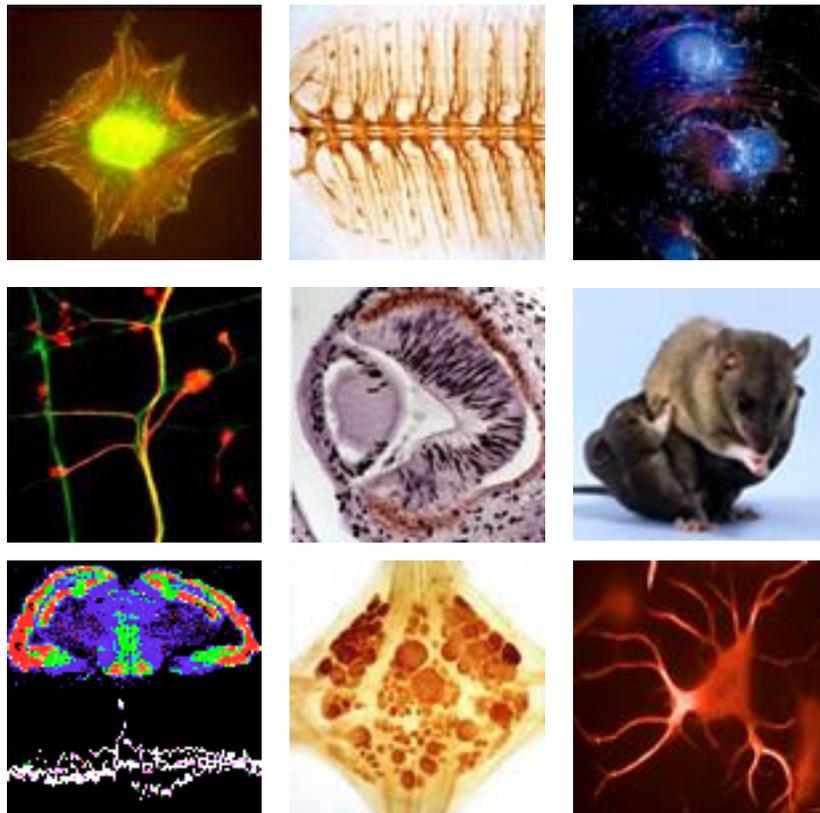


IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Neuroscience



An Interdepartmental Graduate Program in the Life Sciences

www.neuroscience.iastate.edu

The Neuroscience Graduate Student Handbook

2023 – 2026

Neuroscience Interdepartmental
Graduate Major

Iowa State University

This Handbook . . .

This student handbook is provided to give general guidance about important issues and activities that you will encounter in your graduate career. Because the Neuroscience interdepartmental graduate major continually seeks to improve, as does the entire graduate education program at Iowa State, some changes may occur between the times of the printing of this handbook. You are expected to stay in close communication with your major professor and Neuroscience program staff regarding important issues. You are also encouraged to bring questions and comments to the Chair and members of the Supervisory Committee of Neuroscience at any time.

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INTRODUCTION

The Neuroscience Major

The Graduate Program in Neuroscience is an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary training program at Iowa State University that offers the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. The Neuroscience training program offers a broad spectrum of Neuroscience research opportunities, ranging from the molecular to the cellular to the systems level of analysis. The program includes over 20 faculty from the departments of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology; Biomedical Sciences; Chemical and Biological Engineering; Food Science and Human Nutrition; Genetics, Development and Cell Biology; Kinesiology; Mechanical Engineering; Psychology.

The strength of the Neuroscience Program lies in the combined expertise of its diverse faculty. Neuroscience faculty in a variety of disciplines will provide you with flexibility in your choice of a research project and major professor. Other activities and organizations in the program bring faculty and students together and provide opportunities for personal and professional interaction. These interactions are central to our goals, which are to provide broad and robust graduate student training while stimulating excellence in Neuroscience research.

The learning goals for our program include:

1. Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of scholarly literature in Neuroscience.
2. Form testable hypotheses and articulate research objectives that, when met, will lead to significant contributions to Neuroscience.
3. Conduct qualitative and/or quantitative research via appropriate acquisition, analysis, and reporting of data.
4. Interpret research results appropriately, integrating them into the existing knowledge in Neuroscience.
5. Clearly and accurately communicate research findings orally and in writing, and often through the use images (tables, figures, and other forms of imagery) and electronic or other forms of media.
6. Articulate how the graduate program, including coursework and creative scholarship, fits into life and career goals.
7. Conduct scholarship, in teams or with independence, in ways that consistently demonstrate ethical practice and professionalism.

Administration

The Program Chair and Supervisory Committee oversee the activities of Neuroscience Program. Feel free to contact them if you have any questions about the program. The current Chair and Supervisory Committee are:

Program Chair:

Elizabeth Stegemoller
Associate Professor, Kinesiology
111K Forker Building
(515) 294 – 5966
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Program Coordinator

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UPON ARRIVAL AT IOWA STATE

When you first arrive, you may find yourself overwhelmed by the number of things you must do. Here is a list of some of the most important.

1. Visit the Interdepartmental Programs office in 220 MacKay Hall. Introduce yourself to the NEURO Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator can help you find your way around the University administrative offices and answer your questions regarding NEURO and/or the University. The Chair and Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) can answer many questions you have about your academic program. Dr. Stegemöller's office is in 111K Forker Building.
2. **Read this Handbook.** It is especially important to read the section on Administrative Matters during your first few days.

3. Register for e-mail and plan to check it regularly (at least daily). E-mail is the most common means of communication at Iowa State University. Let the DOGE know when you have an e-mail address so it can be added to the Neuroscience list serve.
4. Access the following references and examine them carefully. These documents contain all the University regulations and requirements for graduation. Most of these items come directly from the Graduate College and Office of the Registrar. **All items in bold are required and students are expected to be familiar with this information.**

Graduate College Handbook

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/>

Graduate College Thesis/Dissertation Website

<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/current/thesis/>

General University Catalog

<http://catalog.iastate.edu/>

Schedule of Classes

<http://classes.iastate.edu/>

Iowa State University Semester Calendar

<http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/calendar/>

Iowa State University phone/e-mail directory

<http://www.info.iastate.edu/>

GETTING STARTED – YOUR FIRST YEAR

Graduate Student Orientation

For new graduate students, the academic year begins with an orientation period which is designed to ease the transition to graduate study at Iowa State. It is a time to become acquainted with the Neuroscience Program and its members and to prepare for registration and the start of classes. Along with this handbook, you should have received a schedule of important orientation activities sponsored by Neuroscience and the Graduate College. Please refer to them for information about your responsibilities during Orientation.

Which of the following sections you need to read is determined by how you are being funded. Students may enter Neuroscience by either of two routes: direct admission into Neuroscience or admission after acceptance into a department. Doctoral students entering Neuroscience directly are usually supported for their first year on a Neuroscience Research Assistantship and spend their first year doing rotations and choosing a major professor. They should read the entire handbook. Students entering after acceptance into

a department arrange for a major professor and financial support through their home department. The latter students may skip sections dealing with temporary advisors, and choosing a major professor. Direct admission students will still be required to do research rotations.

Assignment of a Temporary Advisor

If you have entered the Neuroscience program directly, the chair of the major or another faculty mentor will serve as your temporary advisor until your major professor is selected. The temporary advisors are well acquainted with the Neuroscience laboratories at Iowa State. The responsibilities of the advisors are to guide you in selecting courses during your first year, to discuss with you the research opportunities in NEURO, and to suggest laboratories for visits and rotations.

Toward the end of the first week of the orientation period, you will meet with your advisor for counseling and preparation of your schedule for the fall semester. If it is necessary to add or drop a course, or change sections of a course or the number of credits, you may do so on WorkDay, the University registration system.

Rotations in Neuroscience – NEURO 557

All first year students are required to do laboratory rotations to help them choose their major professor and/or gain a breath of knowledge of neuroscience techniques. The research rotations, in addition to helping you choose your major professor, provide you with an interdisciplinary research experience, give you an opportunity to actively participate in the research program of the laboratories in which you are interested, and promote interaction and exchange of information among research groups. Although research will be conducted during these rotations, the completion of a project is not required.

Neuroscience Research Assistants must do three laboratory rotations during their first year (NEURO 557); 1 rotation the fall semester and 2 rotations the spring semester. Each rotation should be 7-8 weeks long. You will be required to complete interviews with 5 neuro faculty to identify 3 faculty members you would like to rotate with. You will determine your rotations, complete and submit the rotation contract, and complete all necessary trainings by the 5th week of class of the first semester. Following each lab rotation, you are required to complete and submit a research evaluation form. All forms/materials will be available on Canvas.

Choosing Your Major Professor

Much of your first year will be devoted to the important process of selecting a major professor, the person who will guide you in your graduate studies and whose research group you will join. Activities during orientation week and rotations should provide you an opportunity to meet individual faculty members and discuss their research. You should also make appointments for additional conferences with the professors whose work interests you within the first five weeks of classes your first semester. First-year graduate students in Neuroscience must choose a major professor by the end of their first year at Iowa State, preferably by the end of the second semester (i.e.: April to early May).

You should make use of the following information to help you decide on a research group and a professor with whom to rotate:

- The NEURO website, which has brief descriptions of the research programs of each faculty member.
<http://www.neuroscience.iastate.edu/>
- Curriculum vitae and references to recent publications of NEURO faculty, available on many professors' homepages.
- Discussions with individual faculty members. (This is very important!)
- Potential that the faculty member will have space and funding for a new student, and what the level of financial support will be.
- Discussion with current graduate students.

After you finish NEURO 557, ask the faculty member with whom you would like to work whether he or she can accept you into his or her laboratory and arrange for your future financial support. Once a mutual agreement has been reached, please inform the Neuroscience Program Chair and Program Coordinator. You will need to initiate a "Request to Establish a Home Department for Students Admitted to Interdepartmental Majors" form:

Available online at <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html>

NOTE: You should wait to choose a major professor until *after* NEURO 557. If a faculty member attempts to get a commitment from you before the end of your rotations, don't do it unless you are absolutely certain it is what you want. It is best to reserve your decision until you are fully informed about the opportunities available to you.

ACADEMIC MATTERS

Degrees Offered

Neuroscience offers coursework and research experiences leading to the degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy. Because Neuroscience is a research-based discipline, non-thesis Master of Science degrees are *not* available.

Admission to a Degree Program

The degree that a student may pursue in Neuroscience (that is, MS or PhD) is normally determined and specified at the time of the student's admission to the program. Although a prior MS is not required for admission to the PhD program, criteria for admission to the PhD program are more stringent than to the MS program. Earning an MS in Neuroscience does not automatically qualify a student to pursue the PhD degree in Neuroscience. Conversely, a student admitted to the PhD program may need to change to an MS program in NEURO. This decision may impact the student's funding that was awarded based on pursuit of the PhD degree. Students should confer with their major professor, the NEURO chair, and notify the NEURO office if they are contemplating making such changes.

Required Courses

It is expected that graduate students entering the Neuroscience program will have a strong background in the biological sciences, psychology, biochemistry or computer science including work in general biology, biochemistry and physics. Your temporary advisor or major professor will help you determine if you have deficiencies in any of these areas and decide if you need to take additional background courses. If it is desirable to take such courses, you should take them as soon as possible.

To assure that all our students are trained in the major areas of Neuroscience, all students should include in their program of study a core of courses that will provide a broad coverage of the basic program in Neuroscience. Formal courses should include Rotations in Neuroscience, Cellular, Molecular, and Developmental Neuroscience, Systems Neuroscience, Cognitive Neuroscience, Neuroanatomy, and Statistics. All students will take the Neuroscience Seminar, Advanced Topics.

A summary of the requirements is given below and on the *Checklist for Completion of Graduate Requirements for the Neuroscience Program*, page 24 of this handbook.

Curriculum Requirements for Neuroscience Students

PhD: 72 graduate credits of which 36 credits, including all dissertation research credits, must be earned under the supervision of the POS committee.

Graduate credits of B or better earned at another institution may be transferred at the discretion of the POS Committee and the approval of Neuroscience and the Graduate College. PhD students must take the complete core requirements.

Additional coursework for both the PhD and MS degrees is selected by the student in consultation with his/her Major Professor and POS Committee to meet departmental requirements and to satisfactorily prepare the student for their research project.

Additional information relating to credits required for graduate degrees can be found in the ISU Graduate College Handbook, <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/publications/gchandbook/>

Neuroscience PhD Core Curriculum Requirements Include:

Take each of the following			
NEURO 557	Rotations in Neuroscience	2 credits	Fall and Spring of 1 st year
NEURO 556	Cellular, Molecular, & Developmental Neuroscience	3 credits	Alt. Fall, Odd Years
KIN 572	Neural Basis of Human Movement	3 credits	Fall
PSYCH 519	Cognitive Neuropsychology	3 credits	Alt. Spring, Odd Years
BMS 537	Neuroanatomy	3 credits	Spring
NEURO 696	Neuroscience Seminar <i>To be taken every Fall & Spring</i>	1 credit	Fall & Spring
NEURO 661	Advanced Topics in Neuroscience	3 credits	Alt. Fall, Even Years
STAT 587	Statistical Methods for Research Workers	4 credits	Fall & Spring
NEURO 699	Research with Primary Mentor	Variable	
MANDATORY ETHICS TRAINING: All Neuroscience students are required to complete 1 credit hour of ethics training. This training should meet the NIH grant requirements (i.e. have an animal component).			

NEURO 661

Advanced Topics in Neuroscience

All students who are formally admitted to the Neuroscience Program are expected to enroll for two credits of NEURO 661 during the Fall semester after completing their second year.

- A minimum of 2 overview lectures are required for all Neuroscience doctoral students. The lecture should be 40 minutes long and focuses on an individually selected topic which is not directly related to one's thesis and does not duplicate instructors' lectures in Neuroscience core courses. For example, a student may opt to give an up-to-date research review or, alternatively, a formal practice lecture in some area of Neuroscience. The purpose of this is to allow students to have prepared and presented a non-research based talk (teaching or industry) for future potential interviews.
- A minimum of 3 journal reviews are required for all Neuroscience doctoral students. The reviews should be 20 minute long and focus on an individually selected topic which is not directly related to one's thesis.

NEURO 696

Neuroscience Seminar

All Students who are formally admitted into the Neuroscience Program should be enrolled in NEURO 696 every Fall and Spring semester. **Enrollment is also open to students not formally in the program.*

Students will be required to attend 8 research seminars related to neuroscience, their dissertation research, or professional development. Seminars during either semester may include up to 3 webinars and 3 seminars off campus (i.e. conference seminars).

Personal research presentations will also count towards seminars in either semester. Students will attend personal research presentations from other neuroscience graduate students. These presentations will be announced to the Neuroscience community. Faculty and students will be encouraged to attend and provide feedback for the presenting student. Two presentations are required. These presentations are each 40-45 minutes long. One will be a "midstream" report, typically given during the student's second year at about the time of prelims. This report will emphasize background, rationale and progress on one's dissertation research. A second presentation will be made as a "final stage" thesis presentation.

Each semester there will be seminars that are directly sponsored, or co-sponsored by the Neuroscience Program. We strongly encourage all Neuroscience graduate students to attend these seminars.

In addition, you are encouraged to attend other seminars related to Neuroscience or your research interest (Departmental seminars and seminars sponsored by the Biomedical Sciences Department, Psychology department, Kinesiology department, FSHN, and MCDB Program) There may also be job interview seminars for faculty positions in areas directly related to Neuroscience or your research interest.

To fulfill the requirements for NEURO 696 each semester, you need to provide summaries of the seminars to the instructor in charge of the course. Each summary should have the following information indicating: 1) the student's name; 2) the name of the seminar

speaker; 3) title of the seminar; 4) date; 5) brief summary of the seminar; 6) how the seminar relates to neuroscience, your research interest, or professional development.

In addition to the above coursework, all Neuroscience PhD students are required to take a minimum of six credits of elective courses.

Possible Neuroscience Electives (Minimum of 6 credits)		
A ECL 551	Behavioral Ecology	3 credits
AN S 670	Molecular Biology of Muscle	3 credits
BIOL 354	Animal Behavior	3 credits
BIOL 436	Neurobiology	3 credits
BMS 354	General Pharmacology	3 credits
PSYCH 410	Behavioral Neurology	3 credits
PSYCH 598C	Seminar in Cognitive Psychology: Cognitive Neuroscience	1 credit
BBMB 404	Biochemistry I	3 credits
Kin 560	Principles of Motor Control and Learning	3 credits
HDFS 515	Seminars on Biomarkers of the Family	3 credits

You should receive input from your POS Committee when determining what electives would be most appropriate for your research interests. The list above are only suggestions. You may chose other graduate courses that are the best fit for your research.

In addition to the above core requirements, your POS Committee and/or home department may have additional requirements or recommendations.

In all cases, additional coursework may be selected to satisfy individual interests, areas of deficiency, or Program of Study Committee recommendations.

Neuroscience graduate students are **encouraged to teach two semesters** as part of their training for an advanced degree. Students who are non-native English speakers, for whom English is not their first language, must take and pass the Oral English Certification Test (OECT) to be eligible to teach (see below).

Neuroscience Master's Degree Core Curriculum Requirements

Students seeking an MS degree must take a total of 30 credits, with not less than 22 credits earned at ISU. MS students have the same core course requirements, including seminar courses, as PhD students.

Transfer of Credits

The transferability of credits from other institutions will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the student's POS committee and the Neuroscience Chair. To waive a course requirement, send a memo, signed by your major professor (on behalf of your POS committee) and the instructor of the course you wish to waive, to the Neuroscience Chair. The memo should state that you have already received satisfactory instruction in the subject matter covered by the required course. Credits for seminars, workshops and colloquia are not transferable.

Graduate English Requirements for Non-native Speakers of English

Non-native English speakers must pass the English Requirement as established by the university. Depending on the results of this exam additional courses may be required to meet English proficiency standards.

English Placement Test

This test is for non-native English speakers who DO NOT have a prior Bachelor's, Master's or PhD degree from a U.S. college or university. If you have a Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD degree from a U.S. college or university, where the language of instruction was English, you need to fill out a Graduate English Requirement Approval form found on the Graduate College forms webpage:

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html>

The English Placement Test should be taken at the beginning of your first semester of enrollment, generally during orientation week and coordinated with International Students & Scholars check-in. It must be taken in addition to TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System), which is taken as part of the application/admission process. A student who does not pass the English Placement Examination is assigned to one or more courses in the English 101 series. This course work must be completed during the first year of study.

Testing Information for English Placement Test:

Email: ept@iastate.edu

Office: 226 Ross Hall (by appointment)

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~apling/ept.html>

Oral English Certification Test (OECT):

Center for Communication Excellence, Graduate College

1137 Pearson Hall

(515) 294-1958

itas@iastate.edu

<http://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/ita/oect>

International graduate students who fall in one of the following categories need to have their oral English language proficiency certified through OECT:

- Appointed/considered for a teaching assistantship
- Will have some teaching responsibilities even if not assigned a teaching assistantship
- Is currently applying for the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) or Graduate Student Teaching Certificate (GSTC) Programs

Please refer to the OECT website for a list of exemptions:

<http://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/ita/oect/candidates>

Generally the OECT of oral proficiency is offered at the beginning of the fall semester, end of the fall semester and end of the spring semester. Registration is required prior to testing. Information regarding specific test dates, registration, testing, and scoring can be found on the program website, <http://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/ita/oect>. Students, especially those anticipating a TA appointment, and faculty with questions about OECT testing should call (515) 294-1958 or email itas@iastate.edu.

A prospective teaching assistant who does not pass these tests is required to successfully complete course work and may require being retested. Sections of the courses University Studies 180 and 511 are designed to help new teaching assistants. These courses focus upon pronunciation, listening, question handling, teaching and lecturing skills, and an introduction to the culture of U.S. university life. Because enrollment is restricted in University Studies 180, TAs cannot register for the courses through Access Plus registration. TAs must appear at the OECT Office, 1137 Pearson Hall, on the first or second day of classes for fall or spring semester to obtain permission to enter the course by completing a course add slip.

PROGRESSING THROUGH YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM

Program of Study Committee Appointment

After you have chosen a major professor and home department, you will, in consultation with your major professor, appoint a graduate Program of Study (POS) Committee. The composition and responsibilities of the POS Committee will be in accordance with the Graduate College guidelines as detailed in the Graduate College handbook. The Program of Study Committee (POS Committee) provides oversight, advice, mentoring, and access to information and facilities. The committee is composed of faculty invited by the student to supervise their progress towards degree. The student's major professor chairs the committee. The POS Committee should include faculty whose research interests can aid and complement your research interests, as well as faculty whose expertise will ensure that you graduate with a breadth of knowledge. Specific rules govern the makeup of the committee. Current minimum requirements for the composition of Program of Study Committees are summarized below and on page 20 of this Neuroscience Student Handbook.

PhD POS Committees must include:

- At least five members of the ISU Graduate Faculty.
- At least three NEURO faculty members, which must include the major professor.
- At least one graduate faculty member outside the student's field of emphasis to ensure diversity of perspective. The faculty member serving as the representative outside the student's field of emphasis may be a NEURO faculty member.

MS POS Committees must include:

- At least three members of the ISU Graduate Faculty.
- At least two NEURO faculty members, which must include the major professor.
- At least one graduate faculty member outside the student's field of emphasis to ensure diversity of perspective. The faculty member serving as the representative outside the student's field of emphasis may be a NEURO faculty member.

There are provisions to allow for co-major professors and for service of non-graduate faculty members on POS committees. For details, please consult the Graduate College Handbook – Chapter 6.

Within six months of joining their home lab or by the beginning of the third semester, students should have made their final member selections for their POS Committee and should have an approved POSC. Regular meetings between a student and their POS Committee are strongly recommended as one of the key steps in making progress towards a degree.

Program of Study

The Graduate College Program of Study is one of the more important documents you will encounter while in graduate school. In essence, it is a contract between you and the Graduate College indicating the minimum course work and credits that must be taken to complete your degree (PhD or MS). No changes can be made to it without the mutual approval of the student, the Major Professor, the POS Committee, the major and when applicable co-major or minor graduate programs, along with the Graduate College. Students will meet with the POS Committee no less than three times throughout their progress. The first meeting should occur after year 2 to ensure course work and potential research project is in line with the Committee. The student will then meet with the Committee for the proposal and defense. Student may meet with their committee more frequently, and continued communication through email is encouraged.

Each student, in consultation with their POS Committee, formulates a POS, based on the curricular guidelines established by the major program, and when applicable co-major or minor programs, along with the ISU Graduate College. All the courses listed on the POS must be successfully completed to be eligible for graduation and obtaining the degree sought.

Students are advised to complete their POSC as soon as possible. The Neuroscience Program requires its students to submit their POSC for approval by the start of the third semester, or within six months of joining their home lab. The Graduate College requires that the POSC form must be approved by the Graduate College no later than the term before the preliminary oral examination (doctoral candidates) or final oral examination (master's candidates). In order for the POSC form to be approved in any given term, the form must be submitted to the Graduate College by the published deadline for that term.

POSC forms are available online through Workday. Each student's program of study should be designed to correct deficiencies in academic preparation, allow study of subject matter that most interests the student, and avoid repetition in areas where the student is well prepared. The POS committee assures that program requirements are met before approving the POSC form.

For additional information about the POSC please reference the Graduate College Handbook – Chapter 6 and POSC website.

<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/handbook/>

<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/posc/>

Graduate College Requirements for Composition of Program of Study Committees

Below is listed the current minimum requirements for the composition of Program of Study Committees. The rules are established by the Graduate College, but are listed below in terms of a student majoring in Neuroscience. All individuals listed below must be members

of the Graduate Faculty. See the *Graduate College Handbook* for a complete explanation and instructions on how to have co-major professors, additional members, etc.

		PhD	MS
Major Professor ^{1,2}	Inside Neuroscience	1	1
Committee Member	Inside Neuroscience	2	1
Committee Member	Not Neuroscience	1	
Any Member of Graduate Faculty		1	1
Minimum Total		5	3

¹The major professor, or one of the co-major professors, must hold graduate faculty status. The list of graduate faculty in each department can be found in the Appendix of the *Graduate College Handbook*.

²If the major professor holds a Collaborator appointment, there must be a co-major professor who holds regular faculty status.

Dissertation Research Proposal

PhD candidates majoring in Neuroscience must present a description of their proposed dissertation research to their POS committees at or before the time they submit their proposed Program of Study to their POS Committee for approval. The proposal must include a written component submitted to the POS Committee prior to an oral presentation. The POS Committee will determine the length and formality of the written and oral components. Research proposal requirements, if any, for master's degree candidates are determined by their home departments, if applicable.

Note: Some departments require their students to present formal, detailed research proposals later in their degree program, for example, in conjunction with a formal departmental seminar, or as a part of the preliminary exam. If a POS committee so desires, they can require a Neuroscience student to fulfill such additional proposal requirements.

Preliminary Examinations

All graduate students must pass certain examinations before obtaining their advanced degrees. A preliminary oral examination is required of PhD degree students by the Graduate College. This examination should be completed by the end of your third year. Preliminary exams for students majoring in Neuroscience must include a written component as well as an oral component. The POS committee determines the nature of the written component, but it is often in the form of an NIH or NSF grant application. The Preliminary Oral Exam is given by the student to his/her POS Committee. It is the student's responsibility to arrange an appropriate date, time, and location for the oral prelim. Students request their Oral Preliminary Exam via the *Online Preliminary or Final Oral Exam Request* link as found on the Graduate College forms webpage. *This request form must be submitted to the Graduate College at least two weeks prior to the oral exam.*

Master's degree candidates are not required to take a Preliminary Examination.

Additional information about the University Oral Preliminary Exam requirement can be found in the Graduate College Handbook – Chapter 4.4.2 Examinations.

Graduate College Forms

https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/student_forms.php.

Writing Your Thesis

Neuroscience accepts theses written for MS or PhD degrees in either the traditional format or the so-called “alternate format”, which includes one or more papers designed for submission to a journal. Writing in “alternate format” will help you learn to write papers and, at the same time, shorten the time it takes for your thesis research to be published. The Graduate College Thesis/Dissertation website, <https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/current/thesis/>, is a resource developed to help all Iowa State University graduate students with this important part of their degree.

Preparing for Graduation

Each semester, the Graduate College publishes the deadline dates, <https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/calendar/>, for submission of appropriate forms and paperwork. It is a good idea for students approaching their graduation term to review this information and be sure to observe all appropriate deadlines. Early in the semester in which you expect to graduate, you must apply for Graduation with the Graduate College through Workday – Grad Student Status Page. This form indicates your intended date of graduation, exact thesis or dissertation title and other relevant information. Currently, the deadline for submitting an Application for Graduation form is within the first couple weeks of the term. If you do not graduate at the expected time, a new application must be submitted. It is of note that you are charged a graduation fee when you submit your Application for Graduation form. This fee may be nonrefundable if graduation is not cancelled on or before the cancellation deadline.

After the dissertation or thesis has been completed and all the other requirements have been met, except for the Final Research Seminar and Final Examination, you should consult with your major professor and POS Committee to arrange a time for the Final Research Seminar and Final Examination.

You **must** also request permission from the Graduate College to schedule the Final Examination. Students request their Final Oral Exam via the *Online Preliminary or Final Oral Exam Request* link as found on the Graduate College forms webpage. *This request form must be submitted to the Graduate College at least three weeks prior to the oral exam.*

Graduate College Forms

https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/student_forms.php

Final Examination (Defense)

The Final Oral Examination for the PhD and MS degree is an oral defense of your dissertation or thesis given by you to your POS Committee and any other faculty who wish to attend. This examination reviews the dissertation or thesis and your knowledge of relevant subjects. In many departments, the oral defense follows immediately after the Final Research Seminar. Talk to your major professor to determine the best way to schedule your Final Research Seminar in relation to your defense. It is best to schedule the final defense and research seminar well in advance.

The results of the examination are reported on the "Report of Final Examination" form that will be sent by the Graduate College directly to the program and forwarded to you and your major professor.

Final Research Seminar

All students are required to present a formal, public seminar describing their completed research. The seminar must be announced ***at least two weeks in advance*** to the Neuroscience faculty and students and other members of the Iowa State academic community. Please notify the NEURO office staff of the time and place of the seminar. The program coordinator will assist you in sending a seminar announcement to appropriate individuals.

Evaluating Your Performance

Continued membership in the Neuroscience program and financial support is contingent upon satisfactory progress towards your degree. At the end of the first year, and thereafter, students will document their own progress by preparing a brief annual report of their coursework, research, exams and POS meetings and other professional activities. Students should meet with their primary mentor to discuss their progress first and complete the evaluation form (see below). The form should be signed by both the student and primary mentor and submitted to the chair. Progress will then be evaluated by the Supervisory Committee (minus the student representative). Evaluation will be on the following basis:

- Grades: A cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 is required by the Graduate College for continued appointment to an assistantship
- Performance in laboratory rotations and progress in selection of a major professor (if applicable)
- Progress in initiation of your research project
- Progress in forming POS Committee, completing a Program of Study, and completion of preliminary exam
- Progress in presenting research results
- Evaluation from the major professor.

A notation of progress and recommendations for continuance in the major or corrections of deficiencies may be sent to the major professor and are placed in the student's file.

Dismissal Policy

Students may be dismissed from the NEURO program, that is, removed from the degree program and not permitted to register as NEURO graduate students. Dismissal may occur for any of the following reasons:

a) Failure to progress in his/her degree program

This may be evidenced by a lack of research progress, a lack of aptitude or a failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing, as defined by the Iowa State University *Graduate College Handbook*.

b) Lack of a major professor

Because graduate degrees in Neuroscience at ISU are centered about a mentored research project, it is impossible to complete a degree without a research mentor (major professor). To maintain membership in Neuroscience, a student must have a Neuroscience faculty member serving as his or her major professor. A student admitted to Neuroscience on rotation has up to 12 months to find a major professor. It is the responsibility of the student to find a faculty member willing to serve; faculty members have the right to refuse. Faculty members who have agreed to serve may choose to terminate their service by notifying and explaining to the Neuroscience Chair this intent, in writing. A student who has lost his or her major professor has up to 3 months after the date the Neuroscience Chair is notified by the faculty member to identify another Neuroscience faculty member willing to serve as his or her major professor. If the student desires assistance, the Neuroscience Chair will help the student search for a major professor; however, final responsibility for finding a major professor rests with the student.

c) Academic Dishonesty

The proper conduct of science requires the highest standards of personal integrity. Because of this, the University and Neuroscience consider dishonesty in the classroom or in the conduct of research to be a serious offense. Students accused of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the *University Catalog* and the Faculty Handbook. Possible punishments can include dismissal from the program and expulsion from the University, depending on the severity of the offense.

Dismissal Procedures

A student's POS committee, or if the student has no POS committee, the student's major professor, temporary advisor, or a member of the Neuroscience Supervisory Committee has the right to recommend dismissal of any student for any of the reasons listed above. Recommendations for dismissal are made by sending a memo to the Neuroscience Chair.

Procedures for dismissal are as described in the Iowa State University *Graduate College Handbook*.

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/publications/gchandbook/homepage.html>

Before a dismissal is decided, the Neuroscience Chair must give the student a written notice explaining why dismissal is being considered. It is the responsibility of the Neuroscience Chair to discuss the situation with the student, as well as their POS Committee, major professor, temporary advisor, and/or Supervisory Committee, in an attempt to find a satisfactory resolution. This discussion constitutes the informal conference as described in the *Graduate College Handbook*. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, and the Supervisory Committee votes to dismiss the student, either party may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of the Graduate College for a decision. The student may appeal the decision of the Associate Dean, as described in the *Graduate College Handbook*.

Responsibilities of Neuroscience and the Major Professor

It is the responsibility of the Neuroscience Program to counsel students who are having academic difficulties, to help students search for an acceptable major professor or, if students are unable to overcome these difficulties, to help the students identify and apply to other appropriate degree programs. It is the responsibility of the major professor and his/her department to seek funds for a student's assistantship and for the conduct of research.

Relationship between Status in Neuroscience and Termination of Financial Support

Although students in Neuroscience are normally supported on graduate assistantships, this is not a requirement for continued participation in the Neuroscience Program. Students not on assistantship will continue to have regular status in the major so long as they remain in good standing and are registered.

However, because assistantship support at Iowa State requires that a student be a member of a graduate program, dismissal from the Neuroscience Program requires that assistantship support be terminated unless the student is able to transfer to another graduate program at ISU.

In addition, termination of financial support by a major professor does not necessarily imply that the faculty member is no longer willing to serve as the student's major professor or that the student's membership in Neuroscience will change. **Decisions regarding termination and renewal of assistantships are made by the department or program offering the assistantships, which in most cases is not Neuroscience.** Students with any doubt about their status should discuss their situation with their major professor, the Neuroscience Program Chair, and/or the department or program providing their assistantship support. For further information on termination of assistantship appointments, see the *Graduate College Handbook*.

Appeal Process

The University has established appeal processes for student grievances. These vary depending on the nature of the grievance, and are described in the *Graduate College Handbook*. Generally, these procedures begin with the program chair or the appropriate DEO. It is usually best for all parties if a satisfactory resolution can be reached without initiating a formal appeal process. The Associate Dean of the Graduate College is available to informally consult with students and faculty.

Surviving It All

One of the first genuine shocks for many students in graduate school is how hard they need to work to keep up with all their classes, research, and other responsibilities. The pressures on individual students vary with their departments, professors and projects. However, most students find that they need to work harder as graduate students than at any time before in their lives. The number of hours per week can be staggering. If you are like most students and discover there simply aren't enough hours in the day, the best way to survive is to learn how to select your priorities and focus on them. Your professor and/or more experienced students can give you advice. You are also encouraged to seek advice from the NEURO Chair or members of the NEURO Supervisory Committee. If you are feeling overwhelmed with personal or professional obligations and stress, the Iowa State University Student Counseling Services office offers additional, confidential resources. Student Counseling Services are available on the third Floor of the Student Services Building. Their phone number is (515) 294-5056. You may also access additional information on their program website, <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~stdtcouns/>.

CHECKLIST			
Student Name			
Degree			
Date Started			
Major Professor			
Co-advisor (if any)			
Major			
Minor or Co-Major			
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS			
	<i>Term/Year</i>	<i>Notes</i>	
Joined Lab of Major Professor		No later than April 15.	
POS Committee Formed		Within 6 months of joining lab.	
POS Approved by Grad College		Must be approved the term before the Preliminary Oral Exam (PhD) or Final Oral Defense (Masters).	
First Meeting with POSC		The meeting should include a preliminary research proposal and course overview.	
Preliminary Exam (PhD only)		First semester of 3 rd year. Must include a written component in the form of a thesis proposal.	
Thesis/Dissertation Submitted to POSC		Unless an exception has been approved, your thesis must include one or more first author papers written in a form suitable for submission to a journal. Thesis must be given to your POSC at least 2 weeks prior to your defense.	
Final Thesis/Dissertation Defense		For Ph.D students, Grad College requirement of at least 6 months between the preliminary oral exam and final defense.	
Final Research Seminar		This must be a public seminar and the announcement must be given to the Neuroscience Program Coordinator to distribute to all Neuroscience faculty and students.	
COURSE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS			
	<i>Term/Year</i>	<i>Grade/s</i>	<i>If a requirement has been waived, date of approval</i>
Neuro 557			
Neuro 556 (Bio 436)			
Kin 572			
Psych 519			
BMS 537			
Neuro 661			
Neuro 696			
Stat 587			
Neuro 699			
Ethics			
Elective 1			
Elective 2			
Teaching Assignment 1			
Teaching Assignment 2			

Yearly Evaluation Form

Name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Year in Program:	Click or tap here to enter text.
GPA:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Major Professor:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Rotation Completed:	Click or tap here to enter text.
POS Committee:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date of Preliminary Exam:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date of Final Defense:	Click or tap here to enter text.

Comment on the following areas:

Progress in initiation of your research project:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Progress in presenting your research results:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Overall evaluation from your major professor (to be completed by your major professor):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Student Signature and Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

Major Professor Signature and Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Your Appointment

Most students in Neuroscience receive some form of financial support. However, both the source of the support and the responsibilities associated with it vary from situation to situation. Doctoral students entering Neuroscience directly usually receive a research assistantship (RA) or a teaching assistantship (TA) funded by Neuroscience during their first year. Stipends for students supported by departments or in joining a NEURO faculty lab directly (most often MS students) are governed by departmental policies. The responsibilities associated with your stipends depend on whether you have an RA or a TA. Information about these forms of support is available in the *Graduate College Handbook*.

Upon joining a lab, the student's stipend is determined by the major professor according to the professor's departmental policies, unless the student has been awarded a special fellowship. This stipend may be lower than the stipend provided by Neuroscience to rotating students. Funding situations may change for a student during their years of study. Each fiscal year (beginning July 1) the student signs a new Letter of Intent that specifies the terms of funding for the coming year. Letters of Intent generally extend 6 or 12 months.

All graduate students receiving support through an assistantship will sign a Graduate Assistantship Letter of Intent that lists the terms and conditions of their appointment. Generally, graduate assistantship appointments are on a one-half time basis. Although technically this means that a student being paid through an assistantship is expected to work 20 hours per week (half time) on the project for which the assistantship is given (the other half being classroom training), in practice the student is expected to work more than 40 hours per week on classroom learning and lab research.

After the first year, the vast majority of the student's time is spent doing laboratory research. A Teaching Assistantship is for work in an assigned class; a Research Assistantship is for the research of the major professor. The research project for which the RA is given will usually (but is not required to) coincide with the student's thesis research. Most often the half-time appointment is the maximum for a graduate student in order to allow the remainder of the student's time to be spent on graduate courses and research. Appointments may be terminated by mutual consent or for cause as described in the *Graduate College Handbook*. If you have any questions regarding your appointment, speak with the NEURO Program Chair and/or Program Coordinator as well as with whomever is providing your assistantship (faculty or department).

PhD graduate students appointed on a half-time assistantship (either RA or TA) and who remain in good academic standing, receive a full tuition scholarship. This tuition scholarship covers 100% of tuition. The student fees, assessed once per term, are the responsibility of the student. These fees are assessed at the beginning of each semester and include charges for the health facilities, technology, etc. Additional information on fees and expenses can be found on the Tuition and Fees webpage from the Office of the Registrar, <http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/fees/>.

As graduate assistants you will be paid every two weeks. You are advised to set up a direct deposit account with ISU Human Resources. Payroll will be automatically deposited into this account. Applicable deductions as well as Federal and State income taxes and Social Security withholdings apply. **Full or partial support during summer months depends on financial resources of the major professor.**

Grants for Professional Travel

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate, GPSS, provides Professional Advancement Grants (PAG) to support graduate student research. These professional development grants are generally allowed once per year and are on a first come, first serve basis. First year students are eligible to apply for these funds, even while completing research rotations.

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/gpss/>

Attendance and presentation of research results at professional meetings are essential parts of your training, helping to build your professional network. All students should, to the greatest extent possible, attend at minimum one national or international meeting during their degree program.

Students should seek funds for travel from a variety of sources to receive the greatest level of support – this should include their major professor, home department, graduate program, GPSS, etc.

Some funding agencies have a time limit for turning in travel expense vouchers. It is important to coordinate with the various funding entities *before* your travel. This helps ensure that you know what receipts and information are required and eligible for reimbursement. Travel reimbursements are processed only after your travel.

Benefits

ISU Student and Scholar Health Insurance Program

Single coverage student health insurance, including prescription drug benefits, under the ISU Student Health Insurance Plan is provided at no cost to all graduate students receiving an assistantship (RA or TA). Additional information about the Student Health Insurance Program can be found on the Student and Scholars Health Insurance Program website. You will need to enroll in the Student Health Insurance Program, following appropriate annual renewal requirements.

Dental coverage is optional at a reduced premium. Students have the option of adding a spouse or applicable dependents to both health insurance and dental insurance programs,

and are responsible for the associated premiums for selected coverage. Dependents can be added during the open renewal period or following a qualifying event.

All international students, whether on assistantship or not, are required to carry the ISU Student Health Insurance or to be covered by another health insurance policy. For more information, or if you have questions or concerns, please contact Room 3241 of the Memorial Union (294-1120).

**Student & Scholar
Health Insurance Program**

<http://sship.hr.iastate.edu/>

3810 Beardshear Hall

Phone: (515) 294-4800

Email: isusship@iastate.edu

**International Students & Scholars Office
(ISSO)**

<https://www.isso.iastate.edu/>

3241 Memorial Union

(515) 294-1120

Email: isso@iastate.edu

Health Service

As a student, you are eligible to use ISU Health Services. A mandatory health fee and health facility fee are assessed once per semester/term to all students registered according to the number of credits registered and/or full-time enrollment status. These fees provide for services at Thielen Student Health Center, the first point of contact for student health needs and concerns. Please note that these fees can change without notice.

Thielen Student Health Center

<http://www.cyclonehealth.org/>

Student Health, 2647 Union Drive

Emergency: 911

Appointments: (515) 294-5801

After Hours Advice: (800) 524-6877

Billing Questions: (515) 294-7523

Pharmacy: (515) 294-7983

Physical Therapy: (515) 294-2626

Vacations and Sick Leave

Vacation and sick leave does not accrue for graduate assistants and is set at the discretion of your major professor. One possible scenario is that a research assistant with a half-time appointment (C base) will earn vacation at a rate of eight hours per month. Because you are half time, this would be equivalent to two calendar days. You can take vacation with the approval of your academic advisor and by notifying your departmental secretary or, in the first year, the Neuroscience Chair and Program Coordinator. (See your *Graduate College Handbook* for detailed information.)

In your first year, Absence Requests are handled by the Neuroscience office. In later years, Absence Requests will be handled by your home department. Students on assistantships (RA or TA) are employees of ISU and therefore are allowed time off on

official university holidays, but any absence preceding or following the official holiday is counted as vacation. For additional details, see the University Policy Manual, <http://policy.iastate.edu/>.

Teaching assistants are subject to the academic calendar and do not accumulate vacation time. However, they are not required by the University to work when classes are not in session. Graduate assistants on teaching assistantships should, nevertheless, get permission from their major professor before taking a vacation from their research responsibilities.

If you will be absent because of an illness, you should call your advisor or major professor as soon as possible on the day you are sick and must be absent. Maternity/Paternity leave can be taken as sick leave and/or vacation.

Injuries and Injury Reports

All accidents and injuries occurring at work or in the course of employment must be reported to the employee's supervisor (your professor or the administrative offices of NEURO or your home department), even if no medical attention is required. The supervisor and/or employee are responsible for electronically completing a First Report of Injury via Workday. The Supervisor is then responsible for reviewing this and electronically submitting it to the Human Resource Services within 24 hours of when the incident is reported. Incidents that are not reported may cause an employee to be ineligible for future benefits related to this injury or illness. The filing of an accident report is not an admission of liability. Each report will be evaluated by the state's third party administrator to determine whether the claim meets the criteria to be classified as workers' compensation. Please refer to the University's Human Resources webpage for additional Worker's Compensation information, <http://www.hrs.iastate.edu/hrs/node/73>.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Administrative Assistance

There are a number of offices on campus to help with the administration of your graduate program. The main one for Neuroscience students is the Interdepartmental Graduate Programs office, 220 MacKay Hall. General program questions relating to University requirements, procedures, and deadlines may be directed to the NEURO Program Coordinator. Academic advice about courses and rotations will be provided by your temporary advisor or major professor. See the Academic Matters section of this handbook.

Program Coordinator
Interdepartmental Graduate Programs
220 MacKay Hall
☎ (515) 294-6442
FAX (515) 294-6193
E-mail: neuroscience@iastate.edu

Office and Home Addresses

As an Iowa State University graduate student you will be listed in the ISU Online Directory – <http://info.iastate.edu/>. All students are advised to check their current university address in AccessPlus. Please make sure that the campus address and campus phone number on file are current and accurate. This will help ensure that university correspondences and paperwork are forwarded to the appropriate location. Maintaining up-to-date information is very important. Students should plan to review this information annually for accuracy. For local and permanent address and phone information, you have the option of excluding that information from the university public directory.

Communications

It is vital that you maintain good contact with NEURO personnel throughout your graduate program. There are a number of ways to do this:

Email: Upon enrolling as a graduate student you will be assisted in establishing an Iowa State University E-mail account. Email should be checked daily as this is the **primary means** of keeping our students informed about program activities and requirements.

Internet: The NEURO home page will contain most of the information that pertains to on-going program events. In addition, the Graduate College website provides a wealth of information for graduate students.

<http://www.neuroscience.iastate.edu/>
<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/>

Mail Service: You will normally pick up your mail in your home department. If you have not yet chosen a home department, mail may be sent to you at 220 MacKay Hall. You will be notified when you receive mail.

Telephone: Local calls (phone numbers in Ames) may be made on most campus phones. Long distance calls must **not** be made on University phones without the prior approval of the person to whom the phone is assigned.

Transportation

Parking Division

<http://www.parking.iastate.edu/>

27 Armory Building

(515) 294-3388

parking@iastate.edu

Bicycles: You can park your bicycle at many locations on campus. Except for walks labeled as bike paths, bicycle riders must not use campus sidewalks. A bicycle used between sundown and sunrise must be equipped with a headlight, taillights or an adequate reflector, and a warning device. Bicycles used only on campus can be registered free through the ISU Parking Office. Bicycles used off campus must be registered by the city of Ames.

The city of Ames requires that all bicycles be licensed. The licenses may be obtained from various locations in Ames or from the Parking Systems Office in the Armory on campus.

Buses: The city of Ames has an excellent bus system called CyRide. During the school year the buses leave from most locations every 20 minutes. The fare is free for students if you show a current, paid University fee card. The CyRide website is www.cyride.com.

Cars and Parking: A copy of the ISU Traffic and Parking Regulations can be obtained from Public Safety, Parking Division, 27 Armory, or online at: <http://www.parking.iastate.edu/>
**Consult the section covering students.*

Help in Preparing Material for Research Presentations

Please see the following website for additional guidance,
<https://www.cltt.iastate.edu/checkout-equipment/>.

Professional Ethics

It is imperative that you understand the ethical standards of science and conduct your scholarly activities accordingly. Scientists who commit unethical acts, whether from carelessness, ignorance, or malice, quickly lose the respect of the scientific community and may be prevented from receiving funding support. Scientific misconduct includes such

activities as: falsification of data, fabrication, deceptively selective reporting, purposeful omission of conflicting data with the intent to falsify results, plagiarism, representation of another's work as one's own, misappropriation of the ideas of others, the unauthorized use of privileged information, misappropriation of funds or resources for personal gain, and falsification of one's credentials. At ISU, these acts are taken very seriously and constitute "academic misconduct". Please refer to the ISU Faculty Handbook and the Graduate College Handbook:

<http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/faculty-handbook>

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/publications/gchandbook/>

Individuals found guilty of academic misconduct may suffer a variety of penalties, up to and including expulsion from the university.

Occasionally, you may be faced with situations in which you are tempted to act in a manner you think might be unethical. If this occurs, we recommend discussing the situation with your major professor, or another professor whom you trust, to determine whether the actions you are considering are unethical. He or she should be able to suggest alternative actions that will be free of ethical questions.

Unfortunately, not all people understand or care about ethical issues and, at some time in your career, you may be witness to an act you believe to be unethical. When the individuals committing the presumed unethical acts are members of your own laboratory, or worse yet, individuals with power over you, such as your major professor, the situation can be very awkward and you must proceed cautiously. You will find yourself torn between a fear of retribution and a desire to stop the unethical behavior before it hurts you and other members of your laboratory.

If you believe that unethical behavior is going on in your laboratory, we recommend that you first attempt to discuss the situation informally with the person whom you think might be behaving unethically. Sometimes friendly questions will resolve the problem, such as "This data looks almost perfect; how did you do this experiment?" or "Are you sure that you can omit that data point? Won't that prejudice your interpretation?" or "This paragraph doesn't sound like your writing; are you sure you didn't unintentionally copy some of this?" If you feel uncomfortable in this approach, or if you have tried this approach and it didn't resolve the problem, we recommend that you discuss the situation informally with a professor whom you trust. You may also go directly to the Chair of Neuroscience or a member of the NEURO Supervisory Committee. All discussions with the Chair and the NEURO Supervisory Committee members will be confidential.

You may also go directly to the Associate Vice Provost for Research, 2810 Beardshear Hall, who is responsible for investigating charges of academic misconduct on campus. No matter what you chose to do, you should take great care to ensure the rights of the individual whose actions you are questioning. Frivolous accusations of misconduct and vicious spreading of rumors are just as unethical as fabrication of data or plagiarism.

Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action

The University Policy on Discrimination and Harassment can be read in its entirety at <http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/discrimination/>.

The University Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy can be found at the Iowa State University Policy Library website, <http://policy.iastate.edu/>. This policies website will provide guidance to you on how to proceed in addressing any concerns.

NOTES