

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	i
I. Welcome .....	3
Memo from the NGF Student Representative Mona Sobhani .....	5
II. PROGRAM LIFE .....	7
New Student Orientation Checklist.....	8
a. Information for All Students.....	8
Additional Requirements for International Students.....	12
Registration Process.....	14
Student Health and Insurance .....	16
Dental Care .....	16
Program Life .....	18
1. Program Seminars and Journal Clubs.....	18
2. Annual Student Symposium .....	19
3. Annual Neuroscience Retreat .....	20
4. The Neuroscience Graduate Program Offices .....	20
5. Mail.....	20
7. Neuroscience Teas.....	21
8. Library Facilities .....	21
9. Procedure for Student Computer Account Creation .....	22
10. Inter-campus transportation.....	22
General Information About Financial Support .....	23
1. Research Assistantships .....	23
2. Teaching Assistantships.....	24
3. Fellowships .....	24
4. Training Grants.....	24
5. Individual Fellowships and Grants .....	25
6. Summer Support .....	25
7. First-year fellowship .....	25
8. Paying taxes on Fellowships.....	25
III. Program Handbook.....	27
Academic Procedures.....	27
1. Program of study for the Ph.D. ....	27
2. Academic Requirements .....	27
3. Beyond Course Work.....	30
4. Oral Presentation Requirement.....	31
5. Lab Rotations .....	31
6. Lab Visits .....	34
7. Advising .....	34
8. Student Evaluations .....	34
9. Academic Warning and Dismissal of Graduate Students.....	34
10. Qualifying Exam Procedure .....	35
11. Annual Meeting with Dissertation/Guidance Committee.....	39

12. Some Advice on Writing the Dissertation ..... 39

Some Ethical Concerns ..... 42

    1. SCampus. .... 42

    2. On Being a Scientist..... 42

IV. Timeline to Degree ..... 43

V. Directories..... 47

    NGP Faculty ..... 47

New Neuroscience Graduate Students - Fall 2012..... 47

Returning Neuroscience Graduate Students..... 49

VI. LA Life..... 52

    Housing ..... 52

    Transportation and Parking ..... 53

    Culture and Recreation..... 55

    Banking and Shopping..... 56

    Other Important Locations ..... 57

VII. FORMS ..... 58

    Neuroscience Graduate Program Laboratory Rotation Contract ..... 58

    Neuroscience Graduate Program Rotation Summary..... 59

    Mentor Matching Form ..... 60

    Neuroscience Guidance Committee Member Form..... 61

    Annual meeting of the Guidance/Dissertation Committee Form ..... 62

    Academic Advisement Form ..... 63

    Standard Petition Form ..... 64

    Plagiarism Prevention Agreement ..... 65

## I. WELCOME

Welcome to the Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) at USC. Neuroscience is a discipline that integrates many traditional academic fields. The Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) at USC was established to foster training that leads to focused research within an interdisciplinary context. Formed in 1994, USC created NGP as a university-wide doctoral program that brought together researchers from diverse experimental and academic backgrounds with the goal of coordinating neuroscience research and graduate training.

The NGP, and neuroscience in general, continues explosive growth at USC. Presently, more than 100 graduate students from 20 different countries are pursuing their Ph.D. degrees within the NGP. Incoming graduate students can choose to perform their dissertation research in laboratories of nearly 90 NGP faculty members. The faculty hold primary appointments in more than 20 departments in the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, the Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Engineering, or Gerontology or at affiliates of USC.

Laboratories associated with the NGP are located in four separate USC campuses. Administration of the NGP is located in the Hedco Neuroscience Building on the University Park Campus. This campus is home to approximately 40% of the laboratories run by NGP training faculty, especially in buildings housing the Sections of Neurobiology and Molecular Biology of the Department of Biological Sciences, and the Departments of Psychology, Computer Science, Biomedical Engineering, and the School of Gerontology. Many Faculty are located on the Health Sciences Campus (HSC), which is the home of approximately 40% of NGP training faculty laboratories. This campus has training faculty in the Zilkha Neurogenetic and Broad Stem Cell Institutes, in the Departments of Cell and Neurobiology, Neurology, Pharmacology and in the Schools of Pharmacy, Occupational Sciences, and Dentistry. NGP also includes faculty at USC affiliates; the Saban Neuroscience Program at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) is a program emphasizing developmental neuroscience, while the House Ear Institute (HEI) is focused on hearing research and education. Both these programs are located in Los Angeles within 15-20 minutes of the University Park (UPC) and Health Science (HSC) campuses.

Thus you will have many opportunities to perform exciting neuroscience studies and research at USC. Of course, you will become an expert in the field of the area of research of your dissertation. Attaining such an expertise is normal to all graduate programs. However, here, you will attain additional tools and knowledge that will facilitate communication with peers in other disciplines within neuroscience. One of the main niches that NGP fills is the formation of a new cadre of truly interdisciplinary neuroscientists.

To take maximal advantage of NGP, you should know the way we function, our context within USC and Los Angeles, and our norms. This orientation guide is designed to give you this knowledge. Over the years, many people have contributed to the evolution of this guide. It will help you adjust to life as a graduate student in LA and at USC, and to serve as an official statement of the rules governing NGP. We thus urge you to read this guide carefully and thoroughly, particularly with regard to program requirements and milestones. While we do not anticipate this,

should problems were to arise in the future, claims such as “I did not know the rules” are not acceptable. Most of the general questions that you will have during your graduate studies at USC are addressed in this guide. Moreover, NGP staff, administrative leadership and your thesis committee are always available to assist you with necessary clarifications. Please note that some requirements, rules, and options might change from time to time as we work to improve the quality of the program. We will inform you of any such changes promptly and clearly. Furthermore, these changes will not add further obstacles in the path to your graduation.

If you have any questions about the program, do not hesitate to ask. We think you will find that all of the faculty, students, and staff that make up NGP are more than happy to help.

Good luck, and thanks again for choosing USC and our program for your graduate studies!

Pat Levitt, PhD  
Director, Neuroscience Graduate Program

Judith Hirsch, PhD  
Co-Associate Director, Neuroscience Graduate Program

Alapakkam Sampath, PhD  
Co-Associate Director, Neuroscience Graduate Program

**Memo from the NGF Student Representative Mona Sobhani**

Congratulations on your entrance to the Neuroscience Graduate Program at USC! My name is Mona Sobhani, and I am the elected student representative, or “Czarina,” of the Neuroscience Graduate Forum (NGF), of which you are automatically a member. The purpose of NGF is to foster a supportive community among the students of the Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP), as well as any students in other programs conducting neuroscience research (Engineering, Psychology, etc.). Our bi-semester meetings aim to explore the many aspects of a career in neuroscience, provide interactions between senior and junior students, arrange social events, and to address any general concerns of the graduate students.

As your Czarina, I act as the primary liaison between the graduate students and faculty. I attend all faculty meetings to represent the students and their interests and to voice our collective concerns. Therefore, if you have a concern, be sure to let me know so that it can be brought to the faculty’s attention. We also have several other officers in NGF (listed below) who specialize in different aspects of NGF, so feel free to contact them directly, or just let me know and I will talk to them. As officers of NGF, our collective goal is to make sure everyone gets on track, find a lab, and can begin (and maintain) a successful graduate career. We want to make everyone aware of the opportunities in grad school and beyond, and hopefully we’ll have some fun while doing it. Let me take this time to introduce the other officers:

Hanke Heun-Johnson ([heunjohn@usc.edu](mailto:heunjohn@usc.edu)) is this year’s Vice-Czarina. In this position, Hanke will work to promote interaction between our program and the community beyond USC. She will host the student-invited seminar speaker, and also organize a “Careers in Neuroscience” seminar series with other science-related graduate programs, providing students an opportunity to meet scientists currently working in a range of academic and non-academic settings.

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Representative is Amar Bains ([abains05@gmail.com](mailto:abains05@gmail.com)). Amar will attend monthly GPSS meetings and keep us posted on campus-wide events and parties. If you have any general concerns about graduate life at USC, he can bring them up at these monthly GPSS meetings.

Our Programming Officers are Chiara Mazzasette ([mazzaset@usc.edu](mailto:mazzaset@usc.edu)) & Ramsay Brown ([ramsaybr@usc.edu](mailto:ramsaybr@usc.edu)). You can think of Chiara and Ramsay as the party planners – or social chairs – of NGF. They’ll arrange several social events throughout the year to give you a chance to mingle with other grad students in the program and take a well-deserved break from all your hard work. They are working very hard to make this year the best yet! If you have any ideas for a fun adventure, don’t hesitate to let them know!

Our Webmaster, Shane Roach ([shaneroa@usc.edu](mailto:shaneroa@usc.edu)), maintains our fabulous NGF website <http://www-scf.usc.edu/~ngf/>. If you haven’t already been added to the NGF mailing list, please send him an email with your USC email address so that you stay updated on events and important developments in the program. Shane will also ask you for a picture for the website, so find your most collegiate one and have it ready!

Jillian Shaw ([jillianshaw@gmail.com](mailto:jillianshaw@gmail.com)) will serve as our Health Science Campus (HSC) liaison. Many students in the NGP program choose to join labs at the HSC, and, due to the distance between it and the main campus, communication can be a bit difficult. Jillian will facilitate teleconferencing for students who cannot make it to the main campus for NGF meetings and will keep us all updated on interesting seminars at HSC. If you choose to do a rotation at the HSC, Jillian will gladly help you find your way around.

And you are likely already familiar with our New Student Liaison, Michael Frantz ([michaelgfrantz@gmail.com](mailto:michaelgfrantz@gmail.com)). Mike has been hard at work all summer preparing you all for your transition to USC. He's in charge of setting up first year students with grad student mentors - "Big Grads," if you will - and come spring, he will also help facilitate the new student recruitment weekends for next year's class.

Beyond this core group, many other graduate students are very involved in making NGF a wonderful organization. From organizing and participating in our Annual Student Symposium to acting as student reps on several faculty committees to facilitating collaborations both within and beyond USC, the level of involvement of our students is truly what makes our program unique. I hope you will carry on the tradition and choose to be an active member of NGF.

Our first NGF meeting will take place soon after classes begin, so keep an eye out for an email announcement. If you have any questions about NGF, or about the program or USC/LA in general, please feel free to contact me or even drop by my lab. I wish you a successful first year, and even if things get challenging at times, just remember that we've all been through it and we're all here to lend a hand!

Best of luck in the coming year and welcome!

Mona Sobhani  
PhD Candidate, Neuroscience Graduate Program  
Czarina, Neuroscience Graduate Forum  
Brain and Creativity Institute  
University of Southern California  
3641 Watt Way - HNB B19  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-2520  
213-740-2050 (lab)  
[msobhani@usc.edu](mailto:msobhani@usc.edu)

## II. PROGRAM LIFE

The NGP is an interdisciplinary, university-wide training program that is unique because leadership report directly to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the USC Graduate School, rather than to a single college or school. The program is administered with an independent budget that comes from the Office of the Provost, with each school, college and affiliate contributing to the NGP based on training faculty and student distribution. Most NGP-relevant information, including the roster of training faculty, courses, events and seminars, can be found at the program website:

<http://www.usc.edu/programs/neuroscience/index.html>

Key program leadership includes:

	Title	Duties re: NGP Ph.D. Program
Linda Bazilian (213) 821-1088 <a href="mailto:bazilian@usc.edu">bazilian@usc.edu</a> AHF 107-D	Graduate Programs Manager	Graduate Advisor
Vanessa Clark (213) 740-2245 <a href="mailto:saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu">saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu</a> HNB 120-E	Student Services Advisor	NGP Student Support
Amy Goodman (213) 740-8796 <a href="mailto:algoodma@dornsife.usc.edu">algoodma@dornsife.usc.edu</a> HNB 120-J	Graduate Programs Administrative Assistant	NGP Administrative Support
Mallory Redel (323) 442-1509 <a href="mailto:redel@usc.edu">redel@usc.edu</a> ZNI 231/HNB 120H	Graduate Programs Executive Secretary	NGP Administrative Support
Gloria Wan (213) 740-6091 <a href="mailto:yuhungw@usc.edu">yuhungw@usc.edu</a> HNB 120-G	Administrative Coordinator	Neuroscience Events/Building Coordinator
Pat Levitt (323) 442-1509 ZNI 239 HNB 120-H	Director of NGP	Program oversight Advisement

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Judith Hirsch (213) 821-2210 <a href="mailto:jhirsch@usc.edu">jhirsch@usc.edu</a> HNB 328	Co-Associate Director of NGP	Program oversight Advisement
Alapakkam Sampath (323) 442-4413 <a href="mailto:asampath@usc.edu">asampath@usc.edu</a> ZNI 435	Co-Associate Director of NGP	Program oversight Advisement

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## NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

\* Requirement for registration.

\*\* Registration required.

### a. Information for All Students

#### Immunization Requirements\*

- Measles (*domestic & international*)
- Tuberculosis (*international*)

Immunization requirements must be satisfied prior to registering for classes. For more information on required documentation or on immunization clinics available on campus, go to [www.usc.edu/uphc](http://www.usc.edu/uphc) or visit the Student Health Center (SHC, Phone 213/740-0551, Fax 213/740-9229)

#### Degree Verification

Required if USC has not received final transcripts (undergraduate or graduate) from last institution attended. Take an official copy of your final transcript(s) to Degree Progress located in JHH 010, the basement level of the Student Administrative Services Building. **Requirement must be fulfilled by end of your 1<sup>st</sup> year.**

#### Academic Advisement and D-Clearance\*

The NGP Director and Co-Associate Directors serve as members of the Advisement Committee. They will advise all new students on the courses they need to take before each semester of their first year, with one of the three required to sign off on the Academic Advisement form. Students should set up meetings by contacting Vanessa Clark.

- Take a signed Academic Advisement form to Vanessa Clark (HNB 120E, 213-740-2245, [saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu)) for D-Clearance or fill out the request form at



<http://bioweb2.usc.edu/misc/dclear.php> . You must include your student ID number and five-digit course number.

### Conditional Admission

If you received a welcome letter from the Graduate School indicating that you have “conditions on your admission” they must be cleared by the end of the first semester. If you have an ALI hold, you must go to the Registration Building (REG 101, x08500) and register in person.

### Registration

On-line registration: Go to [http://www.usc.edu/student\\_life/academics/](http://www.usc.edu/student_life/academics/) and click on “web registration.”

You will be asked to enter the following information:

Students ID: 10-digit ID #

PIN: 6-digit Birth date (mm/dd/yy)

If you do not know your student ID#, contact Vanessa Clark (HNB 120-E, 213-740-2245, [saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu)).

### USC Student ID card (USCard):

You must complete the following before you are able to obtain your USCard.

- Passport Verification with OIS (*International students only*)
- Registration for classes (*Domestic students only*)

Go to USCard Customer Service office located in (PSX) at the University Park campus or in the Seaver’s Lobby at the Health Science campus.

### USC Computer Account Creation and Email\*\*

Once you obtain your USCard and register for classes, you need to activate your USC computer account. For instructions, call 213.740.5555 or visit [www.usc.edu/firstlogin](http://www.usc.edu/firstlogin).

- Make sure that you update your email account on OASIS, [www.usc.edu/oasis](http://www.usc.edu/oasis) and if you have direct deposit on the e-trac system, [www.usc.edu/etrac](http://www.usc.edu/etrac), as well. Also, please notify Vanessa Clark of your new email address at [saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu).

### Update OASIS with local address and USC email information

Go to [www.usc.edu/oasis](http://www.usc.edu/oasis). Your email address and both your local and permanent mailing addresses must be current at ALL times to ensure that you receive important documents such as health benefits card and paychecks. Your first check will be mailed to your “local” address.

### College Business Office Documentation Processing (*All students EXCEPT Domestic Fellowship Holder*)

Go to the College Payroll Services Office, UUC 217, **ONLY** during the document processing hours (9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.) Arrive no later than 30 minutes before the end of a session to allow time for processing paperwork. Tell front-desk staff your correct title – either – **“Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant or Fellowship Holder.”** It is very important that you use the exact title stated in your offer letter.

#### **Required Documents:**

***International Fellowship Holders:*** Before going to the College Business Office for the first time, you must complete the “Glacier” process. You should have already received a preliminary email notice from Glacier. Please see the attached sheet entitled “Glacier Details for Internationals,” (page 12). You must claim or qualify for your country’s tax treaty. This will enable Glacier to print the correct tax forms. In Glacier, enter “applying for ITN.” You will also receive a letter from OIS.

#### ***International Teaching and Research Assistants:***

Before going to the College Business office for the first time, you must complete the “Glacier” process. You should have already received a preliminary email notice from the Glacier system. You must claim or qualify for your Country’s tax treaty. This will enable Glacier to print the correct tax forms. International RA/TAs, check off the option "Applied for SSN" in Glacier. Once you have received your SS card in the mail you will have to update your Glacier with the SSN and bring in the update along with the card.

#### ***Domestic Teaching and Research Assistants:***

*Domestic Students (Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants):* Award letter **AND** driver’s license and original social security card or birth certificate with same name - OR - Active or expired U.S. Passport with adult photograph. Please **DO NOT** bring expired passports as University Payroll will not accept them.

#### ***Domestic fellowships:***

\*Do not go to the business office in UUC, instead, you may be sent to Disbursement Control.

*Domestic fellowship holders* need to be certain that your local addresses are correct in the Student Information System. Please make sure you fill out a direct deposit form (include a blank voided check) in order for you to receive your stipend payments on time. For further information regarding this, please see Vanessa Clark.

#### **Direct Deposit (*International Fellowship Students are not eligible*)**

If interested, pick up a form at HNB 120 E (see Vanessa Clark) or complete form available online: [http://ais-ss.usc.edu/empldoc/forms/directdeposit\\_form.pdf](http://ais-ss.usc.edu/empldoc/forms/directdeposit_form.pdf)

### Payment of Fees

Fees to be paid by all students: Topping Student Center Fee, Orientation Fee (first semester only), Graduate Programs Fee and any “access” or “laboratory” fees appearing on fee bill. Do not pay tuition, health insurance, Health Center Fee or tuition insurance fee. If any of these fees appear on your fee bill contact Linda Bazilian to remove (AHF 107D, 213.821.1088, bazilian@usc.edu). Fees can be paid online through OASIS ([www.usc.edu/oasis](http://www.usc.edu/oasis)) or you can go to the Cashier’s Office (KOH 200, x 07471)

### Laboratory Safety Training

The basic Laboratory Safety Training course is required for all students prior to working in a lab. If you plan to work in a lab with animals or radioactive materials, you will need to take additional safety training courses during the semester. The Lab Safety Training course is usually held the Friday before the start of fall classes. If you missed the training for some reason, you may also register for the course through Professional Development. All students will be notified by the graduate student advisor or the programs manager as to when the training will be taking place in advance. Registration for the training will be done by the program on your behalf.

### Teaching Assistant (TA) Opportunities

NGP students do not have a program requirement to serve as a TA. While most NGP students are supported through research grants to their mentor’s laboratory or individual fellowships, TAships provide an additional opportunity to provide you with stipend support during your graduate studies. As a rule, first year NGP students are supported by a graduate stipend from the program, and do not serve as a TA. Students cannot take on a TAship until they have passed part A of the Qualifying exam. A student and their laboratory mentor may petition the Director for an exception. The College office has information for students who may be interested in being a TA. There are several requirements that you should be aware of regarding eligibility to serve as a TA:

- College TA Training: Required for all students who will be a teaching assistant for any College courses during their Ph.D., studies. The College TA orientation is held the Thursday and Friday the week before the start of fall classes. All students who plan to TA beginning in their second year must attend the orientation. In addition, you must also register for 2 units of BISC 539, section 42297 cross-list MDA 593 (Practicum in Teaching the Liberal Arts) in the Fall.
- Prior to accepting a TAship, students must file information with the NGP graduate office on the TAship requested, whether the position is in Biology or another department/school. Requests to Biology should be addressed with the graduate programs manager. Failure to communicate this information will result in a loss of TAship with the department of Biology.

- ITA Institute Oral Exam: All International TA's (Exception: Students who received bachelor's degree from an English speaking institution) must take the ITA Institute oral exam given at the end of a weeklong program. Contact the ITA institute for date and time ([ita@usc.edu](mailto:ita@usc.edu)).

ITA Institute website:

[http://www.usc.edu/programs/cet/resources/ta\\_resources/ita\\_institute/](http://www.usc.edu/programs/cet/resources/ta_resources/ita_institute/).

### **Additional Requirements for International Students**

#### **ISE Exam (*International Students ONLY*)\***

If #6 on your SEVIS I-20 states, "The student does not have the required English proficiency" you are required to take the International Student English Exam. You can register for the ISE Exam at the American Language Institute (HSS building, Phone 213-740-0079, Fax 213-740-8549, website: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/ALI/ISE.html>)

#### **Passport Verification (*International Students ONLY*)\***

All new international students are required to complete Passport Verification (PPV). Typically PPV sessions are held nearly every day at 1:00 PM in Mud Hall, Room 101 after August 1st. Please be prepared to bring the following materials with you: first page of your I-20, copy of your I-94 card, passport and passport verification procedure form

(<http://sait.usc.edu/ois/Upload/NewForms/PPVNewStuInfo.pdf>). PPV may be done during the week of ITA so please ensure you check with the coordinators of the ITA ([ita@usc.edu](mailto:ita@usc.edu)) to make sure this is an option.

Contact the Office of International Services (OIS) for further information. The OIS office is located in the Student Union Building (STU300, Phone 213.740.2666, Fax 213.740.5194, email: [ois@usc.edu](mailto:ois@usc.edu))

- OIS recommends that you photocopy and safeguard your important immigration documents because it is much easier to replace lost or stolen items if there is a record.

#### **Social Security Receipt for Stipend Processing (*International Students ONLY*)\*\***

In order to process your stipend checks, you need to obtain a social security card receipt. To get this receipt, you must first complete a "Social Security Number Letter Request Form" available at OIS (STU300, Phone 213.740.2666, Fax 213.740.5194, email: [ois@usc.edu](mailto:ois@usc.edu)). After submitting the form, you will return to OIS two days later to pick up your official letter which you will take to the Social Security Office on 1115 W. Adams. You should receive a "social security card receipt" on the spot. You will need to provide this receipt when you go to the College Business Office to complete your payroll paperwork.

### Glacier Details for Non-Resident Alien Students

All new internationals will receive an email directly from "[support@online-tax.net](mailto:support@online-tax.net)" with a subject stating "Payments from University of Southern California." The contact person in the email will either be the initiating Home Department Coordinator or the Student Affairs Officer at the School or Department level. In the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, & Sciences the email contact in the body of the email will be [glacier@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:glacier@dornsife.usc.edu).

The email will contain an initial username and password for international students to log into Glacier. You will only have 5 days to access Glacier using the initial password. You must log into Glacier to set up a new password. Once this is done international students have longer than 5 days to complete and submit their Glacier forms to the Dornsife College Human Resources and Payroll Office. Vanessa Clark will provide you with further information pertaining to contact person and location of where these forms need to be submitted.

1. The international students should check off that they qualify and claim their tax Treaty if their country has an existing tax treaty with the USA.
2. If the Fellowship holder does not already have a social security number, they should check the box that says "applying for ITIN number."
3. Wage-earning international students must apply for a social security card. In Glacier they may state "applying for ITIN or SSN."
4. Depending on what type of fellowship you will be receiving, all students will be guided through Glacier by a step by step process.

Throughout the year, you will receive notices from Glacier "[support@online-tax.net](mailto:support@online-tax.net)" to maintain your tax forms each year while you are at USC.

Glacier is not the mechanism for international students to complete annual IRS tax return forms.

Cintax is a tax filing service administered by the Office of International Services and is entirely separate from Glacier.

International students are NOT required to meet with University Payroll Services office specifically regarding their Glacier paperwork.

If applied to tuition only, do not add to Glacier. Completing Glacier, is only needed if you will be working or will be receiving a fellowship/scholarship stipend.

## REGISTRATION PROCESS

Action	See
1) First year students: go to advisement appointment with Drs. Levitt, Hirsch and Sampath (one meeting per semester in your first year)	Vanessa Clark, HNB 120E, 213.740.2245 <a href="mailto:saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu">saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu</a>
2) Complete an Academic Advisement Form (see forms section page 59) and obtain the signed approval of the appropriate advisor for your proposed course schedule.	For all first year students and those more advanced students without a dissertation advisor, approval should be obtained from Dr. Levitt, Hirsch or Sampath (one of the three). For all students in their second year or beyond with dissertation advisors, see that advisor for approval.
3) Fill out the request form at <a href="http://bioweb2.usc.edu/misc/dclear.php">http://bioweb2.usc.edu/misc/dclear.php</a> . You must include your student ID number and five-digit course number. Your d-clearance will be entered into the system within 2 days.	Linda Bazilian, AHF 107D, 213.821.1088
You may then register for classes via web registration on OASIS, <a href="https://camel2.usc.edu/OASIS/Login.aspx">https://camel2.usc.edu/OASIS/Login.aspx</a> .	See USC’s Department of Academic Records and Registrar website for detailed instructions of how to register.
<u>Note:</u> Students with ALI and academic holds will need to register in person at REG 101 between 8:30 AM – 5 PM Monday through Friday.	<a href="http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/">http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/</a> / Click on “Registration” under the Services heading.
4) Petitions for late or retroactive registration must be submitted through the Office of Academic Review. <a href="http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/academicreview/generalinfo.html">http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/academicreview/generalinfo.html</a>	Office of Academic Review Petition Fees are \$150 and are subject to the student’s responsibility to pay if students fail to register on time.

FALL 2012 REGISTRATION DIRECTORY

**UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS DIRECTORY**

Registration Permits .....	REG 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor
Enrollment & Drop/Add .....	REG 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor
American Language Institute .....	HSS
OIS .....	STU 300
Office of College Advisement .....	3454 Trousdale Pky
USCard .....	USCard Services (PSX)
Health Insurance .....	SHC Lobby
Housing/Dining Services .....	Parking Structure X
Financial Aid .....	LRC
Parking Permits .....	620 West 35th Street (PSX)

**KEY UPC TELEPHONE NUMBERS**  
**Area Code (213)**

Academic Review .....	740-7741
American Language Institute .....	740-0079
Cashier/Financial Services .....	740-7471
Class Scheduling/Course Master Changes .....	740-4608
Credit Union .....	821-7100
Enrollment Processing (REG Bldg.) .....	740-8500
Expository Writing .....	740-1980
Financial Aid .....	740-1111
Housing .....	740-2546
Student Affairs .....	740-2421
Student Financial Services .....	740-4077
Transportation .....	740-3575
University Collections .....	740-9087
USCard .....	740-8709

**INFORMATION:**

**Payment of fees ..... 213-740-7471**  
**Registration ..... 213- 740-8500**

Office of College Advisement .....	740-2534
Office of International Services .....	740-2666
Registration Materials .....	740-8500

**FINANCIAL SERVICES**

University Collections .....	LRC
Student Financial Services .....	LRC
Payment of Fees/Cashier's Office .....	LRC
Credit Union .....	KOH

**HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS DIRECTORY**

Cashier .....	SRH 101B
Financial Aid – Medicine .....	KAM 420
Graduate Medicine .....	KAM 100F
Housing .....	Seaver Residence
Occupational Therapy .....	CHP 133
Parking Permits .....	Biggy Structure
Pharmacy .....	PSC 206
Physical Therapy .....	CSA 208
Physician Assistants .....	KAM B-29
Student Health Center .....	1510 San Pablo
USCard .....	Seaver-Residence Hall

**KEY HSC TELEPHONE NUMBERS**  
**Area Code (323)**

Cashier .....	442-3040
Financial Aid – Medicine .....	442-1016
Graduate Medicine .....	442-1607
Housing .....	442-1567
Occupational Therapy .....	442-2850
Parking Permits .....	442-1201
Pharmacy .....	442-1466
Physical Therapy .....	442-2900
Physician Assistant .....	(626) 457-4247
Student Health Center .....	442-5980

## STUDENT HEALTH AND INSURANCE

All NGP students will have the student health center fee, student health insurance, and dental insurance paid by the University as long as they are enrolled in classes and considered a full time student (6 units or more). Activation of these benefits will begin the first day of classes. All other students will begin to receive Health Insurance benefits as of August 16, 2012.

You are automatically enrolled in the USC Health Insurance Plan if you are:

- Taking 6 or more units
- Enrolled on the Health Sciences campus
- An international student

The Student Health Insurance Office will mail your insurance card and information packet about a month after the start of classes to the "local" address listed on the Online Academic Student Information System (OASIS), [www.usc.edu/oasis](http://www.usc.edu/oasis).

If you already have a health insurance plan (or you are on your parents' plan) you may be eligible to waive enrollment in the USC Health Insurance Plan by providing proof of comparable coverage. Documented proof must be presented to the Student Health Services Office at the Student Health Center on your campus.

The **Student Health Center**, [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health\\_Center/index.shtml](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/index.shtml), provides the following services: primary care, basic emergency care, an urgent care clinic, Saturday clinics, specialist clinics, and a pharmacy. You are eligible to use the Health Center as long as you are enrolled in classes and a Health Center fee is listed on your fee bill.

If you are eligible, most care is free. There are nominal charges for some lab tests, prescription, orthopedic appliances, and copies of medical records. Hospitalization is NOT covered but must be purchased separately. Should you have questions, contact SHC.

### Dental Care

Your Health Center fee also covers dental care.

Please see: [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health\\_Center/ins.plan.description.shtml](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/ins.plan.description.shtml) for a detailed brochure and enrollment form.

Instructions for downloading your Delta Dental card:

1. Go to [www.deltadentalins.com](http://www.deltadentalins.com). On the right you will see a box to log in. Click on "Register Today" (unless you have done this already and have a username and password).
2. Follow the steps to Registration. You want to select "Enrollee" as your user type.
3. Enter your name and birthdate along with your enrollee ID.



**\*\*Your Enrollee ID is your USC student ID number\*\***

4. You should be ready to make up your username and password (and maybe put in some other info like address, email) and then you will be instructed to log on from the homepage at [www.deltadentalins.com](http://www.deltadentalins.com).
5. Once you are logged in, look under the heading "Manage Your Account" and you will see a link to "View Eligibility and Benefits (and print ID cards)".

This website of course has lots of other useful information about your benefits including coverage and deductibles, date of enrollment and so forth.

#### AETNA

- 1) You will be prompted to pay the health insurance fee when you do a positive enrollment. Please do not pay. The fee is already paid, and they know, so just skip that step.

NOTE: The health and dental insurance and health center fees are paid by the department that pays your stipend.

## PROGRAM LIFE

### 1. Program Seminars and Journal Clubs

An important part of your training is the opportunity to attend and participate in research seminars and colloquia. These are hour-long public lectures given by visiting scientists. There are four major Neuroscience seminar series 1) Tuesdays during the academic year at 12:30 PM in the Hedco Neurosciences Auditorium at the UPC; 2) Wednesdays at 12:00PM in the Herkoltz Seminar Room of the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute at HSC; 3) NGP Distinguished Speaker series organized by graduate students, held at the UPC at 4pm on Tuesdays 4 times during the academic year; 4) NGP Seminars, held at Hedco or ZNI on their regular days, 4 times during the academic year. NGP faculty in affiliates of USC, CHLA and the HEI, also are involved in organizing seminar series at those sites. Attendance at two seminars monthly is required. You will receive a schedule for each semester and announcements will be posted prominently. In addition notices are posted on the website <http://www.usc.edu/programs/neuroscience/index.html> or <http://www.usc.edu/schools/medicine/research/institutes/zni/>

Other administrative units also sponsor seminars that you may wish to attend. Notices for these other seminars can be found on the following websites or posted on various bulletin boards.

USC Events Calendar (<http://www.usc.edu/calendar/>)

Biology West Calendar (<http://www.usc.edu/biowest/>)

Viterbi School of Engineering Calendar (<http://viterbi.usc.edu/news/events/>)

PIBBS Seminars (<http://pibbs.usc.edu/>)

USC BISC Grad Programs Blog: (<http://uscbiscgrad.blogspot.com/>)

Some of the other groups that sponsor relevant seminars include:

- ◆ Saban Research Institute (on the CHLA campus)
- ◆ House Ear Institute
- ◆ Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine & Stem Cells
- ◆ Molecular Biology
- ◆ Computational Biology and Bioinformatics
- ◆ Marine Environmental Biology
- ◆ School of Gerontology
- ◆ Engineering Research Center for Biomimetic Electronic Systems
- ◆ Other departments on University Park Campus (especially Psychology, Computer Science, Biomedical Engineering, Mathematics)
- ◆ Dental School
- ◆ Medical School Departments on the Health Sciences Campus (e.g. Physiology & Biophysics, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology)
- ◆ School of Pharmacy, Health Sciences Campus

Seminars provide an opportunity to broaden your scope of interests and knowledge in the many diverse subfields of the neurosciences. These seminar series typically provide NGP students with an opportunity to meet visiting distinguished scientists at lunch or receptions. You will develop skills in articulating your research interests and research progress, and make important contacts for future training and advancement. Lunches with speakers are often coordinated by the Neuroscience Graduate Forum so that participation is equitable and straightforward to arrange.

Journal clubs and similar gatherings will be an important part of your academic and research life. Journal clubs are regular, informal meetings of students, postdocs, and faculty that share interests in a particular field. The usual format is to discuss a recent research paper. The styles of the journal clubs vary; one participant may be asked to present the paper and lead the discussion, or the group in attendance participates collectively in discussions. Developing a skill set in critical reading of the literature is essential for all NGP students. In addition, your future success as scientists will depend on developing the ability to communicate clearly about your scientific work in a broad context. While not required, regular attendance at one journal club of your choosing is an extremely efficient way to learn about the latest developments in your field, how to evaluate critically the work of others, and how to communicate effectively with your peers. It also is a reflection of your own commitment and interest in performing world-class neuroscience research in a chosen area. These extremely important skills and experiences are essential in your transformation from graduate student to professional researcher.

At the moment, there are five active journal clubs. Contacts: Kathie Eagleson, ([keagleso@usc.edu](mailto:keagleso@usc.edu)) for the Developmental and Behavioral Neurobiology Journal club (website [www.usc.edu/zni](http://www.usc.edu/zni)); Wan-Qing Yu ([wanqing.yu@usc.edu](mailto:wanqing.yu@usc.edu)) for the Vision Journal Club, Chiara Mazzasette ([mazzaset@usc.edu](mailto:mazzaset@usc.edu)) for the Neuromuscular Junction Journal Club and Mona Sobhani ([msobhani@usc.edu](mailto:msobhani@usc.edu)) for the Cognitive Neuroscience Journal Club. If these journal clubs don't represent your scientific interests, you are encouraged to gather a group of your student colleagues and contact appropriate NGP faculty members about starting a new Journal Club.

## 2. Annual Student Symposium

In January of each academic year, the Neuroscience Graduate Forum sponsors a graduate-student symposium that is required of all NGP students. Students who are performing neuroscience-relevant research in other PhD programs also attend. **This academic year, the symposium will be taking place on January 25, 2013 at the Ronald Tutor Campus Center: <http://sait.usc.edu/campuscenter/>. Please look out for announcements regarding the details of the event.** The students themselves organize this event, in which they present talks and posters. These presentations are an opportunity to show across the NGP community the work that students are performing and give an opportunity for students to learn how to deliver scientific presentations.

All NGP students, in all years of study, are required present a talk or a poster at the Annual Student Symposium. First-year students may present materials from their rotations, from their undergraduate research, or from a paper that they want to share with the NGP community.

### 3. Annual Neuroscience Retreat

At the beginning of every fall semester, the NGP sponsors a one-day-and-a-half scientific retreat at an offsite location in the Los Angeles area. **This academic year, the retreat will occur on September 28-30 at the UCLA Lake Arrowhead Conference Center (<http://www.lakearrowheadmeetings.com/>).** The retreat is free to all NGP students, and there is **required attendance for all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year trainees.** We invite prominent neuroscientists from outside the USC community to join us in presenting their own research. This provides NGP students with an opportunity to meet and interact with influential scientists in the field. In addition, the retreat is an opportunity for all new students and their senior peers to learn about the diversity of neuroscience research in being done in NGP investigator laboratories. Students and training faculty also have a lot of casual time to interact with each other. Advanced NGP students present their rotation and thesis research at a poster session, and talks are given by NGP faculty and an outside guest to provide an opportunity to hear the latest advances in a particular area of neuroscience. The retreat also can help you to make decisions about potential laboratories in which to rotate. New students should register for this retreat with Amy Goodman (HNB 120J; 213-740-8796; [algoodma@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:algoodma@dornsife.usc.edu)) as soon as possible.

### 4. The Neuroscience Graduate Program Offices

The NGP staff offices are located on the University Park Campus in HNB 120. See page 7 for the contact information and locations of all the locations of all NGP staff and faculty leadership.

For first year students, your rotation laboratories will provide you with access to computers, printers, copiers and other administrative needs.

For advanced students who have been awarded Teaching Assistantships, seek help and support from Linda Bazilian (AHF 107).

### 5. Mail

All new students can receive incoming mail in their assigned box in the Hedco Building mailroom, which is next to the elevator in the main lobby. Use the following as a mailing address: University of Southern California, Neuroscience Program, 3641 Watt Way, Los Angeles, CA 90089-2520. The 9-digit zip code is important, and the digits 2520 also serve as the mail code for campus mail to reach the Hedco Building. You can also place outgoing campus mail and stamped U.S. mail in the corresponding bins in the mailroom for pickup by Mailing Services. The Program covers the cost of postage for official business only. See Amy Goodman in the Neuroscience office for procedures.

### 6. Building Access

In general, buildings at USC and affiliates have security measures in place that require keys, keypad codes or ID card coding. You can obtain access to buildings for evening and weekend work through your rotation laboratory. Your faculty mentor for each research rotation will direct you to an

administrative office (e.g. Hedco, Mudd, ZNI, HEI, Saban at CHLA) to obtain the appropriate coding or keys. Note that access is provided for the duration of your rotation. All inhabitants of USC buildings take matters of security very seriously. Please do your part to maintain the safety of the people, property, and animals upon which we depend. Flagrant breaches of security, such as propping open locked doors or giving out your key code to anyone will be dealt with severely.

## 7. Neuroscience Teas

The ZNI Tea Time, sponsored by a different laboratory, is held weekly in a designated conference room or outside on a patio of the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute. See the ZNI web site for information, <http://www.usc.edu/schools/medicine/research/institutes/zni/>. The Neuroscience Tea at the Hedco Building is held every weekday except Friday, from 3:00 to 4:00 P.M., in the large conference room. Coffee, tea, cookies, and other treats are provided at both locations. The Teas are meant to foster collegiality and interdisciplinary communication among Neuroscience members such as yourselves. The atmosphere is very informal, with people free to come and go as they wish. When you do come, stay for a while, try to meet someone you don't already know, and bring an open mind about alternative approaches to studying the nervous system.

## 8. Library Facilities

The Seaver Science Library (SSL), located in the Seaver Science Center, is the principal science library at UPC. The Norris Medical Library (NML) is the primary resource on the Health Sciences campus. Both sites have a good collection of current and journals, and a book collection. You have access to libraries across the USC campus and to the scientific journals for which USC has a subscription. The collection of neuroscience-relevant journals is substantial, and this allows you to access PDF format articles for use in your academic and research endeavors. There are computer terminals and printers available that provide you with access to multiple databases, including MEDLINE. Most of the important journals in our field are indexed in this database. You will also be able to access scientific journals remotely by using your USC login and password to explore databases such as Pubmed and Medline. The reference librarian at Seaver Science or Norris Medical Libraries can help you learn to use different databases. The libraries also hold bioinformatics sessions that provide an opportunity to develop extensive skills in accessing the databases available for meta analyses of novel datasets.

Other libraries at UPC that might be of use to you are the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Library (LVL), and the Doheny Memorial Library (DML). The main undergraduate library with many general interest books, periodicals, and reference materials. Both Leavey and Doheny have comfortable and quiet reading rooms that are good places to study. At the Doheny Library reference desk, students can request a free search of databases of pre and postdoctoral fellowships. These can be very valuable for those without RA support or those arranging postdoctoral positions. The Hoose Philosophy library is one of the genuine highlights of the USC Campus.

To obtain a USC library card, simply present your USCard at any campus library circulation desk. Once you have a valid library card, you can check books out from any library. Materials checked out

with student cards are normally due to be returned at the end of the semester, but are subject to recall at any time. Note: You can obtain a USCard at the USCard customer service office located in PSX (Parking Structure X) and Seaver Residence Hall at HSC (Health and Science Campus).

UCLA's Biomedical Library has an extensive journal and book collection for those rare times when you need a resource that cannot be found at one of the USC libraries.

### **9. Procedure for Student Computer Account Creation**

Computer accounts will be created automatically for all students enrolled in degree programs. Simply obtain your USCard at the USCard customer service office located in the Customer Service center, centrally located in the PSX (Parking Structure X) at the University Park campus or in the Seaver's Lobby at the Health Science campus. Once you have your USCard, you need to activate your USC computer account. For instructions, call 213.740.5555 or visit [www.usc.edu/firstlogin](http://www.usc.edu/firstlogin).

If you do not have access to a personal computer, visit one of ISD's public computing centers and present your USCard at the service desk. You will be directed to one of the center's computers; go to <http://www.usc.edu/firstlogin> and follow the instructions.

You have different options for obtaining free Internet service and access to USC resources from home. Depending on where you live, the kind of Internet service provider you prefer and whether you use a wireless network, you will need to set up your computer with a ResNet, or a VPN connection.

ResNet is available at all campus residential complexes, as well as some areas of the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Library and the USC Marshall School of Business; it provides a high-speed Internet access. To link up with ResNet, go to [www.usc.edu/resnet](http://www.usc.edu/resnet). For more help or information, call the Housing Maintenance office at 213.740.4646 or the Customer Support Center at 213.740.5555.

If you already use another Internet service provider, you may utilize USC's virtual private network (VPN) client to access restricted USC resources. You also will need the VPN software to access USC's wireless network. For more information, call 213.740.5555 or go to [www.usc.edu/vpn](http://www.usc.edu/vpn).

USC students, faculty and staff can access USC's high-speed wireless network at most sites on campus and eateries including the University Village Food Courts. For information about how to get on USC's wireless network call 213.740.5555 or visit [www.usc.edu/wireless](http://www.usc.edu/wireless).

### **10. Inter-campus transportation**

The majority of NGP faculty are located on the University Park and Health Sciences Campuses; others are located at CHLA and the House Ear Institute. Furthermore, courses, seminars, and journal clubs are located at either UPC or HSC. To facilitate movement between campuses, USC provides free regular shuttle services whose schedules can be found at <http://transnet.usc.edu/transit/routes.aspx>. The time to travel between UPC and HSC on these

shuttles is normally about 30 minutes. Other transportation-related information can be found in 'LA Life' on pg. 48.

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are five main sources of support for graduate students:

- ◆ Research Assistantships
- ◆ University Fellowships
- ◆ Training Grants
- ◆ Individual Fellowships and Grants
- ◆ Teaching Assistantships

The NGP, through its funding of first year students, training grants, teaching assistantships, and individual faculty research grants provide financial support (tuition and stipend) for all Ph.D. students who are in good standing in the program. No institution can guarantee support, since the future financial health of any university cannot be predicted with accuracy. In the NGP program of USC, however, students should aware that the program has a perfect record in ensuring continuous stipend and tuition support for all Ph.D. students. Please note that Graduate School rules prohibit full-time students from accepting any employment above and beyond their graduate assistantships (see the **Graduate Assistantship Handbook**).

**An important rule to remember is that you must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 in order to be considered a student in good standing, and thus eligible for financial support. There are processes in place to provide warnings, and on rare occasions, dismissal from the program for those students who are not in compliance with academic standards.**

### 1. Research Assistantships

Research Assistants are main mechanism by which you will receive your stipend while a student of the NGP. To be eligible for an RAship you will need to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0, and be a student in good standing. RAships are funded by research grants. As the name implies, RAs do research, usually related to the Specific Aims of their mentor's grant, and which often becomes part of the student's thesis project. At the end of each semester, students on RAships need to certify that they have worked 20 hours per week to reflect the full time effort the student devotes to his/her thesis research. In the NGP, it is expected that the time commitment of our students to full-time research far exceeds the minimum required 20 hours per week. Formally, the relation between the RA project and the dissertation project can vary depending on the faculty member involved and other circumstances. In most cases, however, the research being pursued by an NGP student with an RAship and the dissertation project are the same.

## 2. Teaching Assistantships

The first year of graduate study is extremely challenging. The NGP believes that students should spend their time excelling in course work and in the laboratory through research rotations. In 2012, all first year NGP students receive University Fellowships/Research Assistantships, and therefore shall not TA for any courses. For some students who identify a research laboratory for their thesis research, opportunities to gain stipend support and to obtain valuable teaching experience can come from TAships. The authority to offer TAships rests exclusively with the Chair of Biological Sciences. TAships from other Departments are arranged by Neuroscience faculty with primary appointments in those Departments. The workload associated with TAships is variable, depending on the course and the familiarity of the TA with the subject matter. You should not spend more than 20 hours per week in fulfilling your TA duties. Consult a few of the more advanced graduate students for tips on course selection. Whatever course you are assigned, please take your responsibilities *very seriously*. You are under an ethical, moral and legal obligation to do your best for your students. While not required by the NGP, teaching experience is valuable for your future as a scientist and educator. The NGP encourages all Ph.D. students to serve as TAs for at least one semester. Some students, with their mentor's input, may TA a second semester. Participation has several requirements that were noted above. Please keep in mind that your performance will be assessed through an evaluation process, and that, as with any other job, your TA position can be terminated for poor performance, either in the classroom or the research laboratory.

## 3. Fellowships

All first year students are provided NGP fellowships. Additionally, a limited number of Dissertation Fellowships are available to students at the end of the academic career. See Linda Bazilian for details.

## 4. Training Grants

The National Institute of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsor pre- and postdoctoral training grants. These grants generally focus in an area of neuroscience (e.g. aging, audition), and thus, only a subset of NGP training faculty may be members of a particular training grant. This means that only a subset of students, based on the laboratory in which they performing research, will be eligible for a slot on a particular training grant. Vanessa Clark has a list of neuroscience-relevant training grants. Students typically are nominated by a training faculty member in whose laboratory the student is doing dissertation research. First year students generally are not supported on currently available training grants. You may wish to talk to your mentor during laboratory rotations to determine the potential availability of training slots in their area of research. You should be aware that the NIH-mandated annual stipend for predoctoral trainees is sometimes different from the TA or RA stipend. Be sure to get complete information about stipends and amount of tuition remission if you are to be funded from something other than a TA



or RA. Current training grants for USC in the Neurosciences include NRSA (National Research Service Award) and HCN (Hearing and Communication Neuroscience).

### 5. Individual Fellowships and Grants

There are many sources of grants, fellowships and other forms of financial aid available to students. Particularly appropriate are individual fellowships from NIH and NSF. Detailed information can be obtained from two sources. First, the Graduate School (GFS 315, 740-9033) has a partial listing of available grants: [http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current\\_fellowships\\_ext.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_fellowships_ext.html).

They also have a reference book that you can see and photocopy. Second, there is a computerized database in Doheny Library (DML reference section, x06050). This database contains literally hundreds of grants to choose from. Fill out an application at the reference desk. A customized printout will be returned to you. There is no charge for students. You may be notified throughout the semester of other support opportunities. NGP strongly encourages applications to such fellowships.

### 6. Summer Support

Your decision to be a Ph.D. student is a year-round commitment. You should view the summer as an opportunity to engage intensively in research, free from the distractions of course work, TA assignments, and the like. We expect you to be in laboratories, engaged in full-time research, every summer. **Please be aware that it is your responsibility to take the initiative in securing summer support, except in the first year.** In later years, talk to your Ph.D. advisor early in the spring semester to ensure that support will be available for the summer. The best plan would be to secure an RAship or training grant slot. There are currently no summer TA-ships available. All graduate students receive a lump sum stipend check in the summer. Summer support, standard monthly stipends and any additional funds require to bring the student to the amount stated in the letter of offer.

### 7. First-year fellowship

All first-year students will receive the same fellowship during 2012-2013. The award includes 12 months of stipend support to cover also your first summer of research in the lab. This year the award will total \$29,000 divided into 11 payments installments from August through June. The fellowship is described as "50% time appointments," but you are not allowed to receive more than the \$29,000. The reason is that by university rules, the remaining 50% of time is for your studies and research. Faculty mentors will then begin supporting students on August 16, 2013.

### 8. Paying taxes on Fellowships

We cannot legally offer tax information or advice. We strongly suggest that fellows contact the IRS directly, and/or consult with a tax professional such as a tax lawyer or a tax accountant. While receiving your fellowship, domestic students will not receive a W-2.

The following link, <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf> contains information regarding tax treatment of fellowship awards. In addition, <http://fbs.usc.edu/depts/sfs/page/2115/1098-t/> provides information regarding the IRS 1098-t form. These links are not meant to be a comprehensive list of tax resources or forms that you should consider.

International Students may want to consult the Office of International Services (OIS) at: <http://sait.usc.edu/ois/>

### III. PROGRAM HANDBOOK

#### ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

##### 1. Program of study for the Ph.D.

Our program of graduate study is designed to provide each student with a broad, fundamental background in Neuroscience coupled with detailed knowledge and expertise in the chosen area of concentration. The coursework in Neuroscience centers on a core course and two key courses (each NGP student will choose from a menu of six key courses). Moreover, students take a neuroscience course known as the Neurolunch, where each student is provided with an opportunity to organize and give presentations. Students are also required to take a course titled “Neuroscience Ethics and Professionalization” (or an equivalent course). Finally, students must take a course in statistics. In addition to those obligatory classes, students must supplement their studies with a small number of elective classes. Various faculty members give advanced courses and seminars on specialized research topics each semester. In addition, a range of courses in areas relating to Neuroscience is available in various departments on the University Park and Health Sciences Campuses. Each student’s curriculum can therefore be tailored to the particular area of interest of that individual.

You decided to join the NGP to have the opportunity to perform advanced research. It is critical to achieve two goals during your first year: 1) demonstrate mastery of neuroscience through coursework (maintaining a 3.0 GPA) and 2) through research laboratory rotations, secure a dissertation laboratory before the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study. Regarding course work, we provide maximum flexibility to meet programmatic goals of depth and breadth. Irrespective of your research area of interest, the USC NGP expects all of its students to achieve core competency in the discipline of neuroscience (through coursework, seminars and journal clubs) and expertise in specialty areas. This, we believe, will prepare for the intellectual flexibility that is a prerequisite for being a successful scientist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

##### 2. Academic Requirements

###### Grades

The rules of both the Graduate School and NGP require that all students maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. In addition, a minimum grade of “C” (2.0) is required for a course to count for graduate credit. Here is a listing of letter grades and the corresponding grade points:

A	(4.0)	B-	(2.7)	D+	(1.3)
A-	(3.7)	C+	(2.3)	D	(1.0)
B+	(3.3)	C	(2.0)	D-	(0.7)
B	(3.0)	C-	(1.7)	F	(0.0)

*If your GPA falls below 3.0 you will not qualify for a Teaching or Research Assistantship or a fellowship, and you will be in danger of being dismissed from the NGP as a graduate student in good standing. It is possible to grant a one-semester exception, to provide the student with an opportunity to raise their GPA. This*

cannot be guaranteed, however. It is your responsibility to petition the NGP Director and the Graduate School for this exception. Note that you must achieve a B or better for the core course, NEUR 524.

These rules have important consequences for interpreting your grades in graduate courses. The custom in Neuroscience graduate courses is to use the range from “A” to “B-”. As usual, an “A” denotes excellent performance. However, during graduate training, a grade of “B-” denotes unsatisfactory performance, equivalent to the “C”-“D” range during undergraduate training. In a similar way, a “B” can be thought of as signaling performance that is adequate but not outstanding. Students who receive a C or below generally are failing in their efforts to demonstrate core competency.

### Course Requirements

Overall course requirements for earning a Ph.D. from USC include the completion of 60 course units. In Neuroscience, at least 24 of these 60 units must be in the form of formal course work (lecture or seminar courses); the remainder may be in the form of research/dissertation units. The formal course work includes 22 units of specific course work and at least 2 units of elective course work, as indicated below.

#### Specific Requirements (22 units)

1. Advanced Neurosciences (NEUR 524/525), (8 units)  
This year-long neuroscience core course and offers an advanced overview of brain research, from molecular biology to cognitive neuroscience. This course is purposely broad, intending to endow students from different disciplines the basic language to approach all of brain research.
2. One key course from each of two of four tracks (3 units each for a total of 9 units).  
The four tracks and related courses are as follows:
  - a. Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Track
    - i. NEUR 531, Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology
    - ii. NEUR 426 (BISC 426), Principles of Neural Development
  - b. Systems and Behavior Track
    - i. NEUR 532, Systems and Behavioral Neurobiology
    - ii. NEUR 541, Neurobiology of Disease
  - c. Computational and Neuroengineering Track
    - i. NEUR 534 (BME 575), Computational Neuroengineering
    - ii. NEUR 535 (CS 564), Brain Theory and Artificial Intelligence
  - d. Cognitive Track
    - i. NEUR 533, Cognitive Neuroscience
3. Four semesters of NEUR 539, Neurolunch (for a total of 4 units)
4. NEUR 538, Neuroscience Ethics and Professionalization (1 unit) or INTD 500, Responsible Conduct of Research (1 unit)
5. Statistics (e.g., PM 510, PSYC 501, or equivalent)

Petitions to waive required coursework will be deferred until the student has established their dissertation mentor and together they have set a course of study. A petition form can be found on page 64. As far as the two key courses from four tracks are concerned, the following policy holds: To accommodate a limited set of circumstances, a petition agreed to and co-signed by the student and the student's advisor may be presented to the Director's Office in writing to request substitution of one alternative course that does not meet the two key-course requirement. The petition must be presented before the end of the student's second year of NGP study. In no case will a student be allowed to complete less than one key course, one from four of the different NGP tracks. Approval of the petition is not guaranteed. The substitution will only be considered if the argument for an alternative third course clearly meets the value of "breadth with depth" embedded in the NGP curriculum. The waiver request may be strengthened by demonstrating either (i) adequate prior background in a third track other than the two in which the student proposes to take key courses or (ii) that the replacement course provides a different kind of breadth appropriate to the student's training and development. Waiver of the statistical requirement can be acquired through assistance of the Graduate Program Manager (Linda Bazilian) and must be approved by the Director.

#### **Elective Courses (at least 2 units)**

The content of elective courses changes from semester to semester according to the interests of students and faculty. These courses are worth 2, 3 or 4 units, and are offered in Biological Sciences, Psychology, Molecular Biology, Computer Science, Gerontology, Cell and Neurobiology, Physiology & Biophysics and other relevant departments.

#### **Registration Policies**

Your advisor must approve all courses, including the ones offered by other departments, each and every semester. (Please make sure to submit the "Department Academic Advisement" form located on page 59.) We strongly discourage students from enrolling concurrently in NGP and in another graduate or certificate program. *NPG students must first obtain approval from the NGP director and provide evidence of the research mentor's support for a petition to enroll in any other program. Failure to follow these procedures is considered a basis for dismissal from NGP. The student should also know that NGP has no financial obligations in regards to the secondary program. For instance, students will have to pay tuition, as tuition remission is only for courses directly related to the Ph.D. work.*

#### **In Your First Year**

Before enrolling in classes at the start of fall and spring semesters, you must meet with the members of the NGP Advisement Committee (Drs. Levitt, Hirsch and Sampath). First year students must meet with all three. Advanced students can meet with one of the three. For first year students, the Advisement Committee will assist you in determining your course of study and potential laboratories for rotations in your scientific areas of interest during your first year. In general, during fall semester all first year students should register for the core course (NEUR 524), Neurolunch (NEUR 539), the and 7 units of NEUR 790 for lab rotations, for a total of 12 units. During spring semester all students should register for one key course (from one of the four tracks), Neurolunch (NEUR 539), core course (NEUR 525), and 5 units (may vary) of NEUR 790 for lab rotations, for a total of 12 units. During the first summer session all students should register for 1 unit of Ethics and Accountability in

Biomedical Research (INTD 500). Please be aware of registration deadlines at all times. Announcements and reminders by the programs manager and graduate advisor will be sent out to all students regarding semester registration procedures and deadline dates so that students are registered on time.

Along with course work, your priority should be to begin your lab rotations (see Section 5 below), with an eye toward choosing a lab in which you will do your dissertation research. Current graduate students and faculty will also help you adjust to student life in L.A.

### A Few Words About Signing Up For Courses

With a full TA or RAship, you are entitled to 12 units of tuition remission each fall and spring semester, although you need only enroll for 6 units/semester to be considered a full time graduate student. During your years as an NGP student, you will not have trouble accumulating the 60 units required for the Ph.D. Do not use research credits (NEUR 790) to fill your course schedule.

A related subject is the summer courses, especially 790 units. If you are paid in payroll for the summer as a “Research Assistant” you must enroll in 3 units of NEUR 790. However, if you are a “Fellowship Holder” (which is the case for most first-year students), you should not enroll for any 790 units over the summer, as the first-year fellowship does not include summer tuition. [Note that during this time you are insured but your Student Health Center fee is not paid (you cannot go to the Student Health Center unless you pay your own fees). The staff, however, kindly arranges continued access to the Lyon Center and library].

Note that the **tuition remission is intended only for courses directly relevant to the Neuroscience Ph.D. Program**. We note, however, that the discipline of neuroscience is strongly inter-disciplinary, so that relevance is broadly defined for maximal flexibility in designing a course of study. Each student is urged to discuss their course plans with their research mentor and is required to file the written approval of the course plan in the NGP office before registration each semester (page 63). The student also can consult dissertation committee members about coursework that enhance progress towards completion of the dissertation.

### 3. Beyond Course Work...

By the end of your second semester, you will have completed your first year of course work. A dissertation laboratory is expected to be selected before the beginning of the Fall semester, year 02 of study (see Section 5 below). Your specific program of course work and research will now be determined by you in consultation with your advisor. It should be emphasized that the primary responsibility for your graduate career rests with you. ***You must understand the rules and regulations for earning a Ph.D.*** in the NGP at USC. Many of them are noted briefly in this guide. The university-wide rules for obtaining a doctoral degree are published in the University Catalogue, an updated edition of which is published every year. The Graduate Student Handbook, published by the Graduate School, is also very useful. It is your responsibility to meet each requirement on time – for example, you must finish the entire procedure for the Qualifying Exams (and therefore advance to candidacy to perform dissertation research) no later than the end of your fifth semester (see below).

Secondly, you should realize that your time is as valuable as you make it. Starting in your second year, there is no formal structured routine for you to follow. Only you, in consultation with your dissertation advisor, can decide how to organize your time, and your decisions and commitments will have a lasting impact on your career. Be organized and work hard.

#### 4. Oral Presentation Requirement

The NGP prides itself in providing opportunities for students to develop outstanding oral and written communication skills. While often underestimated for importance, these skills often differentiate individuals who may be competing for a particular job and whose research accomplishments are similar in quality. Thus, we have mechanisms in place for you to maximize your skill set. One regulation of which you should be aware is that you must give at least one presentation on your research every 9 months after you complete your qualifying exams (Section 11 below). Members of your guidance committee must be present and attend the presentation and sign off a form that you will obtain from Vanessa Clark (can also be found on page 62). This requirement can be met by giving a presentation at the “Annual Student Symposium,” where you will present a short talk on your thesis research.

#### 5. Lab Rotations

The purpose of the Ph.D. program is to prepare you to be an independent researcher, and an important step in this process is to choose a lab in which you will pursue your dissertation research. You are required to perform three different rotations. You may petition the director to do two of the three rotations in the same laboratory. This, however, will require a written letter from the laboratory mentor that she/he can commit to support you fully on a research assistantship in year 02 if you select that laboratory for your dissertation research. While highly unusual, a fourth rotation in your first year can be done, but needs to be approved by the program’s director. Please see the graduate programs advisor for further information. You should take time to meet with prospective faculty member. This conversation neither commits you nor the faculty member to agree to the rotation; rather it provides you with an opportunity to learn about ongoing projects, and to determine whether the laboratory will have funds to support you in future years. Keep in mind that you will need to ask the faculty member whether funding will be available if you elect that laboratory for your dissertation research. Faculty generally can give you a sense that they have grant funding, or are actively seeking funding. If during the interview the faculty member states that they will not be able to support you at all in year 02 (that is you would need to TA both semesters), you should not select that laboratory for a rotation. The program restricts TAs until you pass Part A of your milestone exam (see below), which generally occurs by the end of the fall semester in year 02 of study.

Rotations should be flexible with respect to the lab work and you should approach a faculty member whose research interests align with your own. NGP encourages strongly that these arrangements are set up at least 1 month in advance of the start of the rotation. The Advisement Committee can be quite helpful in narrowing your choices, so that you maximize your opportunities for finding a laboratory that matches your interests in the neurosciences. The laboratory in which you perform your rotations often will have ongoing, small projects. Because of your limited time during the

semester, you typically will work on one of these projects as part of your rotation. You should expect to meet regularly (individual or laboratory meetings) with the training faculty member during your rotation. Unavailability usually is not a good indicator of future access during the important years of performing dissertation research. Keep in mind that the rotation should provide you with insight regarding the research focus of the laboratory, the style of the laboratory head with regard to mentoring, and other members (graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research staff) of the laboratory with whom you will be interacting on a daily basis. This information should help you make an informed decision regarding your final selection. Also remember that the selection process is a two-way street. Thus, you and the training faculty member must have mutual interests in your joining the laboratory.

The policy is summarized as follows:

During their first 2 semesters, new students are to rotate through up to three labs, with rotations lasting, on average, 10 weeks. The rotations must include three different labs. You may petition the director if you wish to do two rotations in the same lab. By the end of the third rotation in spring Semester, students must identify their preferred dissertation mentor. Though not encouraged, in some instances, you are allowed to petition to do an additional fourth rotation during the summer. This must be approved by the NGP Director prior to you starting the rotation. However, students must have selected a dissertation laboratory, and the faculty mentor must have accepted you by the end of Spring 01 semester. Students having difficulty identifying a dissertation lab by the end of the spring semester of year 01 of study must consult an Advisement Committee member as soon as possible for assistance. **Students ultimately are responsible for identifying a thesis research laboratory before the end of year 01 of study, and should seek assistance from the Advisement Committee (Levitt, Hirsch, Sampath) at any time during their first year, if needed. Mentor matching contracts need to be submitted to the graduate student advisor securing mentorship no later than the end of May. Deadlines are listed on page 33.**

Students should begin thinking about their rotations as soon as they have accepted a place in the program. Some contact appropriate faculty before they arrive in Los Angeles to set up a rotation, and this means that they are well prepared to begin work in a lab by early September.

During Orientation in mid-August you will have the opportunity to hear from and mingle with faculty and students from each lab. Many of the training faculty are interested in having students rotate through their labs. You can use this time to talk to faculty who share your research interests and possibly set-up your first lab rotation.

You will also meet with the Advisement Committee during the first two weeks of the semester. You must identify the laboratories that you will contact to perform your first rotation at this time.

The exact time period and location of each rotation must be documented by “contracts” completed and signed by the lab advisor and student at the beginning of the rotation. Contract forms are located on page 58 or can be obtained from Vanessa Clark. She will also contact you towards the end of a rotation to check that you have begun to organize the next one. **You must inform the NGP Office, by submitting the written and signed contract that is given to Vanessa Clark before you begin a**



**new rotation.** Once you have completed a rotation, you will need to submit a rotation summary form to Mallory Redel. Rotation summary forms are located on page 59. Please make several copies of these forms for submission.

The laboratory rotation schedule for 2012-2013 is as follows:

Lab Rotation #1: September 10 – November 16

Rotation Contract # 1 due: September 7

Rotation Summary #1 due: November 26

Lab Rotation #2: November 26 – February 18

Rotation Contract #2 due: November 19

Rotation Summary #2 due: February 25

Lab Rotation #3: February 25 – May 6

Rotation Contract #3 due: February 22

Rotation Summary #3 due: May 13

There is a one-week break between each rotation to complete the previous rotation. Students should consult the training faculty member regarding lab schedules and expectations during holidays that fall within a rotation.

Once you have completed your rotations and all of your paperwork has been submitted (contracts for each rotation along with summary forms), you will be asked to submit a mentor-matching form (page 60) to confirm your mentor by the end of the year:

- Students submit their mentor preferences: May 7th
- Faculty respond to mentor matching: May 8-15th
- Students notified of final decisions: May 16th
- All students should have a confirmed mentor by: May 17th

Laboratory principal investigators (PIs) ultimately will be responsible for your stipend and tuition support after year 01 of study. Thus, many faculty members may not have the capacity to have more than a few students. Arranging rotations ahead of time helps make the experience a productive one for all concerned.

It is, of course, perfectly acceptable to sign up for research credit hours for the time you spend doing your lab rotations.

Remember that it is your right both to choose advisors freely and to change them if problems arise. The Directors of NGP and the faculty as a whole will support your wishes in these matters. If you perceive any problems, please see any of the NGP Directors.

## 6. Lab Visits

You are encouraged to visit any laboratories of faculty in NGP, particularly during your first year. Simply contact the faculty member and arrange a visit. It is advisable to plan in advance with the NGP faculty member to assure they can accommodate your request to rotate. This will be particularly helpful if you are undecided about which lab/research area interests you the most. It is helpful to ask NGP faculty during the lab visit if they plan to take new students, as new funding often begins after the semester has started.

## 7. Advising

All students must receive academic advisement before they can enroll in classes each semester. Year 01 students will meet with the Advisement Committee (Pat Levitt, Judith Hirsch, and Alapakkam Sampath) for advice on course enrollment. Year 02 and later students should consult their NGP faculty mentor for advice on course enrollment, and obtain authorization for one member of the Advisement Committee. See "Registration Process," page 14 for a description of the procedure. In addition to helping you decide which courses to take, the NGP Directors, as well as all NGP faculty, are interested in helping you with other matters as well. If you would like our help with any professional or personal problem, please come see one of us. We will be happy to lend a sympathetic ear, offer advice, give you referrals, and inform you of your rights in disputes with faculty or peers. If you wish, we will intercede on your behalf or act as a mediator. Be assured that your discussions with any of us will be kept completely confidential.

## 8. Student Evaluations

The Advisement Committee meets twice a year to review the performance of each student in the program. We consider grades, participation in classes, research progress, TA performance (if applicable), progress in satisfying degree requirements, the extent to which the student followed previous recommendations, and other matters relevant to professional advancement. The result of this evaluation will be a letter from the chair of the Advisement Committee to each student, and a copy sent to the student's advisor. The letter will contain one of four ratings: (1) Acceptable performance, (2) Acceptable performance, assuming you take certain actions, (3) Unacceptable performance, (4) No evaluation. In each case, the reasons for giving the rating will be briefly outlined and any remedial action will be specified. Students should meet with their advisors for a full explanation of the review letter. First year students and others without advisors should meet with a member of the Advisement Committee. Students receiving a (4) should have their advisor contact the Directors AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to avoid a hold on your registration. **Two successive category (3)'s are grounds for dismissal from the program.**

## 9. Academic Warning and Dismissal of Graduate Students

The NGP as a program takes factors other than an adequate GPAs into consideration in determining a student's qualifications for an advanced degree. A student's overall academic performance, specific

research skills and aptitudes, and faculty evaluations will be considered in program decisions regarding a student's continuation in a doctoral degree program. Please keep in mind that the NGP is a heavily research-focused Ph.D. program with expectations of substantive accomplishments through a significant time and effort commitment. During your first year of study, the evaluation of your research progress occurs through your laboratory rotations. Your progress in performing thesis research is monitored closely by your laboratory mentor and guidance committee.

Satisfactory progress in both coursework and research toward an advanced degree as determined by the faculty is required at all times. The NGP has a strong history in developing and graduating very accomplished students. Occasionally, however, student performance, for a variety of reasons, does not meet the established rigor of the NGP. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress will be informed by the NGP Director in writing. The NGP Director has the right to recommend at any time after written warning that a student be dismissed from a graduate program for academic reasons or that a student be denied readmission. Procedures on disputed academic evaluations are described in *SCampus*.

It is the responsibility of the NGP administrative leadership to provide each student with warnings regarding their academic and research performances. An email message and a letter, placed in the student's mailbox, containing a rating of "3" from the Advisement Committee to a student, is a warning of "Unacceptable Performance" towards the degree. Any violations of the rules stated in this guide, e.g., maintaining a GPA under 3.0, is responsibility of the student. It is the responsibility of the student, once a warning is received, to correct the violations within one semester.

## 10. Qualifying Exam Procedure

Successful completion of the Qualifying Exams admits a student to official candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. To begin the Qualifying Exam process, the first thing you must do is contact Vanessa Clark. Remember two things: a) the vast majority of you will pass, and b) the exams are meant to test your core competencies in neuroscience and your ability to develop and implement a research project. They are challenging, but are not designed to trick a student. Thus, we expect that almost all NGP students who show adequate proficiency in coursework and have had excellent rotation and initial research experiences will do well. In the section marked "Timeline to Degree", you will find details of the procedure. A description of the Qual procedure follows:

### a. Choosing a guidance committee:

By the end of the third semester, students should choose a guidance committee consisting of five members. Three of the five members must be from the home department, and at least one of the five members must have their primary faculty appointment in a USC school that is different from the laboratory mentor. This committee will conduct the qualifying exam and provide guidance during dissertation research. ***The chair of the committee shall not be the student's laboratory mentor and the outside member cannot be from the same department as the chair of the committee. Committees cannot be changed between the written and oral examinations. Any reasons for changes in committees during this time should be consulted with the director of the***

*program.* Students should consult extensively with each committee member regarding subjects to be covered in the exam.

Choosing a committee is an important matter. Ideally, you will develop a close relationship with these faculty members, which will be of mutual benefit not only during your time here as a student of the NGP, but throughout your career. Consult with your prospective mentor about committee composition. Advanced NGP students, who have successfully completed their qualifying exams, are another good source of information. Training faculty may have different styles with regard to the qualifying exams. Some students focus on this issue with regard to the ease or difficulty they may have in the exam itself. Keep in mind that it is most important to have a committee member who is engaged in hearing about a student's academic and research progress, and is willing to put in the time to help a NGP student when needed.

### Roles of Guidance and Dissertation Committees

As of Fall 2010 the following NGP Dissertation Committee changes have taken affect:

- A. The dissertation committee should consist of a minimum of three tenured or tenure track USC faculty, two of whom must be from the home department, at least one of whom must be tenured, and an Outside Member\* from a different Ph.D. granting department at USC, is required.
  - B. Outside members of examining and thesis committees may be appointed faculty in the NGP, but their primary school affiliation must be different than the chair of the student's guidance and dissertation committee.
  - C. Outside members of examining and thesis committees may not have secondary appointments in the department in which the chair of the committee has their primary appointment.
  - D. The Chair of any examining or thesis committee must be a member of the NGP, **but not the student's research advisor (mentor)**. The mentor may serve as an inside member of all committees. All current and future committees will use this structure.
- b. Part A of the written exam:

This must be finished **before** the end of the year 02 fall semester. The chair of the guidance committee will obtain one question from each faculty members. The chair should approve the questions and then e-mail to Mallory Redel. All questions, contracts and instructions will be given to the student by Mallory Redel. Answers will be due back to Mallory within 4 weeks. The purpose of this long period is to allow time for students' other activities, which they are strongly advised not to suspend. Any reference or source material can be used. Students can ask for clarification from the faculty member who submitted the question, but may not discuss it with anyone else. Each answer should be approximately 5 single spaced pages in length.

Finally, in order to prevent plagiarism, you are required to read the "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" found on this webpage: [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug\\_plag.htm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm). When you turn in your completed exam to Mallory Redel by email

submission, you must also provide a signed statement that you have read and understand this guide and that you will not engage in plagiarism. This statement is included in the “Forms” section of this manual, page 65. Besides this statement, you can learn about plagiarism and other ethical matters in science in the Course “Neuroscience Ethics and Professionalization or equivalent (NEUR 538).”

c. Guidelines for questions for Part A of the written exam:

All members of the students should prepare questions with the student’s research interests in mind, and in the light of previous discussions with the student. Three suggested formats are: a) write a brief review of a specific topic; b) summarize, critically evaluate, and synthesize a large body of knowledge; c) compose an annotated course outline that conveys the essence of a specific topic in a limited number of lectures.

In the course of preparatory discussions with your committee members, find out what the format of the questions will be. Also, try to get a sense of each member’s idea of a good answer.

d. Grading Part A of the written exam:

Each faculty member will grade his/her question on a scale of 1.0 – 5.0 using 0.5 steps if necessary (1.0 as poor and 5.0 as exceptional). A mean score of 3.3 or above is passing; below 3.0 is failing. Cases where the mean is between 3.0 and 3.3 or where two or more questions are graded below 3.0 must be considered by the full committee. Two or more negative votes of the committee will result in failure.

e. Part B of the written exam:

You should complete part B of the written exam in conjunction with the oral exam before the fall semester of your third year. The second half of the written exam is a research proposal preferably in the format of a common federal funding source, e.g., an NIH NRSA pre/post doctoral fellowship, NIH R01 regular research grant, or NSF grant. The format choice will be made by the mentor in consultation with the student. The subject will be the student’s actual dissertation project. The final draft must be given to the committee no later than 3 weeks before the oral exam is scheduled. There are no exceptions to this deadline, as training faculty must have adequate time to fairly evaluate the proposal. Failure to meet this deadline will require rescheduling of the oral exam, which is done at the discretion of the student’s committee. This proposal must include preliminary/pilot research results obtained by the student, as expected for any grant application. These pilot data should accomplish at least one of the following goals: demonstrate some familiarity with techniques to be used, establish the validity of underlying hypotheses, or justify the experimental design. Note that it may not be necessary to obtain positive results to meet these goals.

The purpose of part B is for the NGP, through the guidance committee, to ensure that your dissertation research proposal is sound and likely to yield substantive and original findings.

Students often underestimate the time needed to write a proposal, so you should provide yourself with sufficient time. Speak to your mentor, members of your guidance committee, or other advanced students for recommendations. The research results in the proposal should be original and performed by you. Discussing your ideas for the proposal with your mentor, members of the guidance committee and other students and research fellows in your laboratory is permissible. However, the written proposal is not to be reviewed and edited by others prior to submission.

Failure to pass the written examination: The status of the written exam (pass/fail) will be determined by the student's committee at least 1 week prior to the scheduled oral exam. Failure of the written exam will result in cancellation of the oral exam. The student will receive a written warning and allowed to re-take the exam after he/she meets with the chair of his/her committee to review the critiques of the written exam. A second failure will result in dismissal from the program.

f. Oral examination:

This must be completed within three weeks of submission of your written proposal. If a student feels they cannot meet this deadline, they must immediately contact their mentor and the NGP Director or one of the Co-Associate Directors to arrange an adequate solution. In all instances, the oral exam must be completed **before** the end of the spring semester in year 03. The exam will consist of a critical defense of the written proposal, so students should expect questions that relate to topics tangential, but nonetheless relevant to the proposal. The oral exam may also be used to discern whether weaknesses that were identified in the written exam have been corrected.

The single most important preparative step you can take for the oral exam is to arrange a mock oral. The mock exam should be given by 4 or 5 post-quals students or postdocs in your lab or in labs with related interests. Remember that no one, including NGP training faculty, can answer every question perfectly. Maintaining composure during the exam is important and will help you focus on the research project, the details of which you should know better than anyone.

There are common types of questions asked during oral exams. A partial list follows: 1) specific details of experimental design; 2) the scientific or technical basis of methods used; 3) the global significance or health-relatedness of the project; 4) relation of the project to other work in the field; 5) your knowledge of literature relevant to the project; 6) your ability to synthesize and summarize ideas. In preparing for the exam, bear in mind that this is a unique opportunity to receive constructive feedback regarding your proposal from seasoned scientists, which, in fact, is exactly what successful researchers experience throughout their careers.

g. Scheduling the qualifying exams:

The times given above are deadlines, i.e., the latest times by which the requirements must be satisfied. It may be preferable to move the entire process up by one semester. Faculty should identify students that would benefit from an accelerated exam schedule. One important detail to remember: whenever you decide to take the oral examination, **you must file with the Graduate**

School the Request To Take The Qualifying Examination in the semester before the scheduled exam (see also *Qualifying Examination Procedures* on page 44).

### 11. Annual Meeting with Dissertation/Guidance Committee

All post-quals students must meet in person with their dissertation committee at least once every 9 months. Be sure to pick a meeting time for all of your committee members to attend. Should you have difficulties consistently in scheduling your committee to meet collectively, please contact any member of the Advisement Committee (Pat Levitt, Judith Hirsch, Alapakkam Sampath), who can help with this issue.

All students must have the committee members sign a form, confirming the meeting (please fill out and print the form (found in the forms section, page 58) and submit the form to Vanessa Clark).

### 12. Some Advice on Writing the Dissertation

Once you have passed your oral exam, you will need to establish your dissertation committee. In general, members of the guidance committee often become members of the dissertation committee. A minimum of three members must be appointed to your committee; the chair and outside member CANNOT be from the same School. For further information regarding the role of an outside dissertation committee member, please read over the guidelines found on the following link: [http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/documents/StuServices/Role\\_of\\_Outside\\_Member.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/documents/StuServices/Role_of_Outside_Member.pdf). You may download any of the committee forms from the following website: [http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current\\_guidelines\\_forms\\_03.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html).

The following is a general discussion of the approach one should take when writing the dissertation. There are two main messages. General introductory and summary chapters are allowable. Those chapters that form the bulk of your dissertation, which report original research data, should be written in the form of a manuscript suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. (The course “Neuroscience Ethics and Professionalization” – NEUR 538 – or equivalent, covers scientific writing.) Second, be sure that every important step is approved by your advisor and committee in advance.

#### a. Before you start writing

Your dissertation mentor will assist you in making these decisions:

Select a journal. Consider the format, appropriateness, prestige, and costs of journals in your field. Concentrate on refereed journals that publish full-length papers. Short or technical papers are much less important. Book chapter or review formats are not permissible.

Beware of *Science* and *Nature*. These are prestigious, but chances of acceptance are very low and the selection process is capricious. Seek impartial opinions about the significance of your work before deciding whether it’s worth the effort.

Consider authorship carefully. You should be first author on papers that compose your dissertation. In the field of neuroscience, the dissertation advisor generally is senior and corresponding author when the manuscript is submitted. Your advisor should work with you on determining the validity of others being listed as co-authors. Many journals have guidelines for authorship, which you should investigate before making a decision with your advisor.

Decide on your name. It is best to use exactly the same name throughout your career. How should your name appear? If you are married, or plan to be, will you change or hyphenate your publishing name?

Practice your writing and start early. Most students grossly underestimate how long it will take them to finish writing. Start outlining your papers early, because this is often the most effective way to determine what experiments still are needed. The NGP incorporates a number of writing experiences through coursework and exams. Thus, we expect that all NGP students will improve their writing skills during their time in the program. Manuscripts often are edited substantially. Find peers who are willing to read and comment on early drafts. Do the same for them. Mutual editing of this sort may be among your most valuable experiences to hone your writing skills.

Discuss everything with your advisor. Come to agreement on the nature and scope of your dissertation. How many chapters will there be? Which data will be included? If certain data are not to be included, understand your rights to co-authorship of the eventual publications. Learn your rights regarding intellectual property.

Discuss everything with your guidance committee. Committee members, along with your advisor, will have to approve the dissertation eventually. They should and must be involved and committed early on to your success. While conflicts between students and their mentors are uncommon, your committee members can help in such instances.

Consider certain practical matters. Will you need technical support for typing, graphics, photography, etc., or special access to computers, other equipment or supplies? What word processing, data analysis, and graphics software will you use? Who will pay publication costs, including paper reprints if desired?

b. While you are writing

Write your chapters as journal articles. From the start, write each paper in the format of a paper in your chosen journal. Be prepared to re-format the text to conform to the University's dissertation formatting guidelines.

Feed drafts of the papers to your advisor and committee members. Since they are separate papers, each chapter should be fairly self-contained. However, there may be detailed experimental results, or simulation data, that would unduly lengthen the paper. Consider including them in Appendices to your dissertation. Moreover, the journal may accept them for electronic-only publication as Supplemental Materials. Submit the articles individually to your committee



members for their preliminary approval. As a courtesy, provide them with plenty of time to read and respond. This may save you much aggravation later.

Don't offend anyone. Think about your dedication and acknowledgements section well in advance. Don't leave out anyone important. Be tactful. While being constructively critical is perfectly acceptable, a vitriolic or personal attack on the published work of others is seldom a good idea.

Publishing early is OK. Sometimes, competition from others or the need to show progress for continued grant funding will require you to publish papers well before the dissertation. This is a good idea.

Your dissertation should be coherent. A bundle of re-formatted papers or, even worse, a stack of published reprints, is not acceptable for the dissertation. Your chapters should be thematically related. You may plan on writing one chapter, usually the first, in a different format. This may be a literature review, a presentation of background work done by others, etc. A concluding chapter summarizing and discussing the significance of your work may also be appropriate.

c. After you finish writing

Pass out (signed) copies of your dissertation. As a courtesy, make copies of your dissertation for your advisor and one or more key members of your committee. Consider copies for spouse, parents, significant others, etc.

Publish as soon as possible. The NGP expects that all PhD students have at least one peer-reviewed manuscript accepted for publication prior to graduating. In fact, this is the norm for our students. As a warning, the more time that elapses since the primary research is done, the more difficult it is to complete these publications (bearing in mind it may take up to a year to finally see your work in print from first submission). In your new position as a postdoc, faculty member, or industrial researcher, you will not have the time to complete manuscripts from your dissertation work. Publishing your thesis research will reflect well on your future as a scientist.

## SOME ETHICAL CONCERNS

The close relationship between graduate student and advisor is governed by many well-defined rights, responsibilities, and expectations. Ideally, this code of ethics helps insure that your time in graduate school will be productive, satisfying, and rewarding. In less than ideal situations, it may be necessary to invoke these standards to insure that your rights as a student are not violated. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT EACH STUDENT BE AWARE OF HIS/HER RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM. The course “Neuroscience Ethics and Professionalization” – NEUR 538 – or equivalent, covers these rights, responsibilities, and expectations. In addition, the matters are discussed in two excellent booklets. These are:

### 1. SCampus.

This USC publication is a good source of information about women’s issues, basic rights and responsibilities of students, academic integrity, review and appeals procedures, procedures for disputing grades, sexual harassment, and other issues. You can view this guidebook online, <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/> or pick up a bound copy of SCampus from Topping Student Center (TSC building) located on UPC.

### 2. On Being a Scientist

This outstanding brochure from the National Academy of Sciences covers three major topics: the nature of scientific research, social mechanisms in science, and the role of scientists in society. Of particular interest in the present context is the second topic, which deals with the peer review process, replication of observations, the nature of scientific progress, human error, fraud, plagiarism, allocation of credit for research results, and special problems associated with collaborative research. There is also a brief but excellent annotated bibliography. You can read it on-line for free or order copies at the following URL: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/4917.html>.

The important topics not covered in these booklets are rules governing the use of human subjects in biomedical research and ethical considerations regarding these of animals in research.

While it is important to be aware of your rights, don’t be overly concerned. Serious violations of ethical standards have been extremely rare in our program. If you have the slightest concern about any of these issues, don’t hesitate to contact the Directors of NGP, Pat Levitt ([plevitt@usc.edu](mailto:plevitt@usc.edu)), Judith Hirsch ([hirsch@usc.edu](mailto:hirsch@usc.edu)), or Alapakkam Sampath ([asampath@usc.edu](mailto:asampath@usc.edu)). Your discussions will be held in absolute confidence. Of course, feel free to consult other faculty or peers that you may trust, or any of the support services of the university.

IV. TIMELINE TO DEGREE

	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	
1 <sup>st</sup> Year Goals:	<p>*Attendance of the annual NGP retreat.</p> <p>*Lab rotations</p> <p>*Submission of contracts and summary forms due after each rotation.</p>	<p>*Lab rotations cont.</p> <p>* Mentor Matching forms due by the 1st week in May. By end of Spring semester, thesis mentors must be confirmed.</p> <p><i>Pls refer to pg. 60 for form.</i></p> <p>*Presentation at the student symposium</p>	*Research
Courses:	<p>*NEUR 524- 4 Units</p> <p>*NEUR 539- 1 Unit</p> <p>*NEUR 790- 7 Units (Research units)</p> <p><i>**All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester**</i></p>	<p>*NEUR 525- 4 Units</p> <p>*NEUR 539- 1 Unit</p> <p>*1 of the key courses from the 4 tracks.</p> <p>*NEUR 790 (Research Units)</p> <p><i>**All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester**</i></p>	<p>*INTD 500-1-Unit</p> <p>*Register for at least 2 units of research (NEUR 790) as directed.</p> <p>*RAship</p>
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester	4 <sup>th</sup> Semester	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Goals:	<p>*Establish your <b>GUIDANCE</b> Committee.</p> <p><i>*Please note: Guidance committee chair and outside member cannot be from the same department. Guidance committee chair cannot be the student's mentor.</i></p>	<p>*Presentation at the student symposium</p> <p>*Part A: <b>WRITTEN Exam</b> (exam must be taken by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, no exceptions).</p> <p><i>Pls refer to pg. 35 for details.</i></p>	*Research

Courses:	*NEUR 539-1 Unit *1 of the key courses from the 4 tracks. *NEUR 790 (Research Units) <i>**All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester**</i>	*NEUR 539-1 Unit *NEUR 790 (Research Units) <i>**All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester**</i>	*RAship  *Register for at least 3 units of research as directed.
	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Year Goals:</b>	*Part B: <b>WRITTEN Exam</b> (this portion should be completed in conjunction with the <b>ORAL exam</b> ).  * <b>ORAL Qualifying Exam</b> (exam must be taken by the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> semester, no exceptions).  <i>Pls refer to pg. 35 for details.</i>	*Presentation at the student symposium  *Appoint your <b>DISSERTATION</b> Committee.  <i>*Please note: Dissertation committee chair and outside member cannot be from the same department. A minimum of three members need to be listed and approved (Chair, inside and outside member).</i>  *Meet with your Dissertation committee and submit Part II of the Neuroscience Guidance Committee Member form  <i>Pls refer to pg. 62 for form.</i>	*Research
Courses:	<b>NEUR 790 – 6 Units</b> (Research Units) <i>**All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester**</i>	<b>NEUR 790 – 6 Units</b> (Research Units) <i>**All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester**</i>	*RAship  *Register for at least 3 units of research as directed.
	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	

<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Year Goals:</b></p>		<p>*Presentation/Participation at the student symposium</p> <p>*Meet with your Dissertation committee and submit Part II of the Neuroscience Guidance Committee Member form</p> <p><i>Pls refer to pg. 58 for form.</i></p>	<p>*Research</p>
<p>Courses:</p>	<p>NEUR 790 - 6 Units or NEUR 794 - 2 Units</p>	<p>NEUR 790 - 6 Units or NEUR 794 - 2 Units</p>	<p>*RAship</p> <p>*Register for at least 3 units of research as directed.</p>
	<p><b>9<sup>th</sup> Semester</b></p>	<p><b>10<sup>th</sup> Semester</b></p>	
<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Year Goals:</b></p>		<p>*Presentation/Participation at the student symposium</p> <p>*Meet with your Dissertation committee and submit Part II of the Neuroscience Guidance Committee Member form</p> <p><i>Pls refer to pg. 58 for form.</i></p>	<p>*Research</p>
<p>Courses:</p>	<p>NEUR 790 - 6 Units or NEUR 794 - 2 Units</p>	<p>NEUR 790 - 6 Units or NEUR 794 - 2 Units</p>	<p>*RAship</p> <p>*Register for at least 3 units of research as directed.</p>
<p><b>Graduation</b></p>	<p>**Provide Vanessa Clark with your Dissertation Defense info. for postings, recording and announcements.</p> <p>*Make an appt. with Linda Bazilian for finalization of paperwork submission and information after dissertation defense.</p>	<p>*Ensure thesis is uploaded by deadline.</p> <p>*Report to Vanessa Clark/Linda Bazilian of participation in hooding ceremony by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in February.</p> <p>*Inform your PI of hooding ceremony instructions and participation.</p>	<p>*A total of 24 course work units should be completed. A total of 60 units are required for the doctoral degree.</p>

### *Qualifying Examination Procedures*

1. Choose your committee in consultation with your advisor at least 2 semesters prior to when you wish to start the written examination. Written examinations cannot begin until the guidance committee has been approved. The committee is composed of 5 members: your research advisor, tenured or tenure-track faculty members of NGP AND an outside member. The outside member can be a member of the NGP but CANNOT be appointed in the same school as the mentor. The chair of the student's committee CANNOT be the mentor. Download the form from the Graduate School website and return to Vanessa Clark. ([http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current\\_guidelines\\_forms\\_03.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html)). Submit the form at least 1 semester prior to your written exam to obtain approval of your committee.
2. Request that questions for your written examination be forwarded to the chair of your committee chair will review the questions and forward them to Mallory Redel for administration of the exam.
3. Pick up questions from Mallory Redel. Complete the written portion of the qualifying examination in the allotted time indicated in your contracts.
4. In the semester BEFORE you plan to take the ORAL portion of the qualifying examination, complete the "Request to Take Qualifying Examination Form" (download form from the Graduate School website [http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current\\_guidelines\\_forms\\_03.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html)). You may not change your committee between the written and oral examination.
5. One week BEFORE you plan to take your oral portion of the examination, check with Vanessa Clark to see that the "Report on Ph.D. Qualifying Examination" form is in your student file (in HNB 120E). If it is NOT there, contact Linda Bazilian immediately.
6. Have your chair pick up your student file on the day of your oral examination. At the end of your examination, have the chair of your committee indicate that you passed (I'm making an assumption here), have ALL committee members sign the form, have your chair return your file with the signed form to Vanessa Clark. You **cannot** have access to that form until it is completed.
7. Sometime shortly after you have completed the qualifying examination, you will be able to review your degree progress on OASIS. When you review your report, check to see if there are any deficiencies or problems. Contact Linda Bazilian if there are any problems or if you have questions.
8. If you decide to postpone your DEGREE DATE, you MUST complete a "Change of Information Card" (from Degree Progress). You should do this as soon as you know you are not going to graduate in the semester originally planned.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You MUST complete a “Change of Committee Form” each time you change members on your committee. Committees cannot be changed between completion of the written and oral qualifying examinations.

Forms are available on the Graduate School website:

[http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current\\_guidelines\\_forms\\_03.html](http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_guidelines_forms_03.html)

## V. DIRECTORIES

### NGP Faculty

All NGP Faculty appear on <http://www.usc.edu/programs/neuroscience/faculty> with contact information and material on research interests.

## NEW NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE STUDENTS - FALL 2012

<u>Name</u>	<u>Schools Attended</u>
Eliza Bacon	UC Riverside
Christina Chen	Vanderbilt University/CSU Fullerton
Xun Chen	Beijing Normal University
Xiaolin Chou	Fudan University
Mary Donhoffner	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Nick Goeden	CalTech
Sydney Goings	Scripps College
Matthew Halliday	Allegheny College
Panthea Heydari	UCLA
Ted Hsu	UC Santa Barbara
Koto Kikuma	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Beril Kiragasi	Bogazici University
Brian Leung	Drexel University
Hung Chi Lu	National Taiwan University
Helga Mazyar	Isfahar University of Technology/National University of Singapore
Vanessa Moser	Furman University
Steven Pennell	Skimore College
Syed Qadri	University of Virginia
Brandalyn Riedel	Western Washington University
Celeste-Elise Stefany	University of Ottawa
Christopher Ventura	UC Irvine
Kathryn Wallin	USC
Hui Yang	Peking University

Rachel Yuan	USC
Chen Zhang	Tsinghua University
Brian Zingg	UCSD

**PIBBS transfers**

Kate Fehlhaber	UCLA
Anita Ramanathan	Visvesvaraya Technological University/USC



## RETURNING NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE STUDENTS

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## VI. LA LIFE

### HOUSING

#### On Campus:

The USC Student Housing Office (213-740-2546) is in Parking Structure X.

#### Off-Campus:

Talk to fellow graduate students for the best advice on this topic. You might also find someone you would want to room with in this way.

The major Los Angeles newspaper, *Los Angeles Times*, as well as smaller community newspapers (i.e., *Wilshire Press* in the Wilshire District, *Santa Monica Evening Outlook* in the Santa Monica-Venice area, *Daily Breeze* in the Redondo-Hermosa-Manhattan Beach area, or the *Star News* in the Pasadena area) *Northeast Newspaper*, in the Eagle Rock, El Sereno, East Los Angeles area, have listings of apartments and houses for rent. You can check listings in the student newspaper at USC, the *Daily Trojan*. Some students have also had success with the “Apartments for Rent” listings published weekly and available in stacks outside USC-Commons.

Before you begin your off-campus search for housing there is one very important purchase you should consider making, a *Thomas Brothers Street Atlas of Los Angeles and Orange Counties*. These are available at the USC Bookstore or at just about any bookstore or map store in the L.A. area and are worth every penny. With the Thomas Guide you will be able to locate any street address in L.A. and Orange counties quickly and easily. Even long-time Los Angeles residents find the Thomas Guide to be invaluable.

Non-University housing near the USC campus is limited and therefore fills up early. The area north of campus is known as “North University Park,” and is generally considered to be a good place to live. Because the area is small, availability is limited and landlords are able to charge more, so it can be difficult to find a bargain. However, there are a number of older places with “character” that are not too expensive and entirely livable. These must be sought out early, but try anyway. You might be lucky. One advantage of living in this area is that you can easily walk or bike to campus, which also saves on parking.

Farther from campus there are several areas where graduate students have been able to find good housing in nice neighborhoods. Of these areas, the one closest to USC is the Wilshire District. Located about 2 ½ miles north of USC, the Wilshire District has many nice apartments at reasonable rates. The Wilshire District, roughly defined, is bounded by Wilshire Blvd to the South, Melrose Avenue to the North, Vermont Avenue to the East, and Western Avenue to the West. The commute between the Wilshire District and USC can be made by MTA subway-Red Line (7<sup>th</sup> Street/Figueroa-downtown Los Angeles-Dash Shuttle Line F by USC will take you directly to the MTA subway on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, (15 minutes), bus (15-20 minutes), bicycle (15-20 minutes) or car (10 minutes).

If you'd like to live near the beach your best bet is probably the Venice-Santa Monica-Culver City area. Many graduate students have been able to find nice, reasonably priced apartments in this area. Generally speaking, rents in this area decrease as the distance from the beach increases. The rents in Culver City, for example, tend to be lower than they are in Venice. It might be a good idea to seek the advice of someone who is familiar with the area so you don't unwittingly move into a rough neighborhood. A large number of students from both USC and UCLA live in the Venice-Santa Monica-Culver City area, and, as a result, the social atmosphere is quite congenial. The commute to USC from this area is about 30-40 minutes by car. During rush hours, you can avoid the congested freeways by using surface streets instead. Since so many USC students live in this area, car pools can be established.

Some graduate students live in the Eagle Rock-Pasadena area. Eagle Rock has low rents, but some neighborhoods might not be the safest, and therefore is not recommended for people living alone (the same comment applies to the local area just off campus). In Pasadena the best place to look for an apartment is at the southern end of town and in the city of South Pasadena. This is a good neighborhood in which many students live. The area near Cal Tech is especially nice, but expensive. Another good place to look is in Monterey Park, an area south of Pasadena and east of campus. A fair number of USC medical and grad students live here. The commute by car from Eagle Rock, Pasadena or Monterey Park to USC is approximately 30 minutes, depending on traffic conditions. Another area that is clean and close to USC is Alhambra; it is near the South Pasadena area; rents are reasonable to expensive, and approximately 10-12 miles from the campus.

The areas discussed herein have been included only because present graduate students have found them to be good places to live while attending USC. Obviously there are many other parts of Los Angeles that have not been discussed where you may be able to find excellent housing.

## TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

The transportation system in Los Angeles is called the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). The phone number for MTA information is 1.800.COMMUTE (266.6883). There is excellent express bus service from several cities into the downtown area. Some routes include stops right at USC. You can usually get between any two places in the L.A. area by bus, but one or two transfers may be required. For information about bus schedules and current fares, you can go to <http://www.metro.net/>

A new rail transit system has been installed in Los Angeles. The *Blue Line* runs between Long Beach and L.A.; the *Red Line* runs from the Union Station in downtown L.A. to a portion of what is known as the "Wilshire Corridor" to as far as the Hollywood and Vine area, as well as Universal Studios; and the *Gold Line* runs from Pasadena to Union Station. Most recently the new rail transit system has been extended to Transportation Services as well.

In addition, LADOT has a Dash Line that will take you from USC-downtown Los Angeles and back. They run from 6:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M., every 15 minutes. Dash stops are all around the campus: Jefferson/Figueroa, Figueroa/Exposition, Exposition/Trousdale Pkwy., Exposition/Watt

Way, Exposition/Vermont, Vermont/37<sup>th</sup>, Vermont/36<sup>th</sup>, Vermont/35<sup>th</sup>, Jefferson/McClintock, Jefferson/Hoover, Jefferson/Figueroa to downtown Los Angeles. For information about the LADOT and Dash Lines, you can go to <http://www.ladottransit.com/> or call 1-800-COMMUTE.

If you live close to campus you may want to commute on your bicycle. Keep in mind, however, that the traffic in stolen bikes near USC is very brisk, so take precautions. Don't park your bike outside for any length of time. Keep it in your apartment and, while you are at school, keep it in your office if it's an expensive bike. Whenever you park it outside, lock it securely. Bicycles must be licensed –see procedures in the current issue of *SCampus*. Invest in a strong lock and helmet, and watch out for cars!

USC operates both shuttle and Campus Cruiser services. The shuttle service (<http://transnet.usc.edu/transit/routes.aspx>) provides transportation to the housing areas off campus and to campus parking lots Monday through Friday. It also provides convenient and frequent connection between the main USC campuses, UPC and USC, as well as Union Station. You can also call the Campus Cruiser Escort Service (<http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/campus-cruiser/>) to transport you to locations within approximately one mile of the center of campus (including the off campus housing area). If you are working late at night in the lab, it is a good idea to call the campus cruiser escort service (213.740.4911) rather than walk to the parking structure alone. See *SCampus* for information and schedules.

If you commute by car you would be wise to invest in a USC Parking permit, which will entitle you to park in certain designated areas on campus. For current costs, you can go to [http://transnet.usc.edu/guest\\_services/rates.aspx](http://transnet.usc.edu/guest_services/rates.aspx) or call 213.740.3575 (x03575 when on campus). (The permit for residents allows access to more of the campus.) Permits are sold at the USC Trojan Transportation center, located at 620 West 35th Street PSX on the University Park Campus. Or, the Parking office may set up a booth in the center of campus during the first week of classes. There is some off-campus parking but it is scarce and not very safe. Regardless of where you park, on or off campus, you should always lock your car and make certain that you leave nothing of value (tape deck, books, clothes, tennis racquet, etc.) in a place where it can be seen from the outside of the car.

Central Los Angeles is generally known as an expensive area for car insurance. Many don't realize that there is quite a bit of variability in the cost of equivalent coverage from different companies. Do a fair amount of comparison-shopping.

USC has launched Zimride, <http://zimride.usc.edu>, our private social network for ridesharing. Combining social networks and a proprietary route-matching algorithm, Zimride makes it easy to share the seats in your car or catch a ride.

USC Zimride requires a @usc.edu email address. You can also sign in using your Facebook account if you are part of the USC network. Membership is free and easy. All USC students, staff, and faculty are eligible to sign-up for our private Zimride Rideshare Community with their campus email address at <http://zimride.usc.edu>.

## CULTURE AND RECREATION

Los Angeles has no shortage of cultural and recreational activities. There is something for everyone, from amusement parks (Disneyland, Magic Mountain, Knott's Berry Farm) to art museums (L.A. County, J. Paul Getty, Norton Simon, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), and Huntington Library and Art Gallery); from classical music (Hollywood Bowl, the Music Center) to country and western (Palomino Club); from zoos (Los Angeles, San Diego) to aquariums (Sea World); and horse racing (Hollywood Park, Santa Anita) to pro baseball (Dodgers, Angels), football and so on. The L.A. County Museum of Natural History, the L.A. County Museum of Science and Industry, and the California Afro-American Museum are just south of campus in Exposition Park. For a unique experience, visit the Page Museum and the La Brea Tar Pits next to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art on Wilshire, and the Museum of Tolerance, located in West Los Angeles, and do not forget to visit L.A.'s most recent and most spectacular museum, the Getty Center, overlooking Northwestern L.A. In many instances students are entitled to discounts, and student rush tickets to concerts, etc. can be a really great deal. You must have a student I/D/ with a current registration sticker. Here are a few ways to learn about what's going on: the *L.A. Reader* and the *L.A. Weekly* are free, and are usually available each Thursday afternoon in the lobby of Grace Ford Salvatori Hall, GFS (C-5, UPC map); also check the "Calendar" section of the Sunday *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Magazine*.

Recreational facilities in the Los Angeles area are outstanding. There are beaches, parks, golf courses and tennis courts. The mountains are an hour away where hiking is excellent and skiing sometimes good (although the season is usually short). Winter skiing is always good in the Sierra Nevada, about six hours away.

There's also plenty going on at USC, including plays, concerts, first-run movies, film retrospectives, and art shows. Most popular, however, are the athletic events, especially the football games. It may seem intellectually inappropriate to go nuts over football, but USC football games (particularly the UCLA and Notre Dame games) are exciting spectacles that you really should experience at least once. If you enjoy watching college athletics you ought to invest in a "Student Activity Book." These are available during registration week. The Student Activity Book is essentially a season ticket to opportunity to purchase a Rose Bowl ticket if USC is selected to play. The best ways to learn about the cultural and recreational goings-on at USC are the student newspaper, the *Daily Trojan*, available at kiosks around campus, and a booklet entitled *SCampus*.

Excellent athletic facilities for students can be found at the **Lyon Center** (next to the McDonald's Olympic Swim Stadium, B-4, Map #1). Entrance and basic facilities are free to students with current I.D. There are several tennis courts, handball and racquetball courts, weight room, and a track generally available for student use. Two new swimming pools, located on the NW corner of the campus, were built for diving and swimming events in the 1984 Olympic Games. Students can form teams to enter University intramural leagues in a number of sports (e.g., basketball, softball, coed water polo, coed volleyball). If you're interested in participating, watch for notices on bulletin boards in Hedco, Hancock, or Gerontology.

**Catalina**

USC maintains a research lab on Santa Catalina Island at Big Fisherman Cove near Two Harbors. You should see this lab at least once to explore research possibilities and experience the somewhat exotic locale. Catalina Express, a commercial carrier, operates regular boat service from San Pedro to Two Harbors most of the year. Please visit their website for more information: <http://www.catalinaexpress.com/>

**BANKING AND SHOPPING****Banking (near USC)**

At University Village there is one bank. Bank of America offers bankcards as well as checking and savings accounts. Automatic teller machines are available. NEVER GO ALONE TO AN AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINE AFTER DARK. If you open a savings account with them, they will cash your personal checks. A particularly good way to meet your banking needs is the USC Federal Credit Union, which is on campus and offers good deals on checking and savings accounts (e.g., checking is free with an obligatory \$5 application fee and a \$25 minimum in a savings account). The Credit Union currently has three automatic tellers on campus. There are also automatic teller machines that accept a variety of cards in King Hall and the Commons, as well as a Bank of America ATM machine next to the entrance of the USC-Bookstore.

If you bank off campus, you wish to cash your personal checks, you can do so at the cashier's window on the second floor of King Hall for a 25¢ charge [Limit: \$25.00 – students; \$100.00 – USC T.A. or R.A. (must have a stamp on a student card)]. Checks can be cashed at the bookstore with a purchase.

**Books**

The University has an excellent bookstore, and graduate students with TAs or RAs are entitled to a 10% discount with their I.D. card. Another good store for books and supplies is “The Paper Clip”, next to campus in the University Village (see below). They also give a 10% discount.

**Supermarkets**

The Superior Market, located in University Village, is the only supermarket near USC. The food, meat, and produce are usually acceptable. The market will cash personal checks if you have a California Driver's License. You can also send telegrams and mail packages at the market, as well as purchase money orders.

Ralph's Super market is located on Vermont Avenue, near Adams Blvd., at 2600 S. Vermont Ave. The market provides most check cashing services, money orders, etc. with proper identification.

Janitorial supplies, food in large quantities and other selected items can be found at the new Smart and Final located at 3607 South Vermont Avenue.



Elsewhere in Los Angeles you're better off with one of the large chain supermarkets. In most neighborhoods, there are many to choose from, including Alpha Beta, Lucky's, Ralphs, Vivas, Vons, Food-4-Less.

Trader Joe's and Costco are alternatives to traditional supermarkets.

### **Department Stores**

Contact other graduate students for ideas where to shop. Downtown Los Angeles "Dash" shuttle bus (Line F) is available to take you to and from USC to the downtown area to shop as well. Stops are along Vermont Ave. and Exposition, Vermont and 36<sup>th</sup> St., Vermont near Jefferson, Jefferson and McClintock, Jefferson and Hoover, as well as return stops to USC along Figueroa and around the USC campus. Cost is \$.25 a ride, and transfers are free, if you ask for one.

### **University Village**

University Village is the only shopping center near USC. In addition to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Market and the banks listed above, it also has a variety of shops that cater to the needs and desires of students - fast food, books, stationary, clothes, sporting goods, photocopy, records, etc. There is also a movie theater.

### **USC-Carlson Wagonlit International Travel Agency**

USC provides a Travel Agency for all your needs. Student fares are available year-round. For student travel contact: (213) 743-4325; fax number is (213) 743-4342. Hours are 8:00 A.M. - 5:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. En route and after hour emergency phone: (800) 570-8699 (ID Code: U637).

## **OTHER IMPORTANT LOCATIONS**

### **Post Office**

3585 S. Vermont Ave (213.731.8295) - just across the street from campus. There is also a mail stop in Parking Structure X (PSX) that provides a limited number of postal services.

### **California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)**

3615 S. Hope St. (213.744.2000) - near the 110 freeway, 2 blocks east of campus. There are numerous other offices scattered across the city. Just look in the phone book for the one nearest to you.

VII. FORMS

NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM LABORATORY ROTATION CONTRACT

Instructions: Complete everything except summary of research/faculty comments at the beginning of your rotation and return the form with your signature (and the faculty member's signature) to Vanessa Clark. Upon completion of the rotation, you will receive this form to complete the summary and for the faculty member to add his/her comments.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Lab Rotation # \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Lab Phone # (where student can be reached) \_\_\_\_\_

Research Project: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

IMPORTANT QUESTION to FACULTY: If you accept this student into your lab, how will the student be supported during her/his PhD studies?

NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM ROTATION SUMMARY

To be completed after rotation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Lab Rotation # \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Research Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Research Project:  
(Attach additional pages if needed)

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Faculty Assessment/Comments:

Faculty Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Mentor Matching Form

**Instructions:** Rank the faculty (up to 3) in whose labs you have rotated according to your order of preference. The Advisement Committee will honor student's first choice for thesis mentor as long as the chosen faculty member also agrees to accept the student into his/her lab. If you would like to select a faculty mentor in whose lab you did not rotate, contact Drs. Pat Levitt ([plevitt@usc.edu](mailto:plevitt@usc.edu)), Judith Hirsch ([jhirsch@usc.edu](mailto:jhirsch@usc.edu)) and Alapakkam Sampath ([asampath@usc.edu](mailto:asampath@usc.edu)) immediately.

**Due Date:** May 7, 2013. Send your completed form to Vanessa Clark  
(email: [saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:saydacla@dornsife.usc.edu))

**Note:** Your ranking preferences will be kept confidential to the faculty listed below.

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

RANKING	Faculty Name
# 1	
# 2	
# 3	

NEUROSCIENCE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE MEMBER FORM

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Outside Member)

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GUIDANCE/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE FORM

Meetings are to take place EVERY 9 MONTHS. All Committee members must be in attendance, no exceptions. Any special circumstances must be submitted to the director for approval.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form certifies that the above named student has held their annual meeting with their following Guidance committee.

Guidance Committee: *(all members of the committee must print sign and date)*

Signature	Print	Date
_____	_____	_____
(Chair)		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
(Outside Member)		

**ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT FORM**

*This form is to be submitted prior to the start of Fall and Spring semesters of your first year*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Last) (First)

Local Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Street) (City/State) (Zip Code)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Student I.D. \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please print)

DEPT	COURSE	CLASS #	UNITS	DAYS	TIME	PROF

Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Academic Advisor signature)

Agreement \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Student's signature)

STANDARD PETITION FORM  
*Neuroscience Graduate Program*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of cohort: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for petition:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Lab Rotation
- Course Substitution
- Summer Internship
- Other

Please provide a short explanation of your request in the lines below. Please attach additional paperwork if necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisors Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form should be brought to the attention of your graduate program advisor at least 30 days prior to the effective date.



PLAGIARISM PREVENTION AGREEMENT

I have thoroughly read and understand the “Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism” ([http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug\\_plag.htm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm)). I certify that I have not plagiarized any portion of my written qualifying exam, nor will I engage in plagiarism at any point in my graduate studies at USC.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_