

Office of Research Education
Memorandum of Understanding - Direct Admit Policy

I. Background/Definitions.

Typically, students spend their first 10.5 months in a PhD program doing course work and laboratory rotations. They have not yet selected their PhD mentor, and the Office of Research Education (ORE) covers their tuition, stipend and fees during this period. Once they have selected and joined the research program of their PhD mentor, the mentor then becomes responsible for tuition, stipend and fees.

Rotations play an important role in a student's training during the first year training experience. They allow students to have first-hand knowledge of the breadth of the research interests of program faculty. In addition, the rotations allow students and potential mentors to assess how they work with each other and develop a working relationship to support optimal training for the student. That being said, in a limited number of cases, a student begins the first year with her/his/their PhD mentor identified. We refer to this situation as a "direct admit (DA)" because the student is "directly admitted" to the research program of an assigned PhD mentor.

Below, we detail the conditions and requirements for a "direct admit" student. The goals are to ensure that (1) direct admission to a specified PhD mentor's research group has been carefully considered and is consistent with optimal training of the student, (2) DA students, except for the rotation requirement and delay of choice of thesis mentor to after the first year, are treated no differently than any other student in the program, (3) that the mentor is fully aware of and agrees to the financial obligations as detailed below, and (4) both the student and mentor are aware of and accept the conditions that accompany direct admission, as detailed below. The student, mentor and PD will all sign this Memorandum of Understanding to indicate that they agree to and accept the policy stated here. The conditions and requirements discussed here are to be considered as minimal and individual PhD programs may have additional ones. Please note that some programs have policies that do not allow DA students. In addition, some programs have additional conditions for DA students beyond those discussed here. The policies in place in a student's home program need to be followed in addition to the ones discussed here.

I. Admission Process.

Direct admit (DA) students will have applied to the program, been selected for interview and offered admission. Ideally, the student will have interviewed with several potential thesis mentors. The goal here is to ensure that DA students are treated similarly to other program students and meet the criteria/bar for admission set for regular admit students.

II. Curriculum requirements.

Except for the laboratory rotations, DA students must meet the same curriculum requirements as other students in the program. Some programs may elect to have a student present a talk similar to a post-rotational talk, along with other first year students, based on their research with the chosen mentor.

III. Student expectations.

The decision to enter directly the research program of the chosen mentor requires careful and thoughtful consideration. A DA student should have prior knowledge and working experience with the mentor, e.g., as a PRA, to have a good idea of the mentor's training style and interactions with trainees. It is expected that the student will make every effort to complete the PhD training with the pre-selected mentor. The student should work with the mentor and advisor to be assertive and identify problems and concerns as they arise to ensure that the student-mentor relationship is strong and maintained.

The student understands that there will be limited, if any, opportunities to do a shortened "rotation" if the need for a new mentor arises. Accordingly, until the DA student has a PhD committee, the student should

have a designated advisor or advising committee in the event issues arise that would benefit from an outside perspective and advice.

DA students will adhere to all other Program rules and requirements. Specifically, they will be required to successfully complete the same coursework, examinations, and laboratory research requirements as other students in the Program. Students not meeting these requirements will be subject to dismissal from the Program.

IV. Mentor expectations and financial obligations.

a) Expectations: The mentor will agree to the standard expectations for training a student who has chosen the mentor for PhD training. In addition, during the first 10.5 months in the program, even though the student will not be financially supported by ORE, the mentor understands and agrees that the student will complete first year course requirements. Standard rotation requirements are typically waived or modified. Depending on the program, the student may be required to present a post-rotational like-talk based on on-going research with the mentor.

b) Financial obligations: DA student financial support will be commensurate with any other student in the program. In contrast to typical students who are supported by ORE for the first 10.5 months, the mentor of a DA student assumes immediate financial responsibility and will cover the DA student's stipend, tuition and fees, upon entry to their research program and laboratory.

For FY 2022, the costs to support the first 10.5 months of a DA student are provided in the Table below. Please note that if a student enters with transfer credits, tuition will accordingly be reduced by the amount corresponding to the number of transfer credits. The costs undergo regular review and changes. For example, the stipend is regularly increased to be competitive with peer institutions; however, when and by how much the stipend is increased is difficult to predict. In 2021, it was increased from \$31,000 to \$34,000. Fees and recruitment expenses are budgeted with a 3% annual increase.

Stipend (10.5 months)	\$29,750
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021-2022 stipend rate is \$34,000/year 	
Tuition (If a student has transfer credits, tuition is reduced accordingly.)	\$10,912 (in state)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021-2022 in-state tuition rate is \$496 per credit (22 credits) • 2021-2022 out-of-state tuition rate is \$1,021 per credit (22 credits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Majority of first year students are out-of-state 	\$22,462 (out of state))
Fees	\$6,108
Enrichment (charged each year a DA student is in the program)	\$500/year
Total first year costs (In subsequent years, \$500 enrichment is added to the traditional stipend, tuition)	\$47,270 (in-state) \$58,820 (out of state) <i>In first year; plus \$500 for enrichment each later year in addition to traditional costs; if there are transfer credits, tuition would be reduced.</i>

As for any other student in the program, a DA student is highly encouraged to apply for independent fellowship support. In addition, if the program has a T32 and the DA student meets the criteria for appointment, the student would be a candidate for T32 support.

V. Resolution of problems/unexpected events.

Upon matriculation, DA students will be assigned a faculty member from the program's Graduate Training/Advising Committee and meet regularly (e.g., monthly) with this designated faculty member to ensure outside oversight of the student's progress and work to resolve any issues that might arise. Once the student has established a PhD committee, the committee - and specifically the Chair of the committee - will assume responsibility for providing outside oversight of the student's progress and work to resolve any issues that might arise.

All good faith attempts will be made to proactively resolve disagreements and/or conflicts between the student and mentor. It is essential that both the student and mentor express their views, especially ones of concern, respectfully and as soon as they emerge. It is recommended to consult with the thesis chair or assigned faculty promptly if issues or concerns arise. The goal is to resolve issues when they first emerge and/or are minor to avoid situations that worsen or become untenable. It is the responsibility of both the mentor and student to listen respectfully to each other and work constructively to resolve issues.

In the event that conflicts between the student and mentor cannot be resolved, the student will need to identify a new mentor. Depending on the program the mentor may be required to continue support of the student for additional rotations.

VI. Approval. This policy was approved by the ORE Associate Dean and the Directors of all ORE PhD programs on (indicate date here).

(PD and ORE AD initials here)

VII. Student, Mentor and Program Director Signatures

We the undersigned agree to and accept the ORE policy for direct admission as detailed in this MOU.

Student's signature:

Date:

Mentor's signature:

Date:

PhD program Director:

Date:

VIII. Approval of Policy by Program Directors

Biomedical Sciences Program

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