the student's final defense, this completed sheet should be signed by all of the committee members to confer their agreement that all requirements for graduation have been met. **After the chair signs off on the thesis, this form should be included with the thesis for signature by the committee members and the Department Head.**

M.S. Graduate Student Record

Student Name: _____ ID # T00 _____

Major: _____

Date of acceptance / entry into VTPB PhD program: _____

Advisor: _____

Requirement	Date Completed	Initials:	
		Student	Advisor
Establish formal advisory committee and submit Degree Plan to Office of Graduate Studies (end of second term excluding summers)			
Submit research proposal to advisory committee			
Submit final, corrected research proposal to Office of Graduate Studies (at least 14 weeks prior to close of the semester in which student graduates or prior to scheduling final exam, whichever comes first)			
Required Annual Committee Meetings: Year 1			
Year 2			
Year 3			
Submit written problems or deterrents to progress to the advisory committee if fail to graduate at the end of year 3.			
Thesis in final form given to advisory committee members for editing and approval (a minimum of 2 weeks before the final defense)			
Final defense (See Office of Graduate Studies calendar for deadlines)			
Submit corrected thesis to Office of Graduate Studies with signed forms (see OGAPS calendar for deadlines)			
Give departmental seminar			
Complete peer-reviewed manuscript (can be submitted, in press or published)			
Submit current CV to VTPB and interview with Department Head or representative			
Graduate			

Signatures of Committee Members after all Requirements have been completed:

Ph.D. Graduate Student Record

Instructions: The following form is to be completed by the student and major advisor and kept in the student's file in VMS 119. It is designed to monitor the progress of the student and to ensure that all requirements are met for graduation. At the student's final defense, this completed sheet should be signed by all of the committee members to confer their agreement that all requirements for graduation have been met. **After the chair signs off on the dissertation, this form should be included when it is presented the committee members and head of Department to sign.**

Ph.D. Graduate Student Record

Student Name: _____ ID# T00 _____

Major: _____

Date of acceptance / entry into VTPB PhD program: _____

Advisor: _____

Requirement	Date Completed	Initials:	
		Student	Advisor
Lab rotations completed (if applicable)			
Establish formal advisory committee			
Submit Degree Plan to Office of Graduate Studies			
Submit research proposal to advisory committee			
Submit final research proposal to Office of Graduate Studies			
Complete preliminary examination within 1 semester of completing formal coursework except research hours (no later than 2.5 years after enrolling)			
Required Annual Committee Meetings: Year 1			
Year 2			
Year 3			
Year 4			
Year 5			
Year 6			
Submit written problems or deterrents to progress to committee if fail to graduate at the end of year 7.			
Peer-reviewed manuscript #1 accepted for publication.			
Peer-reviewed manuscript #2 accepted for publication.			
Give departmental Seminar			
Give dissertation in final form to advisory committee members for corrections and approval (a minimum of 3 weeks before the final defense)			
Final Defense			
Submit current CV to VTPB and interview with Department Head or representative			
Submit corrected dissertation to Office of Graduate Studies with signed forms (see OGAPS calendar for deadlines)			
Graduate			

Signatures of Committee Members after all Requirements are completed):
