

# UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | ENGINEERING

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Department of Biomedical Engineering

Graduate Student Handbook

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# UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | ENGINEERING

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## Department of Biomedical Engineering

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# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ENGINEERING

## Department of Biomedical Engineering

BME Department  
<http://www.egr.uh.edu/bioe/grad>  
Phone: 832-842-8813

3605 Cullen Blvd, Room 2027  
Houston, TX 77204-5060

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I welcome you to the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Houston, established in 2010. We are dedicated to building one of the most respected Biomedical Engineering programs at the University of Houston, in Texas, in the U.S. and in the world.

We will build an innovative entrepreneurship environment and healthcare focused academic curriculum to meet the demands and requirements of the ever-changing global economy that influences health care technology, management and delivery.

Our main goal is to develop leadership in academia, government, and industry nationally and globally. The importance of global scientific, social, and cultural interaction and the demands of the dynamic, ever-changing global healthcare economy have been strongly emphasized in our undergraduate and graduate programs

To achieve these goals, we are developing new three emerging academic and research fields including:

### Neural and Rehabilitation Engineering

We focus on neural implants, neurogenesis, neurochips, cognitive engineering, neural signal and image processing and modeling, and brain computer interface from hardware to experimentation.

### Biomedical Imaging

We focus on in vivo molecular and cellular imaging research with strong emphasis on the imaging of cancer biomarkers, therapy assessment, and cancer biology models etc. We also focus on clinical cardiovascular and brain imaging and develop an advanced interdisciplinary research field based on human cardiovascular and brain imaging.

### Bionano Science

We focus on gene regulatory networks, genetics of systems biology, computational biology, and infectious diseases. We also focus on innovative drug discovery and design, translational research and personalized medicine, as well as the recent advances in bionano science and engineering.

Best regards,



Metin Akay, Ph.D.  
*Founding Chair, John S Dunn Endowed Chair Professor*  
Department of Biomedical Engineering  
3605 Cullen Blvd, Room 2027  
Houston, TX 77204-5060

# UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | ENGINEERING

## Department of Biomedical Engineering

### IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Biomedical Engineering  
Main Phone: 832-842-8813  
Fax: 713-743-0226

Location:  
Science & Engineering  
Research Center  
(SERC – Building 545)  
2nd Floor

Address:  
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3605 Cullen Blvd, Room 2027  
Houston, TX 77204-5060

#### **Metin Akay, Ph.D.**

Founding Chair, John S Dunn Endowed Chair Professor  
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#### **Ting Y. Chen, Ph.D.**

Academic Advising Coordinator  
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#### **Sarah Connelly**

Graduate Advisor  
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Phone: 832-842-4568  
E-mail: [sconnell@central.uh.edu](mailto:sconnell@central.uh.edu)

**I. Registering for Classes**

- a. Before students begin their first semester in the Biomedical Engineering graduate program, it is necessary for them to attend a departmental orientation. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet staff, faculty, and other graduate students. At this orientation, students will also have time to meet with the graduate academic advisor to discuss initial course enrollment.
  - a. New students will be contacted regarding specific orientation information, including date/time/location.
- b. After the initial orientation and advising, students are able to enroll each semester through their *myUH* account at <https://accessuh.uh.edu/login.php>
  - a. If a student has questions about courses, course availability, enrollment, academic standing, etc. they should contact their faculty advisor and/or the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering.
  - b. If a student needs to add/drop a course and cannot complete the add/drop on their *myUH* account, they will need to contact the Graduate Academic Advisor.
    1. Graduate Academic Advisor- Sarah Connelly, [sconnell@central.uh.edu](mailto:sconnell@central.uh.edu), SERC Rm. 2018-A

**II. Graduate Program Information: Before students begin their program, they must choose one of the following three tracks: Neural, Cognitive, and Rehabilitation Engineering, Biomedical Imaging, or Genomics, Proteomics and Bionanoscience and Engineering.**

- a. M.S. Biomedical Engineering without Thesis
  1. The program requires the completion of a minimum of 36 credit hours of approved coursework distributed as follows:
    - a. one (1) math course
    - b. one (1) statistics course
    - c. ten (10) courses (1 core and 9 electives)
    - d. six of the nine courses are in an area of concentration
- b. M.S. Biomedical Engineering with Thesis
  1. The program requires the completion of a minimum of 30 credit hours of approved graduate work distributed as follows:
    - a. one (1) math course
    - b. one (1) statistics course
    - c. five (5) courses (1 core and 4 electives)
    - d. seminar attendance (minimum of 2 semesters)
    - e. nine (9) thesis/research credits
- c. Ph.D. Biomedical Engineering (directly from Undergraduate)
  1. The program requires a minimum of 84 credit hours of approved graduate work distributed as follows:
    - a. two (2) math courses
    - b. one (1) statistics course
    - c. nine (9) courses (all required core and the remaining electives)
    - d. forty eight (48) credit hours of research and dissertation
    - e. seminar attendance (at least one semester per academic year)
- d. Ph.D. Biomedical Engineering (with prior M.S.)

1. The program requires a minimum of 54 credit hours of approved graduate work distributed as follows:
  - a. one (1) math course (beyond M.S. level)
  - b. seven (7) courses (all required core and the remaining electives)
  - c. thirty (30) credit hours of research and dissertation
  - d. seminar attendance (at least one semester per academic year)
- b. Thesis/Research Enrollment
  - a. Master's students first enroll in the 6x98 as soon as you begin work on your master's research. You must be continuously enrolled in research until you graduate, including summers if you are working on your research with your advisor.
  - b. Master's students first enroll in the 6399-7399 (thesis courses) the semester they submit their proposal and committee appointment page to their major department.
  - c. Master's students continue to enroll in 6x98 (research course) each semester until they graduate (including the semester of graduation).
  - d. Master's students are awarded a final thesis grade in 6399 and 7399 from their thesis chair after successfully defending their thesis and submitting 5 copies of their thesis to the Engineering Dean's Office for binding.
  - e. If you expect to graduate in a given semester, you must enroll in and complete that semester at the University of Houston
- c. Dissertation/Research Enrollment
  - a. Doctoral students first enroll in the 8x98 as soon as you begin work on your Doctoral research. You must be continuously enrolled in research until you graduate, including summers if you are working on your research with your advisor.
  - b. Doctoral students first enroll in the 8399, 8699 and/or 8999 (12 hours of dissertation courses) the semester they submit their proposal and committee appointment page to their major department.
  - c. Doctoral students continue to enroll in 8x98 (research course) each semester until they graduate (including the semester of graduation).
  - d. Doctoral students are awarded a final dissertation grade in 8399, 8699 and/or 8999 (12 hours of dissertation courses) from their dissertation chair after successfully defending their dissertation and submitting 5 copies of their dissertation to the Engineering Dean's Office for binding.
  - e. If you expect to graduate in a given semester, you must enroll in and complete that semester at the University of Houston.
- d. Graduate Course Offerings: For a complete list of course offerings go to the Department of Biomedical Engineering at <http://www.bioe.uh.edu>
- e. Program Checklist- Go to <http://www.uh.edu/graduate> , for a complete degree plan checklist for your program and thrust area.
- f. Full-Time Enrollment
  - a. In general, graduate students are expected to be enrolled in consecutive long semesters (i.e., fall and spring) until the degree is completed and awarded. If you cannot enroll in a given semester, then you must apply by general petition to your college through your department for a leave of absence. The five-year rule on master's coursework still applies.

- b. Full-time enrollment means that you must enroll and complete the minimum number of hours each semester as outlined below. We expect supported graduate students to progress toward their degrees at a reasonable pace. This means that dropping of courses by full-time graduate students is discouraged. Requests for full-time graduate students to drop courses below full-time status must have the approval of the Departmental Graduate Advisor, Chair and the Graduate Associate Dean and will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
  - 1. For supported students: Full-time is considered 12 credit hours/semester
  - 2. For unsupported students or those on an F-1 Visa: Full-time is considered 9 credit hours/semester
- g. Transfer Credits
  - a. Course credit already applied to a prior degree may not be transferred or applied toward another degree at any level. In other words, a course cannot be applied to two different degrees.
  - b. Students will need to complete the transform form with the Graduate Academic Advisor and submit transcripts and syllabi for courses transferring.
  - c. A maximum of six credit hours of transfer credit (with a grade of A or B), upon approval of your departmental Graduate Advisor and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research of the College, can be applied to a master's or Ph.D. degree.
  - d. Transfer credit hours cannot be more than five-years old at the time of graduation to satisfy the master's degree course requirements. Exceptions to the five-year limit are rare and require approval through the Dean's Office to the Provost's Office.
- h. Time Limitation
  - a. The university has a five-year time-limit rule for Master's degree programs (this includes PB credit level changes and graduate transfer credit). Students who enroll at the University of Houston must complete the usual master's degree program within five years of the date of admission to the master's program at the University of Houston. Students who are in the joint MIE/MBA program have 7 years in which to complete this joint-degree program.
  - b. No course over five years old at the time of graduation can be used to satisfy the master's degree course requirements. This includes PB courses changed to graduate credit and transfer graduate courses approved for graduate credit. No PB courses from another university can be used for graduate credit.
  - c. Doctoral students must complete their dissertation within five years after completion of the comprehensive/qualifying exam. Otherwise, the exam must be repeated.
  - d. The following comment is taken directly from the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog: Graduate students may hold a graduate assistantship (teaching or research) for no more than three years in pursuit of a master's degree, no more than five years in pursuit of a doctorate, and for no more than six years if pursuing a doctorate directly after entering a graduate program with a baccalaureate degree. This means that financial aid is not available when the assistantship limit is exceeded. Normally, no individual may hold an assistantship at the University of Houston for more than a total of six years. Any exception to this policy must receive the approval of the dean of the college and the senior vice president for academic affairs.

### III. Scholarships

- a. BME Departmental Scholarship: The scholarship is awarded through the Department of Biomedical Engineering. Applicants are eligible upon acceptance into the Graduate Program. Scholar selections are determined by the department's scholarship committee. Criteria used for awarding this competitive scholarship are as follows:
  - a. Academic record in undergraduate program, the quality of the undergraduate program, the reputation of the academic institution and any previous other academic experience
  - b. Graduate record examination results
  - c. Letters of recommendation
  - d. Job experience
  - e. Publications
  - f. Research Interests and research statements
  - g. Research Experience
  - h. Journal Publications
  - i. Poster and oral presentation record/evidence
- b. In order to maintain the BME Departmental Scholarship, current scholars must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours each Fall/Spring/Summer semester and maintain a minimum 3.0 semester GPA. Awarding of the scholarship is contingent upon available funds.

#### **IV. Graduate Tuition Fellowship**

- a. The Graduate Tuition Fellowship provides funding to assist in defraying cost of in-state tuition of up to 12 credit hours per semester and up to 6 credit hours in the summer for qualified PhD students, who are in good academic standing. Guidelines for UH Cullen College of Engineering GTFs is as follows:
  - a. The GTF is intended for PhD students (exceptions include a M.S. student on a clear path to a Ph.D. program who has to enroll as a M.S. for curricular reasons).
  - b. The GTF qualifies a student for in-state tuition.
  - c. The College requires Ph.D. students to enroll for 12 hours/semester for three long semesters unless the student has completed their preliminary/qualifying examination. Once a Ph.D. student passes this examination, the College allows the student to enroll in 9 hours per semester until graduation. If a student has not completed their preliminary qualifying examination by the end of their third long semester, the student may enroll for 9 hours in the fourth long semester; however, the student must complete their preliminary/qualifying examination in the fourth long semester. Failure to do so will result in the GTF award being discontinued until such time that the preliminary/qualifying examination is completed. The GTF will cover up to 6 hours of enrollment during the Summer semester.
  - d. A student receiving the GTF must consult with his/her departmental Director of Graduate Studies regarding enrollment requirements (reduced load, 9/12 hours in a long semester hours, 3/6 hours in a summer semester, etc.)
  - e. To be considered for a GTF, the following selection priorities are in place:
  - f. First priority will be given to Cullen College of Engineering graduate students supported by external grants/contracts from the home department or a Cullen College of Engineering faculty member.
  - g. Second priority will be given to PhD students who are receiving other departmental support (TA, GA, IA, etc.)



- h. Third priority will be given to M.S. students committed to continuing study for a PhD and who are receiving home department support (Ta, GA, IA, etc.)
- i. Students who are supported outside the Cullen College of Engineering as a TA, IA or GA will not be eligible for the GTF.
- j. Department Chairs will submit a proposed list to the Dean based on the above priorities.
- k. After all department lists are received, a Selection Committee, as appointed by the Dean, will review the requests and make a final recommendation to the Dean.
- l. The Dean will notify the Department Chairs of students selected, and the Department Chair will provide official notification to the student.

V. **Research Assistantships**

- a. Research assistantship appointments pay the student a stipend to participate in a particular research project that may serve as his/her thesis research topic. Research assistantships may also be available for projects that will not serve as the student's research topic. The research assistant may be appointed 50% time (20 hours per week) or 25% time (10 hours per week). Students receiving stipends for research activity that also constitutes the dissertation research spend considerably more time each week working on the project than that dictated by the assistantship.

VI. **Academic Standing**

- a. To be eligible for a degree from the Graduate College a student must achieve two grade point averages of "B" (3.00) or better. The first grade point average is based on all courses numbered 5000 or higher which appear on the transcript. (Deficiency courses are not included.) The second grade point average is based on all courses that appear on the program of study. Academic excellence is expected of students doing graduate work. Upon recommendation from the chair of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, the Dean of the Graduate College can withdraw a student who is not progressing satisfactorily.
- b. **Good Standing**
  - a. A student is considered in "Good Standing," who has been admitted to a graduate degree program in Engineering, with either regular or provisional admission status, and maintains a 3.0 or higher grade point average (GPA):
    1. in all work taken for graduate credit (courses numbered 5000 or higher)
    2. in the coursework in the student's approved program of study
    3. in all course work taken at UH (overall GPA) post baccalaureate.
  - b. A student will earn academic good standing by obtaining a 3.0 or better in the GPAs listed above by the end of the first academic year. Coursework such as research and dissertation is not considered towards this total.
  - c. A student may be recommended for dismissal from a graduate program if the student fails to increase all of the GPAs listed above to 3.0 or better by the time he/she completes their first academic year.
  - d. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the department.
- c. **Four C-Rule:** A graduate student who receives a grade of C+ or lower in 12 semester hours of credit attempted at UH in all courses taken for graduate credit, whether or not in repeated courses, is ineligible for any advanced degree at this institution and will not be permitted to re-enroll for graduate study.

VII. **Misconduct**

- a. The highest standards of academic integrity are expected of all students. The failure of any student to meet these standards may result in suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of the individual colleges. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, tampering, plagiarism, falsification or misrepresentation of data or facilitating such activities. The university's Academic Honesty Policy is available at <http://www.uh.edu/provost/shared-interest/policy-guidelines/honesty-policy/AcademicHonestyPolicy2013.pdf>

#### **VIII. Qualifying Exam**

- a. Doctoral candidates in Biomedical Engineering are eligible to request to sit for the Qualifying Exam after the second semester of graduate studies. In order to qualify for the Exam, the candidate must have completed all general core courses of the PhD program as well as a minimum of one (1) course from the core of their chosen research thrust area.
- b. An Exam Committee is formed by the department once the candidate submits the Qualifying Exam Intention Form (**Appendix II**) to the Department and meets the criteria above.
- c. The committee will consist of four (4) members: candidate's Research Advisor, Department Chair, and two (2) additional faculty members from the department. Additional faculty should represent the candidate's research focus area and are primarily responsible for the examination of the candidate. The Research Advisor may ask questions but is expected to fulfill the advocate role for the candidate as he/she prepares for the examination. The Chair's primary function is to ensure that there is consistency across all candidate qualifying examinations.
- d. After the Exam, the Qualifying Exam Score Sheet must be submitted to the Department (See **Appendix III**)
- e. Components of Exam
  - a. The qualifying exam is administered orally.
- f. Overview
  - a. Candidates will coordinate with their respective Exam Committees to arrange a one (1) hour exam session to take place by the end of Fall or Spring semester following committee assignment. Examinations are expected to span about 1 hour but may vary between 1 to 1 ½ hours. The oral component will start with a general overview provided by the candidate on their research thrust area and prospective research project. The Exam Committee will then ask questions and engage in discussions with the student for the remainder of the session. The following is the goal and scope of the oral exam:
    1. Determine candidate's depth of understanding of the biomedical engineering graduate core.
    2. Assess candidate's capacity to think critically and apply engineering tools to solve problems.
    3. Assess candidate's capacity to integrate skills in an area of research in biology and/or biomedical engineering.
- g. A successful candidate will be knowledgeable, able to think critically, and demonstrate the ability to integrate and/or apply course information to topics pertinent to their research area.
- h. Immediately following the oral examination session, the Exam Committee will meet in a closed session to discuss the student's performance and determine the results of the exam. The following results are possible.

- a. Pass: the candidate may continue in the PhD program, complete course work, and prepare to defend a prospectus.
- b. Contingent Pass: the candidate is allowed to continue in the PhD program contingent upon completing any contingency plan recommended by the Exam Committee.
- c. Fail: the candidate will be removed from the PhD program. A contingent plan may be developed to enter the Masters program, either thesis or non-thesis. The candidate may petition to retake the qualifying exam during which time he/she may be retained in the PhD program until the petition is resolved. If the petition is not accepted, he/she will be removed from the PhD program. If the petition is accepted, a continuation in the PhD program will be contingent upon results of a re-examination.

#### **IX. Dissertation Prospectus**

- a. A rough draft of a research proposal should be shown to the student's research advisor for approval of content prior to scheduling the oral presentation. The oral presentation of the dissertation prospectus is made to the student's dissertation committee. Other interested members of the faculty are invited to attend the presentation but are invited to leave prior to questioning by the dissertation committee begins. The student's presentation should take advantage of appropriate audio visual aids and should be limited to no more than 50 minutes.
- b. Copies of the written dissertation prospectus must be distributed to all members of the student's dissertation committee no later than one week prior to the oral presentation in the oral examination, the student is expected to defend their prospectus and justify that the proposed research is of the acceptable quality and magnitude consistent with quality doctoral education. The Prospectus Intention Form also must be submitted to the department before the student's presentation (See **Appendix IV**).
- c. Following the oral presentation of the research proposition, questions are welcomed from members of the departmental faculty. Following general questions, departmental faculty members other than those on the student's dissertation committee are excused and the student's dissertation committee and interested faculty from the student's major will remain to ask questions of the candidate regarding his proposed research. Generally, the oral discussion of the dissertation prospectus is limited to three hours.
- d. After questioning, the candidate is excused from the room while the dissertation committee conducts its deliberations. The decision regarding whether or not the dissertation prospectus is acceptable is the decision of the dissertation committee alone. The student's dissertation committee conveys its evaluation of the acceptability of the dissertation prospectus to the chair of the departmental graduate committee by signing the Prospectus Approval Form (See **Appendix V**).
- e. If the student's dissertation prospectus is considered acceptable, the chair of the departmental graduate committee will recommend to the Graduate College that the student be advanced to PhD candidacy status.
- f. If the student's dissertation prospectus is unacceptable, the chair of the dissertation committee formulates recommendations for future action and submits them to the chair of the departmental graduate committee and the chair of the department. Either of two recommendations is possible:
  - a. A re-examination may be scheduled and the entire process repeated, or
  - b. The student may be removed from the doctoral program. The results of the dissertation prospectus presentation are conveyed to the student by the chair of the departmental graduate committee.

- g. Admission to Candidacy
  - a. PhD students achieve candidacy status in a letter from the dean of the Graduate College upon:
    - 1. Successfully defending the dissertation prospectus

## X. **Thesis/Dissertation Information**

- a. Thesis/Dissertation Committee Formation
  - a. MS students should form their committees by ORD- the official reporting date or 12th day of class of the semester of their defense, which is their graduating semester.
  - b. PhD students should form their dissertation committee within 6 months of passing their Qualifying Exam. PhD students must wait at least one semester after having their Dissertation Prospectus approved before scheduling their dissertation defense.
  - c. **See Appendix I** for a copy of the Committee Appointment Form. This form must be submitted to the department by the deadlines indicated above.
  - d. Students with questions about the requirements or deadlines should contact the Graduate Advisor in the Biomedical Engineering Department.
- b. Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines
  - a. The Dean's Office publishes a document containing guidelines for theses and dissertations. Students are advised to obtain a copy of these guidelines in advance of beginning to write a thesis or dissertation. The Guide, the Thesis/Dissertation Checklist, and the Thesis/Dissertation Binding Form can be found at <http://www.egr.uh.edu/academics/graduate-programs-policies/guide-preparation-thesesdissertations>
- c. Thesis/Dissertation Submission
  - a. Deadline for Submission: To graduate in a given semester, the student must upload their ETD to the Vireo website and notify the coordinator, along with submitting the approved hard copy thesis (with fully signed signature pages) to the Graduate Associate Dean's Office (E421) by the appropriate deadline. All documents and payment must be turned in at the time of submission. Any student missing this deadline must enroll and reapply for graduation in the next semester. No extensions will be made.
    - 1. Fees: The cost of binding is \$40 per copy for BS, MS, and PhD. Microfilming is no longer required for dissertations. Copyright is free and included in the ETD.
    - 2. If there are questions or if clarification is needed regarding this two-step process, contact the College Graduate Coordinator located in E421 in the Dean's Office of Engineering Bldg 2 (D3): Miranda Vernon-Harrison, phone 713-743-4219. For more detailed information, including current deadlines, go to <http://www.egr.uh.edu/academics/graduate-programs-policies/guide-preparation-thesesdissertations>

## XI. **Applying to Graduate**

- a. In order to graduate in a given semester, students must apply to graduate one week prior to UH deadline which is published on the UH Academic Calendar, which can be found at <http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1220>
  - a. First, students must go to *myUH* to apply to graduate.
  - b. Second, students must complete the Graduation Questionnaire Form, which can be found at: <http://www.egr.uh.edu/sites/ccoe.egr.uh.edu/files/files/GradAppQuest.pdf>
  - c. Turn in completed Form to the Biomedical Engineering Department.

- b. Before the application for graduation is reviewed, students must have a graduate degree plan approved (in writing) by the departmental Graduate Advisor. The approved graduate degree plan must be filed with the department.
  - a. A computer-generated graduation application will be sent to the college analyst 2 to 4 weeks after the application for graduation deadline. The college analyst reviews the application and returns copies to the student and the Graduation Office within 8 to 10 weeks.
  - b. Students can normally expect to receive a diploma in the mail about 8 to 10 weeks after the end of the semester in which the degree requirements are completed. Students must provide a current address for mailing the diploma.
- c. After first applying for graduation, students must be continuously enrolled if they do not graduate in the semester for which they applied. A student's application for graduation must be continually updated in subsequent semesters if they do not graduate in the semester for which they first applied.
- d. Applicants approved for graduation should request a transcript 8 to 10 weeks after the semester ends to be certain that the degree has been posted.

**XII. Information for International Students-** For the most detailed, up-to-date information, contact the International Student and Scholar Services Office at <http://www.issso.uh.edu>

- a. Arriving On Campus
  - a. All international students attending the University of Houston must contact the International Student and Scholars Services Office (ISSSO) upon campus arrival. In addition, international students are required to attend an orientation program. For more information contact ISSSO at:
    - 1. 302 Student Service Center 1  
Houston, TX 77204-3024  
USA  
Phone: (713) 743-5065  
Fax: (713) 743-5079  
<http://www.issso.uh.edu>
- b. Maintaining F-1 Status
  - a. Students must be enrolled full-time (9 hours for graduate students).
  - b. Students are not allowed to work, unless they have CURRENT permission from and International Student Counselor or the Department of Homeland Security (Pg. 3 on the I-20 or an Employment Authorization Card)
  - c. Students must carry current documentation (i.e. passport, I-20)
  - d. Keep the ISSSO up to date on your address/contact information/ major life changes.
- c. I-20 Extensions
  - a. Although students are admitted to the U.S. for "duration of status," they must still be attempting to complete their studies by the expiration date on their I-20 (item 5 on page 1 of the I-20). This date is an expected date of completion. Under certain circumstances you may have the date extended. The delay must be caused by compelling academic or medical reasons, such as changes of major or research topics, unexpected research problems, or documented illnesses. Please note that delays caused by academic probation or suspension are not acceptable reasons for a program extension. The application for extension may be made at any time before the I-20 expires. Failure to apply for a program extension before the expiration date

will mean a student has violated U.S. government requirements and will have to apply for reinstatement.

- b. For details on this process, go to <http://www.issso.uh.edu/f1/test5.html>
- d. OPT: Optional Practical Training is not permitted for students during their first semester at the University of Houston or for students with a GPA below 3.0. (For form see **Appendix VI**)
  - a. Post-Completion OPT is allowed for students who have completed their degrees, including submission of their thesis/dissertation for binding for MS and PhD degrees.
  - b. Pre-completion Part-time OPT is allowed for unsupported F-1 students during any semester but is limited to 20 hours per week. Time used is deducted from the one year eligibility at half the rate. Students must meet all applicable INS regulations regarding their status as a student.
  - c. Pre-Completion Full-time Summer OPT is allowed but students can work full-time during the summer only. Time used is deducted from one year of eligibility. Students cannot hold a full-time OPT and be a supported student simultaneously.
  - d. Pre-completion full-time OPT with only thesis or dissertation remaining is allowed for non-supported students, with approval of thesis/dissertation advisor. All coursework, along with department requirements, like screening exams, qualifying exams, and thesis/dissertation proposals must be completed for students to be eligible.
  - e. For students wanting to participate in OPT, they will need to:
    1. Complete the Form in **Appendix VI** and return to the Department.
    2. Submit a copy of their EAD card to ISSSO.
    3. Actively search for employment (Visit UCS for resources and information).
    4. Update ISSSO and UH PeopleSoft "SEVIS" address type of their new address when they move.
    5. Using the OPT Self Report, submit the employer's information including name, address, and the duration of employment to ISSSO.
    6. Create a folder for the student's records only to maintain their "Personal Portfolio". In this folder, keep evidence of OPT employment that is:
      - a. Directly related to major
      - b. A minimum 20 hours/week
      - c. Paid or unpaid
  - f. According to the federal regulations [8 CFR 214.(f)], F-1 students are responsible for reporting the address, employer's name and address, and any periods of employment and unemployment while on OPT. ISSSO is responsible for updating the student's SEVIS record to reflect these changes. This reporting responsibility is an on-going requirement.
  - g. Contact ISSSO IT person Subash Dantuluri if you encounter technical difficulties while submitting your OPT Self Report.
- e. Curricular Practical Training
  - a. CPT as practicum/internship or COOP will not be allowed.
  - b. CPT as Dissertation or Thesis Research will be allowed, but to be eligible, a student must provide a letter from the employer verifying that the corporation is involved in the research and that the offer of employment is predicated on the need for access to their facility for purposes of data collection. The letter must be countersigned by the student's advisor to show approval of the CPT.

Appendix I-Committee Appointment Form

**University of Houston**  
**Department of Biomedical Engineering**  
**Cullen College of Engineering**  
**Appointment of:**

- Doctoral Dissertation Committee
- Master's Thesis Committee

For \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last Name, First                                      Student Number                                      Date of Qualifying Exam

Anticipated field of research \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative title of thesis or dissertation \_\_\_\_\_

It is requested that the following Graduate Faculty members be appointed to constitute the Doctoral/Master's Committee for the student named above. By initialing below, they have agreed to serve if appointed.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	AFFILIATION	ACCEPTED (Initial)
1. _____ (Chair)	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
 Graduate Advisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
 Associate Dean for Graduate Studies  
 Cullen College of Engineering

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix III-Qualifying Exam Intention Form

University of Houston  
**Department of Biomedical Engineering**  
Cullen College of Engineering

**Qualifying Exam Intention Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, myUH number \_\_\_\_\_, am in my

2<sup>nd</sup> Semester /  3<sup>rd</sup> Semester of study and intend to take the Qualifying Exam by the end

of \_\_\_\_\_.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Student

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Advisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Department Graduate Advisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

Scheduled Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty in attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The student is approved to take the Qualifying Exam at the above date/time.

Department Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix IV- Qualifying Exam Score Sheet  
 University of Houston

**Department of Biomedical Engineering**

**Cullen College of Engineering**

1. **Part I:** The student completes Part I and submits the Report to the Academic Unit following all academic unit deadlines and procedures.
2. **Part II:** After the examination, the examining committee chair completes Part II.
3. **Part III:** The examining committee completes Part III by signing the form and indicating their votes of Passed or Failed.
4. **Part IV:** The head of the academic unit completes Part IV by signing the form, confirming the majority vote of the examining committee, and signifying that the proper procedures have been followed for the examinations.
5. **Notification:** The academic unit sends the student a written statement of the results of the examination.
6. **Submission:** The completed Report should be submitted immediately to the Graduate Advisor, Science and Engineering Research Center, Room 2018. Please do not submit this form to the Graduate Advisor until all required exam results have been entered on this form

**Part I: Student Information**

NAME OF STUDENT (Last name, first name, middle initial)		PEOPLESOFT ID#
DOCTOR OF	PROGRAM	

**Part II: Examination Dates (MM/DD/YY)**

DATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION TAKEN
-----------------------------------

**Part III: Examination Result**

PLEASE TYPE NAMES OF COMMITTEE	SIGNATURES	Passed	Failed
CHAIR		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part IV: Final Result**

PASSED <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILED <input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE, HEAD OF ACADEMIC UNIT	DATE
------------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------------	------

All qualifying examination results, including failure in any one of the required examinations, must be reported to the Graduate Advisor and Graduate College. Failure in the qualifying examinations is final unless the student petitions for a re-examination, the supervisory committee, and the head of the academic unit recommend, and the Graduate College Dean approves the re-examination.

Appendix V – Dissertation Prospectus Intention Form

University of Houston  
**Department of Biomedical Engineering**  
Cullen College of Engineering

**Dissertation Prospectus Intention Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, *myUH* number \_\_\_\_\_, passed my Qualifying Exam on  
\_\_\_\_\_ and have scheduled my Dissertation Prospectus for  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that I must submit the Prospectus Approval Form to the Department after approval to be admitted  
to Candidacy.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Student

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Advisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Department Graduate Advisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix VI - Prospectus Approval Form  
University of Houston

## Department of Biomedical Engineering

### Cullen College of Engineering

The student must successfully complete the doctoral qualifying examinations and the results must be on file with the department before the submission of the dissertation proposal/prospectus results may be entered. The student will be advanced to candidacy after successful completion of the dissertation proposal/prospectus.

**Part I:** The student completes Part I and submits the Report to the Academic Unit following all academic unit deadlines and procedures.

**Part II:** After the prospectus, the prospectus committee chair completes Part II.

**Part III:** The prospectus committee completes Part III by signing the form and indicating their votes of Passed or Failed.

**Part IV:** The head of the academic unit completes Part IV by signing the form, confirming the majority vote of the prospectus committee, and signifying that the proper procedures have been followed for the prospectus.

**Notification:** The academic unit sends the student a written statement of the results of the prospectus.

**Submission:** The completed Report should be submitted immediately to the Graduate Advisors, Science and Engineering Research Center, SERC2018. Please do not submit this form to the Graduate Advisors until all required prospectus results have been entered on this form.

### Part I: Student Information

NAME OF STUDENT (Last name, first name, middle initial)		PEOPLESOFT ID#
DOCTOR OF Philosophy	PROGRAM Biomedical Engineering	

### Part II: Prospectus Date (MM/DD/YY)

DATE
------

### Part III: Prospectus Result

PLEASE TYPE NAMES OF COMMITTEE	SIGNATURES	Passed	Failed
CHAIR		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEMBER		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Part IV: Final Result

PASSED <input type="checkbox"/>	FAILED <input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE, HEAD OF ACADEMIC UNIT	DATE
------------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------------	------

All results, including failure of the dissertation proposal/prospectus, must be reported to the Graduate Advisor and Graduate College. Failure in the proposal/prospectus is final unless the student petitions for another proposal defense, the supervisory committee, and the head of the academic unit recommend.

## Appendix VII – OPT

## POST COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) ACADEMIC VERIFICATION & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FORM

Student: Print your name below and take this form to your department for the required signature(s). *Note: The Engineering College requires the signature of the Dean and additional procedures that the student must follow to apply for this program.*

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ PS ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### ACADEMIC VERIFICATION

#### – College or Departmental Signature Required –

This section needs to be signed by the Dean, Dissertation/Thesis Advisor, OR the student's Academic Advisor. The student is applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is available through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It allows an F-1 international student to work for up to one year in a field related to his/her major. In order to recommend the student for this post-completion practical training, we need to know the expected completion date. A student is allowed to apply 90 days before the completion of studies. It is helpful for the student to apply as early as allowed under law, since it may take up to three months to process the Employment Authorization Card from DHS. If the student does not complete the degree when expected, the Employment Authorization Card may be cancelled as long as the OPT start date has not begun. If the card is cancelled the student may reapply for OPT. If you have any questions, please call #35065 and ask to speak to an International Student Counselor. **NOTE:** Engineering majors have additional steps to follow. Please check with your department before attending a group OPT appointment.

1. This student has applied/will apply for graduation at the following degree level (please circle one):

Bachelor

Masters

Doctorate

2. This student is expected to complete/has completed all degree requirements on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

*(Usually the official closing of the semester or may be when the thesis or dissertation is submitted.)*

Academic or Thesis/Dissertation

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

Associate Dean of College \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(Engineering Only)*

**Please return the form to the student.**

#### F-1 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

- If you withdraw your OPT application, you must notify ISSSO in writing. You are responsible to check your OPT application status on USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/>, and to verify the information on your OPT (EAD) card.
- Do **not** work until you receive the Employment Authorization Card (EAD).
- Under no circumstances work **before or after** the start and ending dates on the EAD.
- Only work in a **field related to your major**.
- Do not attend school part-time or full-time in a degree seeking program.
- If you do not finish the degree in your expected final semester, check to see if you need a new I-20 to extend your program ending date. This must be done before your I-20 expires! To fail to do so may require reinstatement.
- Obtain a **new I-20** for any **new degree program**. If you plan to begin a new degree program at UH you will need a new I-20. If you plan to transfer to another school you will need to request your SEVIS record to be released from UH.
- **If you want to travel** outside the U.S. and reenter, you must have a valid I-20 travel endorsement no older than 6 months, a valid visa, valid passport, EAD card, and a letter from your employer verifying your employment.
- Supply ISSSO with your employer's name and address (**keep this data current**).
- **Keep your address, phone, and email information current with ISSSO during your OPT.**
- At the end of your OPT you have a **60 day grace period** to file for a change in your status, receive a new I-20, or depart the U.S.
- **Inform ISSSO of any change or adjustment of status or plans to depart** the U.S. permanently.

**"I understand the above rules."** Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_