TABLE OF CONTENTS

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. USC created the NGP in 1994 as a university-wide doctoral program to bring together researchers from diverse experimental and academic backgrounds with the goal of coordinating neuroscience research and graduate training. The NGP is the largest university-wide interdisciplinary PhD program, and holds a special administrative place at USC, being overseen by the Office of the Provost rather than a department or school.

The NGP, and neuroscience in general, continues explosive growth at USC. Presently, about 100 graduate students from many 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 100 NGP faculty members. The faculty hold primary appointments in more than 20 departments in the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, Viterbi School of Engineering, Keck School of Medicine, the Schools of Pharmacy, Dentistry or Gerontology, or at affiliates of USC, such as Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

Laboratories associated with the NGP are located in four separate USC campuses. Administration of the NGP is located in the Hedco Neuroscience Building (HNB) on the University Park Campus. This campus is home to just under half of the laboratories run by NGP training faculty, including buildings housing the Sections of Neurobiology, Human and Evolutionary Biology and Molecular Biology of the Department of Biological Sciences, and the Departments of Psychology, Economics, Computer Science, Biomedical Engineering, Dornsife Center for Brain and Creativity, and the School of Gerontology. Many faculty are located on the Health Sciences Campus (HSC), which is the home of just over 40% of NGP training faculty laboratories. The University operates frequent shuttles that travel between UPC and HSC. This campus has training faculty in the Zilkha Neurogenetic, and Neuroimaging and Informatics Institutes, the Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research, in the Departments of Cell and Neurobiology, Neurology, Physiology and Biophysics, Psychiatry, and in the Schools of Pharmacy and Dentistry (Occupational Sciences, Biokinesiology, and Physical Therapy). NGP also includes a growing number of faculty at USC affiliate, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA), which has programs that emphasize developmental neuroscience and translational developmental neurogenetics. CHLA is located within 15-20 minutes by car of the University Park (UPC) and Health Science (HSC) campuses. Last, some NGP faculty and students are located at the Information Sciences Institute (ISI), which is approximately 30 minutes west of UPC in Marina Del Rey.

Thus, you will have many opportunities to perform exciting, high impact neuroscience research at USC. You will become an expert in the field of the area of research of your dissertation. Further, you will obtain 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 generation of technically sophisticated, truly interdisciplinary neuroscientists who will have a wide range of choices for future endeavors.

To take maximal advantage of the NGP, you will need to know the way the program operates administratively, and our position within USC. This orientation handbook is designed to provide this information. Over the years, many faculty, staff and students have contributed to the evolution of this handbook. It will assist you in adjusting to life as a graduate student in LA and at USC. Most importantly, it will serve as a source to which you will refer during your graduate studies in order for you to understand and follow NGP rules and guidelines. **The careful and thorough reading and understanding of the content in the Orientation Handbook is a requirement for all students. In addition, there are rules established by the USC Graduate School that apply to you.** We have included as many as possible, but you should take the opportunity to learn about the general university rules governing PhD programs that may supersede those of the NGP. Our students typically experience few problems, and the Directors and Administrative Staff are sources to clarify any questions that you may have. Moreover, it is **your** responsibility to comply with all guidelines of the program. Claims by students such as "I did not know the rules" are unacceptable. Please note that some USC Graduate School and NGP 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. Major rule changes may be 'grandfathered' at the discretion of the NGP Director and Executive Committee. Changes will not add further obstacles to your success in obtaining your PhD in Neuroscience at USC.

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
Associate Director, Neuroscience Graduate Program

Memo from the NGF Student Representative Rachel Yuan:
Congratulations on your entrance to the Neuroscience Graduate Program at USC!

My name is Rachel Yuan, 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 the 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.). We organize various meetings and events intended to help students explore the many aspects of a career in neuroscience, to address any general concerns that the students may have, and to provide opportunities for interactions between both students and faculty members of the program.

As your Czarina, I act as the primary liaison between the graduate students and faculty. I attend all faculty meetings and the NGP Executive Committee meetings to represent the students and their interests. If you do have an issue, be sure to let me know so that it is brought to the faculty's attention, a strong working relationship between students and faculty members is essential for maintaining a successful program! We also have several other officers (listed below) who specialize in different aspects of NGF, so feel free to contact them directly with any relevant questions or concerns you may have. The collective goal of the officers of the NGF is to make sure everyone develops a successful and fulfilling graduate career; we hope that everyone will enjoy their time here and want everyone to be aware of the many opportunities in graduate school and beyond, so do not hesitate to reach out if you need help with something! Let me take this opportunity to introduce the other officers:

Ryan Kast (rkast@usc.edu) is this year's Vice-Czar. Ryan is the organizational backbone of NGF, maintaining records of all NGF meetings and events. Ryan will also work to promote interaction between our program and the community: he will organize an "Alternative Careers in Neuroscience" workshop in the spring that will provide students with an opportunity to meet scientists currently working in a range of academic and non-academic settings. Additionally, he will serve as our representative at USC's graduate student government (GSG) meetings, keeping us posted on events and activities that GSG hosts for all graduate students.

Chris Im (kwokim@usc.edu) will serve as our Health Science Campus (HSC) Liaison. Approximately 40% of students in the NGP choose to join labs at the HSC, and communication can be a bit difficult due to the distance between the campuses. Chris will help maintain cohesion within the program even across campuses, keeping students at HSC updated with UPC events and vice versa. He will also facilitate teleconferencing for students who cannot make it to the main campus for NGF or NGP Director's meetings.

Our Treasurer, Alexis Gorin (agorin@usc.edu), keeps track of our expenses, ensuring that NGF and its committees have enough money to spend on our events. Students are encouraged to be proactive in setting up events, such as professional workshops and panels that will help enrich the program. Contact Alexis with any questions you may have for funding such events.

Our Webmaster, Victor Barres (barres@usc.edu) maintains our NGF website (http://www-scf.usc.edu/~ngf/) and mailing list. The mailing list is the primary means by which we send out

announcements and event updates. The "USC Neuroscience Graduate Forum" Facebook group is another channel used to keep everyone up to date. Please contact Victor, if you would like to be added to our distribution list, and send us a request on Facebook to start getting to know your fellow colleagues!

Helga Mazyar (mazyar@usc.edu) is our Historian and is responsible for keeping photos and video records of all of our events. Feel free to send Helga any photos of your own from NGP and NGF events. They are a great way to show off our program on our website!

Our Programming Officers are Lisa Dokovna (dokovna@usc.edu) and Jonathan Cheung (jacheung@usc.edu). You can think of Lisa and Jon as the social chairs of NGF. They will arrange several social events throughout the year to give you a chance to mingle with other graduate students in the program, oftentimes while exploring the many sights and activities that LA has to offer. If you have any ideas for a fun adventure, do not hesitate to let them know!

And you are likely already familiar with our New Student Liaisons, A.J. Cooper (cooperaj@usc.edu) and Brian Zingg (bzingg@usc.edu). A.J. and Brian have been hard at work all summer preparing you all for your transition to USC. They are in charge of setting up first year students with graduate student mentors and will also help facilitate the new student recruitment weekends for next year's class. Feel free to reach out to them with any questions that may come up during your transition into the program.

Beyond this core group, many other graduate students are very involved in making the NGF a wonderful organization. From organizing and participating in our annual program-wide events, to acting as student representatives on several faculty committees, to facilitating collaborations within and beyond USC and originating ideas for special workshops, 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 the 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, NGP, or USC/LA in general, please feel free to contact me (rachelyu@usc.edu) or drop by my office (HNB 218). I wish you a successful first year, and even if things get challenging at times, just remember that we have all been through it and we are all here to lend a hand!

Best of luck in the coming year, and welcome!

Rachel Yuan
Ph.D. Candidate, Neuroscience Graduate Program
Czarina, Neuroscience Graduate Forum
rachelyu@usc.edu

PROGRAM LIFE

The NGP is an interdisciplinary, university-wide training program that is unique because leadership report directly to the Executive 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 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://ngp.usc.edu/.

Key program leadership includes:

	Title	Duties re: NGP Program
Dawn Burke (213) 740-4551 dawnburk@usc.edu HNB 115	Graduate Program Manager	NGP Program Manager (See detailed list below)
Deanna Solórzano (213) 740-2245 dsolorza@usc.edu HNB 120-H	Graduate Program Student Services Advisor	NGP Student Support (See detailed list below)
Ariana Perez (213) 740-8796 HNB 120-J arianape@usc.edu	Graduate Program Administrative Assistant	NGP Administrative Support (See detailed list below)
Gloria Wan (213) 740-6091 yuhungw@usc.edu HNB 120-G	Building Manager	HNB conference room reservations and mail distribution.
Pat Levitt (323) 361-7868 CHLA- Saban Research Institute, 309 HNB 117	Director of NGP	Program oversight Advisement
Judith Hirsch (213) 821-2210 jhirsch@usc.edu HNB 328	Associate Director of NGP	Program oversight Advisement

NGP Administration Reference List

Administrative Tasks	Main Contact
Admissions/Recruitment	Dawn Burke / Deanna Solórzano /Ariana Perez
Budget (Reimbursements, Honorariums, Educational Allowances, etc.)	Dawn Burke
Commencement/Hooding Ceremony	Dawn Burke
Core Course Administrative Support	Ariana Perez
Curriculum and Course Development	Dawn Burke
Data Collection Reporting	Dawn Burke / Deanna Solórzano
Departmental Clearance (NSCI)	Dawn Burke
Directors-Student meetings	Ariana Perez
Distinguished Speaker Seminars	Ariana Perez
Faculty Committee Support	Dawn Burke
Grades (change of grade, grade submission reminders)	Dawn Burke
Grant Writing Workshops	Ariana Perez
Guidance Committee required meetings - tracking	Dawn Burke / Deanna Solórzano
Internal Fellowship Applications and Nominations	Dawn Burke
Internal Requisitions	Ariana Perez
Meeting Minutes (Executive and Advisement)	Ariana Perez
NGF Committee Liaison	Ariana Perez

NGF Sponsored Events (Budget Oversight)	Dawn Burke
NGF Symposium Day	Ariana Perez
Office Supplies	Deanna Solórzano
Orientation Day	Deanna Solórzano / Ariana Perez
Part A Qualifying Exam questions	Deanna Solórzano
Retreat	Ariana Perez
Rotation Scheduling and Tracking (Contracts and Summaries); Mentor-Mentee contracts	Deanna Solórzano
Schedule of Classes (posting of NSCI courses)	Dawn Burke
Semester evaluations of students-tracking	Deanna Solórzano
Student Progress Tracking: Candidacy and Graduation (degree checks, course substitutions, graduation verification)	Dawn Burke
Student Progress Tracking: Milestones (Committee Forms, Part A and B of Qualifying Exam, ARA, MyIDP)	Deanna Solórzano
Student Stipend Tracking (financial)	Dawn Burke / Deanna Solórzano
Website management and information updates	Ariana Perez

New Student Orientation Checklist

* Requirement for registration.
** Registration required.

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 or visit the Student Health Center (SHC, Phone 213/740-9355)

- ❑ **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 1st 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 required to sign off on the Academic Advisement form.

  For D-Clearance for any NSCI course, please email Dawn Burke, dawnburk@usc.edu. You must include your full name, student ID #, USC email address, and the requested course and five-digit course number. Requests that do not include the required information will not be processed. For any other D-Clearance requests, please see the schedule of classes.

- ❑ **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 Parking Structure D (PSD 106, x00079) to clear this hold.

- ❑ **Registration**

  On-line registration: Go to https://camel2.usc.edu/webreg/Login.asp 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 have not yet received your student ID#, contact Deanna Solórzano (HNB 120-H, 213-740-2245, dsolorza@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.

- ➢ Make sure that you update your email account on OASIS, www.usc.edu/oasis and if you have direct deposit in the Workday System that can be accessed from your MyUSC account, https://my.usc.edu/portal/guest.php, as well.

- ❑ **Update OASIS with local address and USC email information**

Go to 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.

Required Documents:
International Fellowship Holders: You should have already received a preliminary email notice from the Glacier system. Please see the attached sheet entitled "Glacier Details for Internationals". 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 ITIN." You will also receive a letter from OIS.

International Teaching and Research Assistants:
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:
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.

- ❑ **Direct Deposit *(International Fellowship Students can sign up after receiving ITIN or SSN)***

The form can be found in Appendix C or online:
http://undergrad.usc.edu/Direct%20Deposit%20Form.pdf

Once the form is complete, you must submit the form with a VOID check to the USC Business Services Office located at UGB 210.

- ❑ **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 Dawn Burke to remove (HNB 115, 213.740.4551, dawnburk@usc.edu). Fees can be paid online through OASIS (www.usc.edu/oasis) or you can go to the Cashier's Office (STU 106, 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. If you missed the scheduled 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.

For more information and dates of training, please see this website:
http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/environmental-health-safety/environmental-health-and-safety-training

- ❑ **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 awarded to their laboratory mentor or

students' individual fellowships, TAships provide an additional opportunity for stipend support during graduate training. 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. In addition, a student may not TA more than 8 semesters while in the Program. 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 on Thursday 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 593, 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 for Biology will be forwarded to the Biological Sciences Department. 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).
  ITA Institute website:
  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). 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 (https://sait.usc.edu/ois/Upload/Forms/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) to make sure this is an option. For more information regarding the PPV, please visit https://sait.usc.edu/ois/new-stu/ppv.aspx

Contact the Office of International Services (OIS) for further information. The OIS office is located in the Grace Ford Salvatori Hall (GFS 120, Phone 213.740.2666, Fax 213.740.5194, email: 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). 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 international students will receive an email directly from "support@online-tax.net" with a subject stating "Payments from University of Southern California."

The email will contain an initial username and password for international students to log into Glacier. You will have 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 Deanna Solórzano.

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" 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: Attend advisement appointment with Drs. Levitt and Hirsch (one meeting per semester in your first year).	Deanna Solórzano, HNB 120H, 213.740.2245, dsolorza@usc.edu
2.	Complete an Academic Advisement Form (see Appendix A) and obtain the signed approval of the appropriate advisor for your proposed course schedule.	For all first year students, approval should be obtained from Drs. Levitt or Hirsch . For all students in their second year or beyond with dissertation advisors, see that advisor for approval.
3.	Email your departmental clearance request. You must include your full name, student ID number, USC email, the requested course and five-digit course number. Your d-clearance will be entered into the system with 3-5 days.	Dawn Burke, HNB 115, 213.740.4551 D-Clearance link can be found on the NGP website: ngp.usc.edu and click on "Graduate Program"
	You may then register for classes via web registration on OASIS, https://came12.usc.edu/OASIS/Login.aspx Note: Students with ALI and academic holds will need to register in person at PSD 106 between 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday.	See USC's Department of Academic Records and Registrar website for detailed instructions of how to register. http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR Click on "Registration" under the Services heading.
4.	Petitions for late or retroactive registration must be submitted through the Office of Academic Review. http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/academicreview/generalinfo.html	Office of Academic Review **Petition Fees are $150 and are the student's responsibility to pay if student fails to register on time.**

Important Numbers

Emergency Contact Information:

In case of Emergency, please call this phone number first:
Department of Public Safety Emergency Line

University Park Campus: (213) 740-4321
Health Sciences Campus: (323) 442-1000

Department of Public Safety (Non-Emergency Line)

University Park Campus: (213) 740-6000
Health Sciences Campus: (323) 442-1200

Campus Resources for USC Students:

Center for Women and Men (CWM)
Emergencies: (213) 740-4900
24-Hour Line: (213) 321-3982 (24-hour)
www.usc.edu/cwm

USC Engemann Student Health Center
(213) 740-9355
https://engemannshc.usc.edu/

Health Sciences Campus - Eric Cohen Health Center
(323) 442-5631
http://ecohenshc.usc.edu/

Counseling Services
(213) 740-7711
https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

Registrar One Stop Center
(213) 740-8500
TRO 101
Website: http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR

Bookstore
(213)740-5200

Campus Cruiser
PSX
(213)740-4911 (escort)
(213) 740-3575 (info)
http://transnet.usc.edu/index.php/campus-cruiser-program/

Cashiers Office
USC Credit Union
STU 106

Center for Academic Support
STU 301
(213)740-0776

Library Services
Circulation (213) 740 4350
Administration (213) 740 0049
Information Commons (213) 740 7988
Reference Consultations (213) 740 6938
ITS Customer Support (213) 740 5555

Parking (Transportation Services)
PSX
(213)740-3575

Student Account Services
PSB 106
(213) 740-7471

USCard Office
University Park Campus
PSX parking structure
(213)740-8709

Student Health and Insurance

All NGP students will have the student health center fee, student health insurance, and dental insurance paid by the University/mentor laboratory 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.

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

- Taking 6 or more units
- 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.

The **Student Health Center**, http://engemannshc.usc.edu, 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, prescriptions, orthopedic appliances, and copies of medical records. Hospitalization is NOT covered but must be purchased separately. Should you have questions, contact SHC.

Student Counseling Services

Life can be stressful, and for some students in a demanding graduate program, even more so. This is not unusual, and support can be obtained from faculty, peers, and mental health professionals at USC. USC's Student Counseling service provides a broad range of quality programs to assist you during your time at USC should challenges arise. Counseling services is located at USC's Engemann Student Health Center, which is located at 1031 West 34th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90089. The Counseling Center is staffed by ten psychologists, three psychiatrists, four social workers, one marriage and family therapist, and three administrative staff. The Center provides individual counseling, group counseling, crisis services, psychiatric services, and outreach programs. To make an appointment, you may call 213-740-9355.

Dental Care

Your Health Center fee also covers dental care.
Please see: http://engemannshc.usc.edu/insurance/insurance-plan/ for a detailed brochure and enrollment form.
Instructions for downloading your Delta Dental card:

1. Go to 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.

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. The events page of the NGP web site (http://ngp.usc.edu/events/) keeps an up-to-date calendar of all neuroscience-related seminars across the University and at CHLA. There are a number of major Neuroscience seminar series: 1) NGP Distinguished Speaker series organized by graduate students and faculty, held at the UPC at 4pm on Tuesdays 8 times during the academic year; 2) Section of Neurobiology Seminars held Mondays during the academic year at 12:00 PM at the UPC; 3) Zilkha Neurogenetics Institute (ZNI) seminar series on Wednesdays at 12:00PM at HSC; 4) The Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research on Tuesdays at 11am at HSC; 5) The Hearing and Communications Sciences NIH Training Program at various times during the year at different locations on the USC campus; 6) The Saban Research Institute Seminar Series on Wednesdays at 12:00PM at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA). **Attendance at two seminars monthly is required**.

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/)
- Zilkha Neurogenetics Institute: (http://www.usc.edu/schools/medicine/research/institutes/zni/)
- Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cells: (http://keck.usc.edu/Research/Research_Institutes/Eli_and_Edythe_Broad_Center_for_Regenerative_Medicine_and_Stem_Cell_Research_at_USC/Events_Calendar.aspx)

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 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. You may receive emails regarding participation in lunches or dinners with speakers. These are coordinated by the sponsoring units, and for the NGP Distinguished Speaker series, by the Special Events Committee of the NGP (Co-Chair Andrew Hires: shires@usc.edu).

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 four active journal clubs. All information regarding dates and locations can be found at: http://ngp.usc.edu/journals/.

- Vision Journal Club
- Developmental Neuroscience Journal Club
- Molecular Neurobiology Journal Club
- Neurodegenerative Journal Club.

If these journal clubs do not 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 may also attend. **This academic year, the symposium will take place on January 29, 2016 at the Radisson Hotel on Figueroa Street. Please look for announcements regarding the details of the event.** The students organize this event, in which they present talks and posters. These presentations are an opportunity to show the NGP community the work that students are executing and provide a forum for students to learn how to deliver scientific presentations.

NGP students, in all years of study, are required to 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 the 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 25-27 at the American Jewish University, Brandeis-Bardin Campus. (**http://confbbc.aju.edu/). The retreat is free for all NGP students. The gathering provides a venue for students and faculty to interact in a casual setting. **There is required attendance for all students, except for those who are approved for dissertation**

writing. The retreat is an opportunity for all new students and their senior peers to learn about the diversity of neuroscience research being done in NGP investigator laboratories. An required science ethics workshop is held at the retreat for all students, as well as a fun data blitz session. Talks are given by NGP faculty and on occasion, outside guests. These can provide an opportunity to hear the latest advances in a particular area of neuroscience. For first year students, the retreat can assist in making decisions about potential laboratories in which to rotate. All students need to register for the annual retreat with Ariana Perez (HNB 120J; 213-740-8796; arianape@usc.edu) shortly after the beginning of the fall semester.

4. The Neuroscience Graduate Program Offices

The NGP staff offices are located on the University Park Campus in HNB 120. See page 8 for the contact information and 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.

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 Graduate 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 Deanna Solórzano 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 must 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, Broad, ZNI, 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 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. The Teas are meant to foster collegiality and interdisciplinary communication among neuroscientists. 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 do not 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 past 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 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 enrolled NGP students. 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.

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 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. 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.

USC students, faculty and staff can access USC's high-speed wireless network at most sites on campus and eateries. For information about how to get on USC's wireless network call 213.740.5555 or visit www.usc.edu/wireless.

10. Inter-campus transportation

The majority of NGP faculty laboratories are located on the University Park and Health Science Campuses; others are located in The Saban Research Institute (TSRI) at CHLA, which is located at the Vermont and Sunset Metro Red Line subway. Courses are typically taught 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/index.php/bus-map-schedules. The time to travel between UPC and HSC is normally about 30 minutes; the time from UPC to Union Station, where you can catch the Red Line to CHLA, is 15 minutes. Other transportation-related information can be found in 'LA Life' on pg. 55.

General Information About Financial Support

There are five main sources of support for graduate students:

- Program/University Fellowships
- Research Assistantships
- Teaching Assistantships
- Training Grants
- Extramural Individual Fellowships and Grants

First year students receive a stipend from the NGP directly. Some also may be awarded a competitive fellowship from the University (e.g. Provost Fellowship), which is determined prior to entering the program. Once a student joins a laboratory prior to the beginning of year 02 of study, annual (12 months) funding becomes the responsibility of that laboratory and the faculty mentor. **The stipend level throughout your PhD studies is set by the NGP.** Thus, all students will receive the same level of stipend, health insurance and tuition support. The level of support will increase from time to time, and stipends will be adjusted to meet those changes. Those students who are successful in obtaining competitive extramural (external) fellowships will receive a higher stipend level that is provided by the USC Graduate School. Currently, a *top off* of your extramural award, up to $35,000 annual stipend or $10,000 top-off (whichever is less) will be provided. It is important to note that no institution can guarantee support, since the future financial health of any university cannot be predicted with accuracy. However, for students in the NGP, there is a perfect record of continuous stipend and tuition support for all Ph.D. students in good standing. 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**).

Updates about fellowship application opportunities are posted on the NGP website and to the Grad Blog, http://uscbiscgrad.blogspot.com.

The USC Graduate School enforces the rule that PhD students 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 university academic standards.

1. **Research Assistantships**

   Research Assistants are the main mechanism by which you will receive your stipend while a student of the NGP. To be eligible for a 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 or other institutional funds to which a faculty member has access. As the name implies, RAs do research, usually related to the Specific Aims of their mentor's grant, 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 at minimum 20 hours per week to reflect the full time effort the student devotes to his/her thesis research. In the NGP, the time commitment of our students to full-time research typically far exceeds this level, ranging from 40-70 hours weekly. 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 a 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 dedicating time to three research rotations, which is the principal mechanism through which you will select a dissertation laboratory. All first year NGP students receive a fellowship from the NGP, and therefore shall not TA for any courses. The NGP does not allow students to be a TA until they pass Part A of the qualifying exam that is taken in year 02 of study. While very rate, a student may petition the Director for special permission to be a TA during year 02. For advanced 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. Most TAship assignments rest with Departments (Biological Sciences, Psychology, Biomedical Engineering, Computer Science). The NGP has a limited number that are assigned by Dawn Burke in consultation with the course directors. 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 students in the course. 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 a TA for at least one semester. Some students, with their mentor's input, may TA a second semester. Participation has several requirements that are 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. USC Fellowships

There are a limited number of USC Fellowships (e.g. Rose Hills, WiSE, Dissertation Completion) available to Ph.D. students during their course of study. Students compete for Fellowships through an application process overseen by the USC Graduate School or WiSE. The TSRI at CHLA has a predoctoral fellowship program as well to which you may apply if you are a student in a laboratory located at CHLA. See Dawn Burke 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. Students typically are nominated by a training faculty member in whose laboratory the student is doing 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. NIH-mandated annual stipend for pre-doctoral trainees is typically lower than the NGP stipend. For those NGP students on training grants, the USC Graduate School will provide a 'top-off' to ensure that your stipend is equal to other students in the Program. Be sure to get complete information about stipends and amount of tuition remission if you are to be funded through a mechanism other than a TA or RA. The current training grant for USC in the Neurosciences is 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, and the NGP encourages all students to submit at least one application during their training. The NGP offers a grant-writing workshop twice annually to assist students in developing skills needed to prepare a competitive proposal. USC also offers grant-writing workshops during the academic year and summer that are open to all PhD students. Particularly appropriate are individual fellowships from NIH and NSF, but private foundations may also be relevant options depending upon your area of study. Detailed information can be obtained from three sources. First, the NGP web site as a link to a current listing of all neuroscience-relevant extramural fellowship opportunities, including special requirements and due dates (http://ngp.usc.edu/graduate/external-fellowship-opportunities/). Second, the Graduate School (GFS 315, 740-9033) has a partial listing of available grants:
http://www.usc.edu/schools/GraduateSchool/current_fellowships_ext.html.

They also have a reference book that you can examine and photocopy. Third, 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. The NGP does not view summer semester as any different in terms of being an active student than any other semester. Thus, there is an expectation that you will work intensively in the laboratory, engaged in full-time research, and perhaps take a course to fulfill program requirements, or participate in a national course to learn a new discipline or skill set (e.g. Woods Hole, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory). During the summer, you must be supported by a RAship, fellowship from your mentor, or a training grant, as there are no summer TA-ships available.

7. **First-year fellowship**

All first-year students will receive the same fellowship during 2015-2016. The award includes 12 months of stipend support that will also cover your first summer of research in the lab. This year the award will total $31,000 divided into 12 payments installments from August through July. The fellowship is described as "50% time appointments," but you are not allowed to receive more than the $31,000. According to University rules, the remaining

50% of time is for you to engage in academic studies and research. Faculty mentors will then begin supporting students on August 16, 2016.

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/

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Academic Procedures

1. Program of study for the Ph.D.

The NGP program of graduate study is designed to provide each student with a broad, fundamental background in neuroscience coupled with detailed knowledge and expertise in their 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 key courses). All 1st and 2nd year students are required to take Neuroscience Communication (NSCI 539), a science communications course in which each student is provided with an opportunity to organize and give presentations, receive constructive feed-back to improve their skills, and to provide constructive feedback to peers. Students are required to take Science Ethics and Professionalization (or an equivalent course), and participate in Ethics workshops at the annual retreat. A 500-level graduate-level course in statistics is required. In addition to those obligatory classes, students will supplement their studies with at least two advanced graduate courses in two of four designated sub-discipline tracks (see below), as well as a small number of elective classes to achieve the 24 course credits required by the USC Graduate School for all PhD students. 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. The NGP web site has a link (http://ngp.usc.edu/neuroscience-and-related-courses-at-usc/) that lists USC courses in various disciplines that are relevant to neuroscience students (see below). This list is updated each semester, and is a resource for you to review regularly as you consider course selections.

The major emphasis of the NGP is to provide you with an opportunity to perform advanced research. In preparation for the many career options that may be available for you as a well-trained neuroscientist, you will spend the vast majority of your time as a graduate student doing research. Thus, it is critical to achieve two goals during your first year: 1) demonstrate mastery of neuroscience through core coursework (maintaining a 3.0 GPA) and 2) through research laboratory rotations, secure a dissertation laboratory before the beginning of the 2nd year of study. Irrespective of your research area of interest, the USC NGP expects all of its students to achieve core competency in the discipline of neuroscience and expertise in specialty areas. This, we believe, will prepare you for the intellectual flexibility that is a prerequisite for being a successful scientist in the 21st 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 to 3.0 or higher. It is your responsibility to petition the NGP Director and the Graduate School to obtain the one-semester exception. **Note that in addition to the university requirement, the NGP requires that you achieve a cumulative 3.0 or better for the core courses NSCI 524 and NSCI 525. Failing to achieve this GPA in the two courses will trigger a review by the NGP Advisement and Executive Committees to determine whether dismissal from the program is warranted.**

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-", though on rare occasion, very poor performance warrants a "C". 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**; 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 (NSCI 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 4-unit key course (or two 2-unit courses) from two different tracks. (8 units)

   The four tracks and related courses are as follows:
   a. Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Track
   b. Systems and Behavior Track
   c. Computational and Neuroengineering Track
   d. Cognitive Track

3. Four semesters of NSCI 539, Neuroscience Communication (4 units total)
4. INTD 500, Responsible Conduct of Research (1 unit)
5. Statistics (*e.g.*, PM 510, PSYC 501, or equivalent) (4 units)

A listing of all USC Neuroscience and related courses is available at http://ngp.usc.edu/neuroscience-and-related-courses-at-usc/.

Petitions to wave required coursework will be deferred until the student has established their dissertation mentor and together they have set a course of study. Course unit credit for advanced courses that you may have taken as an undergraduate at other institutions are not considered. Advanced graduate courses that you have taken in a Masters or other PhD program may be considered, by petition only to the Director. The form can be found in Appendix D. While a specific required course may be waived because of your strong background in a particular area (e.g. statistics), the 24-unit requirement is not. Thus, granting a waiver will require you to substitute another relevant course (e.g. computer science or math). 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. In addition, you may petition the Director to take two 2-credit 500 level courses within a single track to fulfill the 4 credit requirement in that track. In no case will a student be allowed to complete less than one key course. 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 Student Services Manager (Dawn Burke) and must be approved by the Director.

Registration Policies

Your advisor must approve all courses, including the ones offered by other departments, each and every semester. With rare exceptions, the USC Graduate School does not permit students to enroll 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. Please note that the NGP has no financial obligations with regard to the secondary program. For instance, students will be solely responsible for tuition fees. Final approval is made by the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies.***

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 and Hirsch). For first year students, the Advisement Committee will assist you in determining your course of study and provide guidance, if needed, for potential laboratories for rotations in your scientific areas of interest during your first year. During the fall semester, all first year students will register for the core course (NSCI 524), Neuroscience Communication (NSCI 539), and 7 units of NSCI 790 for lab rotations, for a total of 12 units. During spring semester all students will register for Neuroscience Communication (NSCI 539), core course (NSCI 525), and 7 units (may vary) of NSCI 790 for lab rotations, for a total of 12 units. During the first summer session all students will register for 1 unit of Ethics and Accountability in Biomedical Research (INTD 500). **Please be aware of registration deadlines. Note that students should not exceed registering for 12 units in any semester, as students will be financially responsible for any additional units about 12**. Announcements and reminders by the student services manager will be sent out too 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 identify laboratories in which to perform research rotations (see Section 5 below), with an eye toward choosing a lab in which you will do your dissertation research. Some 1st year students begin July 1, prior to the fall semester, to engage in their first rotation with being able to dedicate full-time to the laboratory.

Important Additional Information 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 (NSCI 790) to fill your course schedule beyond the number of units required, as there are financial consequences for you.

Depending on your financial support each summer, you will register for GRSC-802 or NSCI 790. GRSC-802 is a 0 unit course that allows students to maintain full time status during the summer.

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 his or her course plans with their research mentor. The student also can consult the Guidance Committee members about coursework that enhance progress towards completion of the degree.

3. Beyond Course Work…

By the end of your second semester of your first year in the NGP, you will have completed the two-semester core course in advanced neuroscience. A dissertation laboratory is expected to be selected before the beginning of the Summer semester during year 01 of study (see Section 5 below). Your specific program of study will be determined by you in consultation with your laboratory mentor, who will serve as your dissertation advisor. Your research project will be determined by you and your advisor in partnership, not individually. Your Guidance Committee will play an important role in helping you develop and implement research plans, and they must approve your research plans at the required annual meeting. We emphasize that the primary responsibility for your graduate studies and implementing dissertation research rests with you, just as your career development beyond the Ph.D. ultimately resides with each of you. ***You must understand and follow the rules and regulations for earning a Ph.D.*** in the NGP at USC. Many of them are noted in this Orientation Handbook, but not all details are covered. 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 sixth 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, work hard, and you will succeed.

4. Annual Research Appraisal (ARA)

The NGP prides itself in providing opportunities for students to develop outstanding oral and written communication skills. While often underestimated for importance, these skills differentiate individuals who may be competing for a particular fellowship, postdoctoral training position or job and whose research accomplishments are similar in quality. Thus, we have mechanisms in place for you to maximize your skill set.

All students must meet in person with their guidance or dissertation committee at least once every academic year (or every 9 months) after year 01 in the Program. Be sure to schedule a meeting time well in advance (3-6 months) and make sure that all of your committee members can attend. Should you have difficulties in scheduling your committee to meet collectively, please contact Pat Levitt or Judith Hirsch, who can help with this issue. The meeting is designed for you to have the opportunity to inform the committee of your research and academic progress, for you to receive constructive feedback, for you and your mentor to raise any concerns, and for the committee to help you develop plans for solving any

problems you may be having. The committee chair files a brief report of the student's progress with the Director's office (Deanna Solórzano).

The student is responsible for each committee member signing a form at the annual meeting, confirming that the meeting took place. The form must have the chair of the committee's written summary included. The completed/signed form must be submitted to Deanna Solórzano within 2 weeks of the meeting being held (see Appendix B or the NGP website for a copy of the form).

In addition to this requirement, you will be required to give an oral presentation at the annual NGF Symposium.

5. Individual Development Plan (IDP)

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a planning tool designed to help USC NGP students identify annual progress, professional development needs, and career objectives. The IDP also serves as a valuable communication tool between PhD students, their research mentor and their Advisory and Guidance Committees. NGP students may use this form, or the form found at http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/

Generating the annual IDP is required, and is part of the USC NGP mentoring and professional development activities for each student. The IDP is meant to:

- Identify progress in training and documented accomplishments
- Identify short-term needs for improving performance
- Set goals for the upcoming year, including frank discussions about time allocation for research, academic and professional development activities
- Define ways to develop specific skills and experience needed to complete research training and prepare for individualized long-term career goals

Identifying short-term goals will give trainees a clearer sense of expectations and help identify milestones for achieving objectives. The IDP provides a framework for long-term career planning, serving to initiate ongoing conversations between mentor and NGP student, as well as with Advisory and Guidance Committees.

The development, implementation, and revision of the IDP require a series of steps to be conducted by each trainee. After the trainee has filled out the IDP, the contents of the document should be discussed with their research mentor. After discussion, a copy of the IDP in PDF format should be submitted electronically to Deanna Solórzano in the NGP office. The IDP is to be completed annually in May, discussed with the mentor and submitted by the student prior to the beginning of the fall semester of the new academic year. See Appendix E for the IDP instructions and guidelines.

6. Lab Rotations

The purpose of the Ph.D. program is to prepare you to be a productive, 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 financially supporting 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 Director. Please see Deanna Solórzano for further information. The process of selecting a laboratory for a research rotation involves you taking the time to

set up a meeting and discuss potential research projects with a NGP training faculty member. You should begin the process of establishing your first rotation as soon as you register, but there is no need to commit to the 2nd and 3rd rotations until you have had time to begin your 1st rotation and hold discussions with faculty at the NGP retreat and early in the fall semester. Rotation agreements should be established at least a month in advance of the beginning of each.

It is important to emphasize that your conversations with prospective faculty 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 TAships until you pass Part A of the milestone exam (see below), which generally occurs by the end of the spring 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 is usually 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 principal investigator (PI) 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 will 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. We also note that your performance is evaluated by the faculty member in whose laboratory you perform a rotation. As such, demonstrating a commitment to spending time in the laboratory, being engaged in reading original literature in the area of research, learning new methodologies and analytical skills, and participating in laboratory-specific activities contribute to the evaluation. Poor performance in a laboratory rotation is taken as seriously as poor performance in the core courses. Multiple poor performances can be grounds for dismissal from the Program.

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 should include three different labs although 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. At the end of each rotation, students should have an 'exit interview' with the laboratory PI to establish whether there is agreement about the laboratory being a good fit for dissertation research. Students cannot make their final selection of a dissertation laboratory until the end of their third rotation. We encourage students to have conversations with the faculty they have rotated with in their first year to establish if it is a good fit. Students cannot make their final selection until the end of their third rotation. Although not encouraged, in some

instances, students may petition the Director to do a fourth rotation during May and June. This occurs only when a students has difficulty in identifying a dissertation lab by the end of the spring semester of year 01. The student must consult an Advisement Committee member as soon as possible for assistance. **Students ultimately are responsible for identifying a dissertation research laboratory before the end of year 01 of study, and should seek assistance from the Advisement Committee (Levitt, Hirsch) at any time during their first year, if needed.** Once the selection has been made, email the Advisement Committee and Deanna Solórzano noting your proposed faculty mentor. Deanna will reach out to the identified faculty requesting written approval and letter of financial support. Unless there is an approved petition for a fourth rotation, mentor selections must be finalized by the end of May. Deadlines are listed below.

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 NGP laboratories. The NGP generates a list annually of the training faculty who are interested in having students perform rotations. 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 prior to the beginning of the fall semester. You must identify the laboratories that you will contact to set up your first rotation.

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 in Appendix G, or can be downloaded from our website in the *Graduate Program* section. **You must inform the NGP Office, by submitting the written and signed contract that is given to Deanna Solórzano before you begin a new rotation.** Once you have completed a rotation, you will need to submit a rotation summary form to Deanna Solórzano. Rotation summary forms are located in Appendix H, or can be downloaded from our website in the Graduate Program section.

The laboratory rotation schedule for 2015-2016 is as follows:

Lab Rotation #1: September 8 – November 13
Rotation Contract # 1 due: September 1
Rotation Summary #1 due: November 20

Lab Rotation #2: November 23 – February 12
Rotation Contract #2 due: November 20
Rotation Summary #2 due: February 19

Lab Rotation #3: February 22 – April 29
Rotation Contract #3 due: February 19
Rotation Summary #3 due: May 6

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 should email Deanna Solórzano and Advisement Committee with your chosen mentor match.

- Students submit their mentor preferences to the advisement committee: May 9th
- Advisement committee solicits letters of support: May 9-11th
- All students should have a confirmed mentor by: May 13th

Laboratory mentors (PIs) ultimately will be responsible for your stipend and health insurance support after year 01 of study (beginning August of year 02). 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.

7. Lab Visits

You are encouraged to visit any laboratories of training faculty in NGP, particularly during your first year. Simply contact the faculty member to arrange a visit. It is advisable to plan in advance with the NGP faculty member to assure that 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.

8. 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) for advice on course enrollment. Students in year 02 and beyond should consult their NGP faculty mentor for advice on course enrollment, and obtain authorization from one member of the Advisement Committee. See **"Registration Process,"** page 17 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.

Problems may arise, and while the vast majority of these are worked out well, on rare instances a student and faculty mentor feel that it would be best to change laboratories. The Director of NGP and the faculty as a whole will support your wishes in these matters. If you perceive serious problems, we encourage you to contact either the Director or Associate Director of the NGP early, prior to problems escalating, to discuss specific solutions.

If you would like assistance with professional or personal challenges, please come see one of us. We are here to lend a sympathetic ear, offer advice, provide referrals, and inform you of your rights in disputes with faculty or peers. Oftentimes, we can help resolve problems.

9. 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 rotation performance or dissertation research progress (evaluated by the laboratory PI), 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 Advisement Committee to each student, and a copy sent to the student's mentor. 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. A rating of '2' or '3' triggers a meeting with either Levitt or Hirsch to discuss remedies. Keep in mind that these evaluations serve to monitor student progress and are used solely for internal tracking. They are not placed in students official records or transcripts that are shared outside of the university. First year students and others without advisors will 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.**

10. Academic Warning and Dismissal of Graduate Students

The NGP as a program takes factors other than an adequate GPA 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 dissertation 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 your Guidance/Dissertation committees and faculty mentor 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 the NGP 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 is placed in the student's mailbox. Any violations of the rules stated in this guide, *e.g.*, maintaining a GPA under 3.0, lack of research progress and effort, failing either part (A or B) of the qualifying exam twice is grounds for dismissal. It is the responsibility of the student to understand these expectations, and to familiarize themselves with USC Graduate School rules with regard to dismissal. It also is the responsibility of the student, once a warning is received, to correct the violations within one semester.

11. Qualifying Exam Procedure

Successful completion of the Qualifying Exams admits a student to official candidacy for the Ph.D. degree at USC. To begin the Qualifying Exam process, the first thing you must do is contact Deanna Solórzano. Remember two things: a) historically, almost all students 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. Keep in mind that the exams are challenging, but are not designed to trick a student. Thus, we expect that 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:

Choosing Guidance and Dissertation Committee members:

Prior to the end of the third semester, students must establish a guidance committee consisting of five members. **Students who enter the program in 2015 must establish a guidance committee by October 14, 2016** (see below).

USC Graduate School does not permit Guidance Committee membership to be changed between Part A and Part B examinations, except for extenuating circumstances such as the departure of a committee member who cannot continue to serve. You must petition the NGP Director to request a change in membership. The request must be approved by the Director and the USC Vice Provost for Graduate Studies. Students are encouraged to consult with each committee member regarding subjects to be covered in the exam.

The Dissertation Committee is formed following successful completion of Part B of the qualifying exam. The USC Graduate School defines the size of this committee as a minimum of three members, but it may be more. It may be composed of a subset of faculty of the student's Guidance Committee, or different faculty members may be included (see below).

Choosing a committee is important. 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 committee members who engage with you regarding your academic and research progress, and is willing to put in the time to assist you when needed.

Composition and Roles of Guidance and Dissertation Committees

A. The dissertation committee consists of a minimum of three tenured or tenure track USC faculty, two of whom must be NGP training faculty, at least one of whom must be tenured, and an Outside Member* who may be a member of the NGP, but whose primary academic appointment is in a different school from the laboratory mentor. The *outside* member may also be a member of a USC graduate program other than the NGP. If the *outside* faculty member is not a member of the NGP, they may be appointed in the same school as the student's mentor. Thus, the outside member may or may not be an NGP training faculty member. For the Guidance Committee, 5 faculty are appointed. The outside member is defined in the same fashion as for the dissertation committee. At least 3 of the 5 members of the Guidance Committee must be training faculty members of the NGP.
B. The Chair of the Guidance and Dissertation committees must be a member of the NGP, ***but not the student's research advisor (mentor).*** The mentor may serve as an inside member on both committees. All current and future committees will use this structure.
C. Each student is required to meet collectively with Guidance Committee members once each academic year (approximately every 9 months). The Chair submits a summary of the meeting to Deanna Solórzano, noting particular strengths and progress, or weaknesses to be addressed. The Guidance Committee also is responsible for administering Part A and Part B of the Qualifying Exam.
D. The Dissertation Committee members and the student must meet in person within 2 months of being constituted. The committee and student may meet more often as students approach closure on their research project and seek permission to begin writing their dissertation. Students must obtain approval from the Dissertation Committee to being the writing process. The Dissertation Committee also is responsible for reviewing and approving the dissertation document and for conducting questioning of the student for the oral part of the dissertation defense.

Scheduling the Qualifying Examinations:

There are specific semester deadlines provided for Parts A and B exams to be completed, i.e., the latest times by which the requirements must be satisfied. Should there be any issues about meeting these requirements, you must make an appointment to speak to Pat Levitt or Judith Hirsch as soon as possible. It may be preferable to move the entire process up by one semester. Laboratory mentors should discuss with their students whether they would benefit from an accelerated exam schedule. Keep in mind that the USC Graduate School has certain requirements with regard to the time between completion of qualifying exam and defense of your dissertation. You need to become familiar with those rules.

Part A of the Qualifying Examination:

Part A provides an opportunity for a student to express a deeper understanding of the area of neuroscience that is relevant to their chosen research focus. Thus, successful completion of Part A will serve as a way for the student to become very familiar with relevant primary research literature, and eventually be able to place the experiments in their dissertation proposal (Part B) in the context of the larger field. This speaks to the background and significance of their research, an important component of any grant application. Completion of Part A must occur **before** the end of the year 02 spring semester. The chair of the Guidance Committee will obtain one question from the 4 inside committee members. The outside member of the committee does not provide a question. **The Chair must approve the questions and then e-mail these to Deanna Solórzano who will distribute to the student. Thus, all questions, contracts and instructions will be given to the student by Deanna Solórzano.** A deadline will be provided to the student. Answers are due back to Deanna by 5pm PST on the day that is 4 weeks after the student received the exam questions. There are no exceptions. Turning in the answers after the established deadline will result in automatic failure, and will require the student to retake the exam. The purpose of this time period is to allow time for students' other activities, which they are strongly advised not to suspend. Any primary research publications, references or source material can be read by the student to facilitate answering the exam questions. Students can ask for clarification only from the guidance committee member who submitted the question, but may not discuss the questions or their answers with anyone else prior to submission. Each answer should be approximately 5 single spaced pages in length.

Plagiarism is unacceptable and grounds for failing the exam and dismissal from the Program. 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. When you turn in your completed exam to Deanna Solórzano 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 Appendix F. Additionally, you can learn about plagiarism and other ethical matters in science in the Course "Ethics and Accountability in Biomedical Research (INTD 500)".

Part A – Guidelines for Questions:

The 4 inside members of the student's Guidance Committee should prepare questions with the student's research interests in mind, and in the light of previous discussions with the student. One of three suggested formats may be used: 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 (typically not used). The Guidance Committee members and student must agree on one format style.

Part A – Grading:

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.

Failure to Pass Part A:

The status of the Part A exam (pass/fail) will be determined by the student's committee. Should the student fail, she/he will receive a written warning and must meet with the chair of his/her committee to review the critiques of the exam answers. The student must retake the Part A exam within 3 months of written notification of failure. **A second failure will result in dismissal from the Program**.

Part B of the Qualifying Examination

The semester before you plan to take Part B of the qualifying examination, you must submit the *Request to Take Qualifying Examination Form*, which can be found on the NGP website under the *Graduate Program* section. As a reminder, a committee cannot be changed between the Part A and Part B examinations. At the end of your examination, the committee will inform you of the outcome of the written and oral sections of the Part B qualifying exam. All committee members must sign the *Report on Qualifying Examination Form,* which needs to be returned to Deanna Solórzano by the Chair. Students are not allowed to handle this form.

Part B – Writing Portion of the Examination:

You should complete the writing portion of Part B in conjunction with the oral exam before the end of the spring semester of your third year. The second half of the written portion 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/R21 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 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 written proposal. If a student feels they cannot meet this deadline, they must immediately contact their Committee chair, mentor and the NGP Director or Associate Director to arrange an adequate solution. Failure to meet this deadline will require rescheduling of the oral exam, which is done at the discretion of the student's committee. The 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 Writing Portion is for the NGP, through the guidance committee, to ensure that the student's 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. Students are encouraged to utilize the Part B written document as a basis for fellowship grant applications. Thus, it is expected that you will discuss your ideas for the proposal with your mentor, members of the guidance committee and other students and research fellows in your laboratory. In addition, while you must write a complete initial draft of the document, you are encouraged to seek advice from your mentor in revising subsequent versions. This is a learning opportunity and it is expected that such interactions will improve the final document that will be submitted to your committee for evaluation.

Part B – Oral Portion of the Examination:
In consultation with her/his Guidance Committee, the date for the oral exam is scheduled by the student through the NGP office. In all instances, the oral exam must be completed before the end of the spring semester in year 03. Because you will have obtained advice from your mentor in the process of you producing the final version of the written document, the oral exam is of particular importance for you to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the proposed research. You should be able to defend the written document and to answer 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 exam. The mock exam may be given by 3-5 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, including statistical methods; 2) the scientific or technical basis of methods used; 3) the global significance or health-relatedness of the project; 4) relation of your 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.

Part B – Grading Procedures for the Writing and Oral examination:
The status of the Part B exam (pass/fail) will be determined by the student's committee. The guidance committee may decide upon reading the written proposal that there are very significant weaknesses that they believe cannot be addressed during the oral presentation. In this case, the oral exam is cancelled and according to USC Graduate School rules, the student fails Part B. The guidance committee may decide that either the written proposal is sound, or has modest weakness that may be addressed during the oral exam. In this case, the oral exam will proceed. Pass is determined by a majority of Guidance Committee members. All 5 members must vote. The guidance committee chair must write a summary representing the opinions of those who voted 'pass' and those who voted 'fail'. Should the majority of committee member vote to fail the student, she/he will receive a written letter of the outcome. The student must meet with the chair of his/her committee to review the critiques of the committee regarding the written proposal and oral presentation. The student must retake the Part B exam within 6 months of written notification of failure. There are no exceptions to this deadline. **NGP and USC Graduate School guidelines state that a second failure of Part B will result in automatic dismissal from the Program.** Students who are dismissed may access rules for disputing academic evaluations in ***SCampus***.

12. Guidance for Writing the Dissertation

Once you have passed the Part B exam, you will need to establish your dissertation committee. This should be done within 6 months of passing Part B, but the sooner the better. In general, a subset of members of the guidance committee typically serve as members of the dissertation committee. A minimum of three members must be appointed to your committee – you may have up to five; the outside member CANNOT hold their primary appointment in the same School as your mentor, or they must be a faculty member who is a member of a USC graduate program other than the NGP (and therefore can be appointed in the same school as your mentor). Note that the committee chair CANNOT be your mentor.

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_Outside_Member_Pratt_2011_old.pdf. You may download any of the committee forms from our website under *Graduate Program*.

The following is a general discussion of the approach one should take when writing the dissertation. There are two main messages. NGP dissertation committees typically request that the dissertation include general introductory and summary chapters. 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 "Ethics and Accountability in Biomedical Research" (INTD 500) covers scientific writing). Manuscripts for which you have served as first author and are already published are permitted to serve as chapters of your thesis, though reformatting likely will be necessary, as the dissertation content must be in one format (text, references, figures, tables). Second, be sure that every important step is approved by your laboratory mentor and dissertation committee members in advance. While not a program requirement, the NGP expects that all students will have at least one first author publication prior to defending their dissertation. This achievement is important for professional development and postgraduate success for obtaining academic or private sector positions.

a. **Before you start writing**
Your laboratory 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.

Be cautious of very high profile journals (e.g. *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 the 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. For submitted manuscript on which you serve as first author, the senior author is typically the corresponding author to the journal (because students may graduate and move prior the article being accepted for publication). In addition, the senior author (laboratory PI) is responsible for ensuring that research conducted in her/his laboratory meets the expectations and standards of the funding agency (internal or external) and ensuring responsible conduct in research guidelines are followed. The senior author (laboratory PI) also will make the final determination for authorship. The NGP recommends following the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' definition of authorship (see http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html), but many journals have their own guidelines for determining authorship. Students should understand these rules before making a decision with your advisor. Keep in mind that writing a manuscript is a collaborative process that often requires discussions and negotiations so that in the end, all authors can endorse the contents that are to be reported.

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 by the time of publication of your first paper, 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, qualifying exams, and workshops. 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.

Great communication is the key to success, and it helps avoid misunderstandings! Discuss everything with your laboratory mentor. 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 dissertation 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. In addition to the required academic year meeting for the entire committee to attend with you, we encourage you to meet with members of your committee individually to seek input and advice. 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 graphics, photography, etc., or special access to 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 chapter in the format of a paper in your chosen journal.

Feed drafts of the papers to your advisor and committee members. Since they are separate papers, each chapter should be 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.

Do not offend anyone. Think about your dedication and acknowledgements section well in advance and include all who have made important contributions. 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. Most dissertations of NGP students include general Introductory chapter and Summary chapters. The Dissertation Committee makes this recommendation to the student. The introductory chapter may be in a different format. This may be a literature review, a presentation of background work done by others, etc. In some instances, the questions that you answered in Part A of your qualifying exam helps to start the process of writing this section. A concluding chapter summarizes and discusses the significance of your work and future directions research.

c. **After you finish writing and defending**

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

Publish as soon as possible. As noted above, 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 more than 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.

13. Terminal Masters Degree

The USC Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) is a Ph.D.-granting advanced program in the interdisciplinary study of the neurosciences. The program includes rigorous coursework that is designed to provide core competencies in the field of neuroscience. The cornerstone of the NGP is student performance of original laboratory research. Research findings will culminate in a scholarly thesis document with the expectation that the results will be reported in peer-reviewed journals. On very rare occasion and for a variety of reasons, a graduate student in the NGP will be unable to complete the full course of study for a Ph.D., but nonetheless will have done a significant amount of work in the Program. The student may petition the NGP Director to obtain a terminal Masters degree. The student also must inform the administrative staff of the NGP. The Director will bring the petition to the Executive Committee for deliberation. The student will be notified of acceptance or rejection of the petition. In order to receive the Masters degree, a student in the Program must fulfill the following requirements.

A. Students must complete the course work required of Ph.D. students for a minimum of 24 units. The units must include the NGP core course and additional Program course requirements invoked when the student entered the NGP.
B. Students must successfully complete the required NGP Part A and Part B exams that demonstrate discipline and research competencies.
C. Students can opt for a thesis or non-thesis Masters. A Masters thesis may be comprised of an accepted or published manuscript for which the student serves as first author (organized in thesis format), or a thesis document that typically is a draft of a manuscript in preparation: 1) an introduction to the particular area of research in which the student was engaged; 2) an overview of the specific research project; 3) a description of the methods and results (negative or positive) obtained by the student in their thesis laboratory; 4) a discussion of experimental interpretation and pitfalls. While there is not a page requirement for the thesis document, a range from 25-50 double-spaced pages is typical. A reference list and figures that depict research findings should be

included in the thesis. A Masters thesis requires presentation to a thesis committee (mentor and 3 other NGP training faculty). The thesis is presented to the USC Graduate School of approval and publication. A non-thesis Masters will include a research paper that ranges in length from 30-40 pages. The paper will detail 1) a historical introduction to a specific area of neuroscience research related to the research activity in which the student has engaged; 2) a critical review of the current state of research findings and functional mechanisms; 3) a detailed proposal of future research opportunities, articulating a few examples of specific experiments. A reference list should be included in the thesis. The research paper must be approved by the student's mentor and two other NGP training faculty members, serving as the review committee. The research paper is not presented to the USC Graduate School for approval.

Other Issues

A student opting for a terminal Masters degree may not receive university support (RA or TA) once the petition is granted. The student is fully responsible for scheduling meetings and obtaining approval of the Masters thesis document or Masters research paper in sufficient time for the processing of the requisite forms to be submitted by the NGP administration to the USC Graduate School for final approval.

ETHICS AND YOUR RIGHTS AS A STUDENT

Many well-defined rights, responsibilities, and expectations govern the close relationship between a graduate student and faculty advisor. 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 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH STUDENT TO BE AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A TRAINEE IN THE NGP AND A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.** The course "Ethics and Accountability in Biological Research" – INTD 500 – or equivalent, covers these rights, responsibilities, and expectations in the context of case studies and group discussion. In addition, a mandatory session on 'Ethics and Professional Conduct' is held at every NGP retreat. Finally, these 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.

   Serious violations of ethical standards have been extremely rare in our program. If you have the slightest concern about any issues governing student and faculty responsibilities, and your role to conduct research that meets high ethical standards, do not hesitate to contact the Directors of NGP, Pat Levitt (plevitt@usc.edu) or Judith Hirsch (hirsch@usc.edu). Your discussions will be held in confidence. Of course, feel free to consult other faculty or peers that you may trust, or any of the support services of the university.

TIMELINE TO DEGREE

	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
	1st Semester	**2nd Semester**	
1st Year Goals:	*Attendance at the annual NGP retreat. *Lab rotations *Submission of contracts and summary forms due after each rotation.	*Lab rotations cont. *An email to the Advisement Committee with preferred mentor match is due the 1st week in May. By end of Spring semester, thesis mentors must be confirmed. *Presentation at the NGF student symposium day	*Research
Courses:	*NSCI 524- 4 Units *NSCI 539- 1 Unit *NSCI 790- 7 Units (Research units) **All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester***	*NSCI 525- 4 Units *NSCI 539- 1 Unit *NSCI 790 (Research Units) **All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester***	*INTD 500-1-Unit *NSCI 790-3 Units *RAship
	3rd Semester	**4th Semester**	
2nd Year Goals:	*Attendance at the annual NGP retreat. *Establish your **GUIDANCE** Committee. Must establish by October 16, 2015.	*Presentation at the NGF student symposium day *Part A: **WRITTEN Exam** *(exam must be taken by the end of the 4th semester, no exceptions).*	*Research
Courses:	*NSCI 539-1 Unit *1 of the key courses from the 4 tracks. *NSCI 790 (Research Units) **All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester***	*NSCI 539-1 Unit *1 of the key courses from the 4 tracks. *NSCI 790 (Research Units) **All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester***	*RAship *GRSC 802 or NSCI 790 depending on source of support
	5th Semester	**6th Semester**	

3rd Year Goals:	*Attendance at the annual NGP retreat. *Part B: **WRITTEN Exam** (this portion should be completed in conjunction with the **ORAL exam**). ***ORAL Qualifying Exam** *(exam must be taken by the end of the **6th** semester, no exceptions).* **Review your degree progress on OASIS to check any deficiencies or problems. Contact Dawn Burke with any concerns or questions.*	*Presentation at the NGF student symposium day *Appoint your **DISSERTATION** Committee.	*Research
Courses:	**NSCI 790 – 6 Units** (Research Units) ***All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester***	**NSCI 790 – 6 Units** (Research Units) ***All students should have a minimum of 6 units to be considered full time and no more than 12 units per semester***	*RAship *GRSC 802 or NSCI 790 depending on source of support
	7th Semester	**8th Semester**	
4th Year Goals:	*Attendance at the annual NGP retreat.	*Presentation at the NGF student symposium day *Meet with your Dissertation committee	*Research
Courses:	NSCI 790 – 6 Units or NSCI 794 - 2 Units	NSCI 790 – 6 Units or NSCI 794 - 2 Units	*RAship *GRSC 802 or NSCI 790 depending on source of support
	9th Semester	**10th Semester**	
5th Year Goals:	*Attendance at the annual NGP retreat.	*Presentation at the NGF student symposium day *Meet with your Dissertation committee	*Research

Courses:	NSCI 790 – 6 Units or NSCI 794 - 2 Units	NSCI 790 – 6 Units or NSCI 794 - 2 Units	*RAship *GRSC 802 or NSCI 790 depending on source of support
Graduation:	*If you decided to postpone your degree date you MUST contact Dawn Burke and the Director MUST approve all requested changes *Provide Deanna Solórzano with your Dissertation Defense info. for postings, recording and announcements. *Make an appt. with Dawn Burke for finalization of paperwork submission and information after dissertation defense.	*Ensure thesis is uploaded by deadline. *Report to Dawn Burke your participation in hooding ceremony by the 2nd week in February. *Inform your PI of hooding ceremony instructions and participation.	*A total of 24 course work units should be completed. A total of 60 units are required for the doctoral degree.

DIRECTORIES

NGP Faculty

All NGP Faculty appear on http://ngp.usc.edu/faculty/ with contact information and material on research interests.

New Neuroscience Graduate Students - Fall 2015

Name	Schools Attended
Seohee Ahn	Seoul National University
Aida Bareghamyan	University of Southern California
Maxwell Bay	Syracuse University
Nora Benavidez	University of California, Berkeley
So Young Choi	University of Southern California
Yifu Han	Huazhong University of Science and Technology
Eric Hendricks	Eastern Illinois University
Samson King	Wake Forest University
Clarissa Liu	Barnard College
Phillip Maire	University of Louisville
Lei Peng	Chang Gung University
Alicia Quihuis	Arizona State University
Monica Song	University of California, Los Angeles
Bochuan Teng	Peking University
Chen Tian	Xiamen University
Xiyue Wang	Boston College

Returning Neuroscience Graduate Students

NAME	LAB PI	E-MAIL
AHN, SEOHEE	FIRST YEAR	seoheeah@usc.edu
ARNETT, MEGAN	MCGEE	marnett@usc.edu
BACON, ELIZA	BRINTON	ebacon@usc.edu
BAINS, AMARPREET	SCHWEIGHOFER	amarpreb@usc.edu
BAREGHAMYAN, AIDA	FIRST YEAR	baregham@usc.edu
BARRES, VICTOR	ARBIB	barres@usc.edu
BAY, MAXWELL	FIRST YEAR	maxwellb@usc.edu
BENAVIDEZ, NORA	FIRST YEAR	nlbenavi@usc.edu
BEROUKHIM, DORSA	WINSTEIN	dberoukh@usc.edu
BRENNER, RORRY	ITTI	rorry.brenner@usc.edu
BROWN, DAVID	TJAN	davidjbr@usc.edu
CHEN, CHRISTINA	VAN HORN	chencs@usc.edu
CHEN, XUN	DICKMAN	xunchen@usc.edu
CHEUNG, JONATHAN	HIRES	jacheung@usc.edu
CHOI, SO YOUNG	FIRST YEAR	choisoyo@usc.edu

CHOU, XIAOLIN	TAO	xchou@usc.edu
CLEWETT, DAVID	MATHER	clewett@usc.edu
COMBS, THOMAS DALTON	CORICELLI/BROCA	tcombs@usc.edu
COOPER, ALEXANDER	LIMAN	cooperaj@usc.edu
CUI, YUJIE	DICKMAN	yujiecui@usc.edu
DOKOVNA, LISA	VAN HORN	Dokovna@usc.edu
DONHOFFNER, MARY	SEGIL	donhoffn@usc.edu
DORTON, HILARY	PAGE	hdorton@usc.edu
ELLIS, MATTHEW	PA	matthepe@usc.edu
ENACHESCU, VINCENT	SCHAAL	enachesc@usc.edu
FANG, QI	ZHANG	qfang@usc.edu
FENG, SHANXI	ARNOLD	shanxife@usc.edu
FENSKE, SONJA	KUTCH	sfenske@usc.edu
FIGUIEREDO UCHOA, MARIANA	PIKE	mfigueir@usc.edu
FRANTZ, MICHAEL	MCGEE	mfrantz@usc.edu
FURLANELLO, TOMMASO	CORICELLI	furlanel@usc.edu
GASSER, BRAD	ARBIB	bgasser@usc.edu
GOEDEN, NICK	BONNIN	ngoeden@usc.edu
GORIN, ALEXIS	HIRSCH	agorin@usc.edu
HALLIDAY, MATTHEW	ZLOKOVIC	mhallida@usc.edu
HAN, YIFU	FIRST YEAR	yifuhan@usc.edu
HENDRICKS, ERIC	FIRST YEAR	ewhendri@usc.edu
HEUN-JOHN, HANKE	LEVITT	heunjohn@usc.edu
HEYDARI, PANTHEA	AZIZ-ZADEH	pheydari@usc.edu
HSU, TED	KANOSKI	tedhsu@usc.edu
HUANG, CHAO	CELIKEL	chaohuan@usc.edu
HUEZO-VELASQUEZ, JUAN	BONNIN	huezovel@usc.edu
IM, CHRIS (KWOK)	TOWN	kwokim@usc.edu
JIN, LEI	MEL	leij@usc.edu
JOHNSON, CAROLINE	WATTS	carolinj@usc.edu
KAST, RYAN	LEVITT	rkast@usc.edu
KELLER, BRENTON	CORICELLI	bjkeller@usc.edu
KIKUMA, KOTO	DICKMAN	kikuma@usc.edu
KIM, JAE MUN	KNOWLES	jaemunki@usc.edu
KIM, YOUNG JOO	ZHANG	kim31@usc.edu
KING, SAMSON	FIRST YEAR	samsonki@usc.edu
KINTZ, NATALIE	JAKOWEC	kintz@usc.edu
KIRAGASI, BERIL	DICKMAN	kiragasi@usc.edu
LEE, JOO-YEUN	CHANG	jaemunki@usc.edu
LI, LINGYUN	TAO	lingyunl@usc.edu
LI, XILING	DICKMAN	xilingli@usc.edu
LIU, CLARISSA	FIRST YEAR	clarisml@usc.edu
LU, HUNG-CHI	TIAN	hungchil@usc.edu
LYNCH, KIRSTEN	CLARK	kirsteml@usc.edu
MACPHEE, IMOLA	CLARK	imacphee@usc.edu
MAIRE, PHILLIP	FIRST YEAR	maire@usc.edu
MARKOWITZ, ALEXANDER	KALLURI	almarkow@usc.edu
MAROSH, LEENA ALI	TAO	ibrahimm@usc.edu
MAZYAR, HELGA	TJAN	mazyar@usc.edu

MAZZASETTE, CHIARA	KO	mazzaset@usc.edu
MENENDEZ, LOUISE	ICHIDA	lmenende@usc.edu
MESIK, LUKAS	ZHANG	mesik@usc.edu
MEZHER, ADAM	FIRST YEAR	mezher@usc.edu
MILLIN, RACHEL	TJAN	rmillin@usc.edu
MOSER, ALEXANDRA	PIKE	vmoser@usc.edu
NIMMAGADDA, KIRAN	WEILAND	nimmagad@usc.edu
NIR, TALIA	P. THOMPSON	tnir@usc.edu
PALKAR, RADHIKA	MCKEMY	rpalkar@usc.edu
PARK, JENNIFER	MCGEE	parkji@usc.edu
PENG, LEI	FIRST YEAR	leipeng@usc.edu
QUIHUIS, ALICIA	FIRST YEAR	quihuis@usc.edu
RAMANATHAN, ANITA	ZLOKOVIC	anitaram@usc.edu
RIEDEL, BRANDALYN	BRINTON	bcriedel@usc.edu
RINKER, DANIEL	P. THOMPSON	rinker@usc.edu
SONG, MONICA	FIRST YEAR	monicaso@usc.edu
STEFANKO, DANIEL	PETZINGER	stefanko@usc.edu
STEPHANY, CELESTE-ELISE	MCGEE	cstephan@usc.edu
SWEENEY, MELANIE	ZLOKOVIC	mdsweene@usc.edu
TENG, BOCHUAN	FIRST YEAR	bochuant@usc.edu
TIAN, CHEN	FIRST YEAR	tianc@usc.edu
TOY, WILLIAM	JAKOWEC	wtoy@usc.edu
VENTURA, CHRISTOPHER	KALLURI	cmventur@usc.edu
WALLIN, KATHRYN	WOOD	kwallin@usc.edu
WANG, CHUNJI	SCHWEIGHOFER	chunjiw@usc.edu
WANG, XIYUE	FIRST YEAR	xiyuewan@usc.edu
YANG, HUI	DICKMAN	yanghui@usc.edu
YUAN, RACHEL	BOTTJER	rachelyu@usc.edu
ZHANG, CHEN	ITTI	zhan455@usc.edu
ZHAO, YUKAI	TJAN	yukaizha@usc.edu
ZHU, MUYE	DONG	muyezhu@usc.edu
ZINGG, BRIAN	TAO	bzingg@usc.edu
ZYUZIN, KATIE	WATTS	zyuzin@usc.edu

LA LIFE

Housing

On Campus:

The USC Student Housing Office (213-740-2546) is in Parking Structure X or you can visit https://housing.usc.edu/ .

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 (7th Street/Figueroa-downtown Los Angeles-Dash Shuttle Line F by USC will take you directly to the MTA subway on 7th 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 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", through the Hollywood and Vine area to Universal Studios and, finally, North Hollywood; and the ***Gold Line*** runs from Pasadena to Union Station. The *Red Line* has a convenient station stop at CHLA, located at Sunset Blvd and Vermont Ave. The new ***Expo Line*** begins at Metro Center downtown and goes to Culver City, with two stops at USC. The 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/37th, Vermont/36th, Vermont/35th, 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 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/index.php/parking-rates/ 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. 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 (GPS, stereo, 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 is 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 are 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)

There is a Citibank branch in the strip mall on Vermont across from Gate 6 and just south of the Post Office and a Bank of America branch near the intersection of Vermont and Jefferson. These banks offer bankcards as well as checking and savings accounts. Automatic teller machines are available on and off campus. NEVER GO ALONE TO AN AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINE AFTER DARK and do not cash checks for anyone you do not know. 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 at the Tutor Campus Center 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 Tutor Center, as well as a Bank of America ATMs next to the entrance of the USC-Bookstore and along the Trousdale Parkway side of the Tutor Center. ATMs are available on the Health Science Campus in the Keck Medical Center and in the Keck School of Medicine food court area (USC Federal Credit Union). At CHLA, ATMs of most major banks (Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citibank) are located within 1-2 blocks.

Near UPC, there are additional ATMs available at King Hall, South Figueroa at W. 29th St. 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.]. Checks can be cashed at the bookstore with a purchase.

Books

The University has a bookstore, and graduate students with TAs or RAs are entitled to a 10% discount with their I.D. card.

Supermarkets

Fresh and Easy is on the corner of Jefferson and Figueroa, Smart and Final at 3607 South Vermont and 36th Pl. (across from gate 6) are supermarkets bordering USC. Ralph's Super market is located at 2600 S. Vermont and at CHLA, Vons Super market is located within one block. The food, meat, fish and produce vary in quality (excellent to acceptable) depending upon the supermarket. Also look for farmer markets on or near the various campuses http://www.ccfm.com/site/locations.php.

Elsewhere in Los Angeles there are other large chain supermarkets. In most neighborhoods, there are many to choose from, including Alberstons, Ralph's, Vivas, Vons, Food-4-Less and Super King. Whole Foods, Gelson's, Trader Joe's and Costco are alternatives to traditional supermarkets.

Current students can help you find markets that specialize in international foods.

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 36th 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 ¢.50 a ride, and transfers are free, if you ask for one.

USC-Carlson Wagonlit International Travel Agency

USC provides a Travel Agency. 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). They do charge a fee, so it also makes sense to look online if you will be purchasing tickets yourself for subsequent reimbursement.

Other Important Locations

Post Office

3585 S. Vermont Ave (213.731.8295) – just across the street from campus. You may purchase money orders there as well. 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.

Neuroscience Graduate Program Academic Advisement Form

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

Name:_____ ID#:_____

Local Address: _____
(Street) *(City/State)* *(Zip Code)*

Phone #:_____ Email:_____

Academic Advisor: _____ Semester: _____
(Please print)

DEPT	COURSE	CLASS #	UNITS	DAYS	TIME	PROF

Approval _____ Date_____
(Academic Advisor signature)

Agreement_____ Date_____
(Student's signature)

ANNUAL RESEARCH APPRAISAL
NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Part A: Student information (to be completed by student)

Name:

Date of last ARA meeting: Date of this ARA meeting:

If circumstances have interrupted or delayed normal progress towards degree completion at any point (e.g., family or medical leave, switching labs or degree programs, etc.), provide a brief explanation (including when and for how long):

Part B: Committee evaluation (to be completed by committee chair)
(Note: in NGP, the committee chair is NOT the student's mentor.)

Summarize the student's research and academic progress during the past academic year:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Part C: Committee **Signature**

Mentor: _____ _____

Committee chair: _____ _____

Outside Member: _____ _____

Additional member(s) : _____ _____

Additional member(s) : _____ _____

Part D: Review and signature of program director:_____

Division of Financial and Business Services
Payment Services

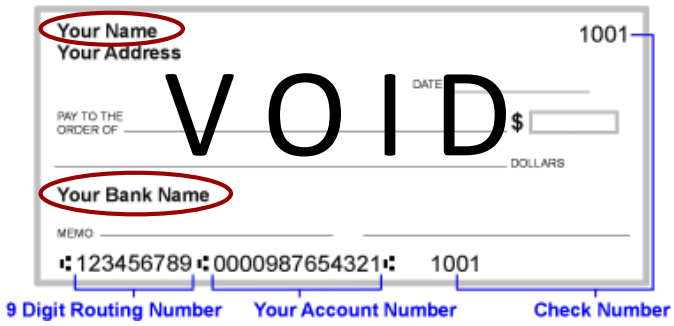
DIRECT DEPOSIT AUTHORIZATION
FOR EMPLOYEE/STUDENT REIMBURSEMENTS AND STIPENDS

☐ New Application ☐ Change of Bank ☐ Cancel Authorization

☐ Employee ☐ Student

I hereby authorize the University of Southern California to initiate deposits (credits) and/or corrections to prior deposits (previous credits) to the financial institution indicated below. The financial institution is authorized to credit and/or correct the amounts to my accounts. This authority is to remain in full force and effect until I revoke it by giving at least ten (10) days prior written notice to USC Payment Services.

Employee Information	
Name:	10-digit USC ID:
Email:	Telephone:
Authorized Signer:	Date:
Authorized Signer's Signature:	
Financial Institution Information	
Financial Institution:	Account-holder Name:
Bank Routing Number:	Bank Account Number:



IMPORTANT: *Affix copy of voided check below and fax to 888-498-1118 (secure online fax) or deliver in person to Payment Services, University Gardens Building, Suite 210. Deposits may only be made to checking or share draft accounts. Processing of this request may take up to three (3) weeks.*

University of Southern California, Business Services, Payment Services, UGB 210, Los Angeles, CA 90089-8015
Tel: (213) 740-2281; Fax: (213) 740-9797 www.usc.edu/dc

(Rev. 03-2014)

Neuroscience Graduate Program General Petition Form

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

Name: _____ ID#:_____

Phone #:_____ Email: _____

Cohort Year: _____

Request:

☐ 4th Lab Rotation:

☐ Course Substitution:

Required Course	Units	Substitution	Units

☐ Summer Internship: _____
Company/start date

☐ Extension of Time to Complete Degree: _____
Through your final semester

☐ Leave of Absence: _____
For the following semester(s)

☐ 794 a&b Concurrent Registration: _____
Semester

☐ Program Withdrawal: _____
For the following semester

☐ Readmission: _____ Semesters absent: _____
For the following semester *Must be < 4*

☐ Other

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

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

International students requesting a Leave of Absence must obtain a signature from the Office of International Services (GFS 120)

The student's visa requirements have been reviewed and the request for a Leave of Absence is hereby recommended.

OIS Signature: _____ Date: _____

Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Neuroscience Graduate PhD Students at USC

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a planning tool designed to help PhD students identify annual progress, professional development needs, and career objectives. The IDP also serves as a valuable communication tool between PhD students and their research advisor.

Goals of the IDP
An annual IDP is one component of a broader professional development strategy and mentoring program. Specifically, it helps PhD students:

- Identify progress in training and document accomplishments to date
- Identify short-term needs for improving performance
- Set goals for the upcoming year, including discussing how to spend time
- Define ways to develop specific skills and experience needed to complete research training and prepare for long-term career goals

Benefits of the IDP
Identifying short-term goals will give trainees a clearer sense of expectations and help identify milestones for achieving objectives. The IDP can also jumpstart long-term career planning and provide a tool for structuring conversations between mentors and trainees.

Overview of the IDP Process
The development, implementation, and revision of the IDP require a series of steps to be conducted by a trainee and her or his research mentor. These steps are an interactive effort, *beginning with the trainee.* After the trainee has filled out the IDP, she or he should discuss it with their research mentor. After both the student and the research mentor sign the IDP, the IDP should be turned in to the relevant Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The IDP should be completed annually in April and turned in to the DGS by the end of May each year.

Process	For Trainee	For Mentor
Review expectations for training	Review general expectations and responsibilities for your stage of training (see pages at the end of this document)	Identify additional expectations you have for your trainee that aren't listed in the general expectations
Part 1: Evaluate progress and skills	Evaluate your progress this year; assess your skills as they relate to seven core competency areas for research scientists	
Part 2: Set goals	Set specific goals for your research and professional development for the next year	
Part 3: Implement IDP	Discuss your IDP with your mentor; implement IDP and periodically review your progress with your mentor.	Review the IDP with your trainee and provide feedback; establish a regular review process

Acknowledgments: This IDP is adapted from resources developed by ScienceCareers, Scripps Research Institute, and the National Postdoctoral Association

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

A. Information/Signatures

Name of predoctoral student:

Department or program:

Year in predoctoral training:

Predoctoral trainee signature: Date:

PI name:

PI signature: Date:

B. Annual Progress Report

1. What were your main goals for the past year?

2. Which goals did you meet? If you did not meet a goal, why not?

3. List all major accomplishments this year in career development (e.g. presentations, publications, teaching, committees, course work, etc.). Include mentoring of graduate or undergraduate students in the laboratory.

4. Describe your level of satisfaction with your career development in the past year using a scale of 1-5 with 1 being highly satisfied. Provide a rationale for your choice.
   1 – Highly satisfied

2 – Somewhat satisfied
3 – Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4 – Somewhat dissatisfied
5 – Highly dissatisfied

C. Self-Assessment of Skills

Using the table on Page 4, reflect on your level of development in seven competency areas important for success in research: 1) Scientific Knowledge; 2) Research Skills; 3) Communication; 4) Professionalism; 5) Management and Leadership Skills; 6) Responsible Conduct of Research; 7) Career Advancement.

For each competency area, put an "x" in the column that most accurately describes your current level of expertise. Mark only one column per competency.

Always consider your career stage when assessing your competencies. Avoid comparing yourself to colleagues who are significantly more junior or senior than you.

For example, as a second year student, you may have a broad based knowledge of science that is appropriate to your career stage, but seemingly inadequate compared to a student who is about to defend his or her thesis. In this case, "appropriate for career stage", not "needs development", is the best choice.

Ask your research mentor to review your answers with you.

Pay close attention to the skills for which you and/or your mentor answered, "No basis to evaluate" or "Needs development." Are these skills you need to hone for your anticipated career path? Similarly, review skills that you identify as "strengths." You may wish to consider career paths that capitalize on these skills.

Core Competencies	No basis to evaluate	Needs development	Appropriate to career stage	Strength
Scientific Knowledge				
Broad based knowledge of science				
Deep knowledge of specific research area				
Critical evaluation of scientific literature				
Research Skills				
Technical skills related to research area				
Experimental design				
Statistical analysis				
Interpretation of data				
Creativity/innovative thinking				
Navigating the peer review process				
Communication				
Basic writing and editing				
Writing scientific publications				
Writing grant proposals				
Writing for nonscientists				
Speaking clearly and effectively				
Formulating and asking sound questions				
Presenting research to scientists				
Presenting to nonscientists				
Teaching in a classroom setting				
Training and mentoring individuals				
Seeking advice from advisors and mentors				
Negotiating difficult conversations				
Professionalism				
Demonstrating workplace etiquette				
Complying with rules and regulations				
Upholding commitments and meeting deadlines				
Maintaining positive relationships with colleagues				
Contributing to discipline (e.g. professional society member)				
Contributing to institution (e.g. committee participation)				
Management and Leadership Skills				
Providing instruction and guidance				
Providing constructive feedback				
Dealing with conflict				
Planning and organizing projects				
Time management				
Managing research resources responsibly				
Leading and motivating others				
Creating vision and goals				
Serving as a role model				
Responsible Conduct of Research				
Careful recordkeeping practices				
Understanding of data ownership/sharing issues				
Demonstrating responsible authorship/publication practices				
Demonstrating responsible conduct in human/animal research				
Able to identify and address research misconduct				
Able to identify and manage conflict of interest				
Career Advancement				
Creating and maintaining a professional network				
Identifying career options				
Tracking professional development and accomplishments (e.g. writing and maintaining a CV or résumé)				
Interviewing				

Adapted from ScienceCareers MyIDP, which is based on the National Postdoctoral Association's Core Competencies for Postdoctoral Scholars

D. Goals for the Upcoming Year

1. In the upcoming year, what:

a. Publications do you plan to submit?

b. Meetings, conferences, and workshops do you plan to attend?

c. Fellowships or other funding applications do you plan to submit?

d. Collaborations do you plan to establish?

e. Other professional training or activities do you plan to participate in (e.g. teaching, university service, courses, internships, etc.)?

2. Career goals

a. Approximately when do you hope to finish your predoctoral training?

b. If you plan to finish within 12-18 months, estimate when you will begin a job or postdoctoral search.

c. What is your "Next Step" career goal (e.g. postdoctoral training, research job, science policy)?

d. What is your long-term career goal? (*ScienceCareers* MyIDP can help you evaluate your options in light of your interests and skills.)

e. What further training is required before it is appropriate to start a career search?

3. How can your PI help you achieve your goals for the upcoming year? What do you need from your PI?

4. [Question for Mentor to discuss with Student] How can I, as Mentor, assist the student to develop and achieve his or her specific career development goals for the upcoming year?

Long-Term Goal Setting (Optional)

This section of the IDP is optional. It will be useful for trainees who seek additional structure and strategies for long-term career planning. We encourage trainees to discuss these goals with their research mentor; the BRET Office of Career Development is also available for confidential career advising appointments.

For each of the competencies evaluated in Part D (Self-Assessment), put an asterisk next to those items marked "needs development" or "no basis to evaluate" which are also critical for your long-term career development (i.e. beyond your graduate and/or postdoctoral training). Then, use the table below to set S.M.A.R.T. goals to develop your skills in these areas. S.M.A.R.T. stands for:

S = Specific M = Measurable A = Action-oriented R = Realistic T = Time-bound

Some examples are provided in italics. Add as many rows as needed to address the items with an asterisk. Remember, though, that it may not be realistic to work on every goal at once! Prioritize the most important goals work on them first. Adjust the timelines to avoid burnout.

Competency	**Specific plan for improvement that is action-oriented and realistic**	**How will you measure success?**	**Timeline (could be a self-imposed deadline, or an event like an upcoming conference)**
Seeking advice from advisors & mentors	*Ask my PI and collaborator to meet monthly to discuss project progress; schedule meeting times and locations for next 6 months*	*We meet at least 5 times and develop a concrete plan to publish our project results*	*Schedule meeting times by the end of next week; develop publication plan by end of semester*
Identifying career options	*Attend monthly PhD Career Connections seminars this academic year*	*Attend 80% of seminars; Network with speakers; for those whose career interests me, ask them for contact info and follow up*	*By the end of the academic year*

Graduate Training Year 1: Trainee Expectations & Responsibilities

The first year of graduate school is designed to help students develop a solid foundation in biomedical science, learn to glean information from the primary research literature, and become acquainted with the research environment. As your scientific interests crystallize you will choose a PhD-granting program and a laboratory in which to conduct thesis research.

General

- Do I know how to evaluate prospective research mentors and PhD programs?
- Am I working hard enough to impress prospective research mentors as a dedicated student who will be committed to their thesis research project?

Scientific Knowledge, Research Skills, and Responsible Conduct of Research

- Am I spending enough time and effort on my coursework to become literate in graduate level biomedical sciences?
- Am I spending enough time and effort in my lab rotations to make an informed decision about choosing a research area and a research mentor?
- Do I understand how my rotation project fits into the "big picture" of what my rotation lab is studying?
- Can I design an experiment that would generate a conclusive answer from the results?
- Can I execute an experiment and record the results in a form that could be published?
- Can I effectively read a primary research paper to understand the authors' goals, results, and interpretations?
- How do I know when to trust what I read in the literature or hear in a seminar?
- Have I identified areas of research that interest me most?

Communication

- Can I communicate my research goals and results effectively in an oral presentation to my colleagues?
- Have I had an open discussion with prospective research mentors about their expectations of PhD students?
- Do I view email to professors and answers to homework and test questions as professional writing samples, always using appropriate grammar and correct spelling?

Professionalism and Management and Leadership Skills

- Do I understand the standards of professional scientific conduct and am I committed to upholding them?
- Am I forming appropriate support relationships with mentors, peers, and administrative staff?
- Do I understand how research is funded and expectations for sharing the results of grant-funded research?
- Do I understand how research training is funded and expectations of students funded by institutional training grants?
- Do I follow through on tasks I commit to completing?
- Do I attend required courses and complete assignments on time?
- Do I balance my coursework and lab rotations adequately?
- Am I a good lab citizen, aware of how my actions impact others (e.g. taking steps to replenish reagents and supplies so they are available for others)?

Career Advancement

- Do I understand the format of a CV and biosketch?
- Have I created my CV so it can be updated continuously?
- Have I identified the career and professional development resources available to me?

Graduate Training Year 2: Trainee Expectations & Responsibilities
The second year of graduate school is critical for mastering the discipline, knowledge and skills needed for success as a research scientist and for acquiring the kind of insight into yourself and the scientific universe that will allow you to make the most of your talents and interests.

General
- Have I established a clear set of goals that I wish to accomplish this year and next?
- Have I discussed these goals with my mentor?
- Have I established a dissertation committee suitable to advise me in my thesis research?

Scientific Knowledge, Research Skills, and Responsible Conduct of Research
- What courses do I need as a foundation for my thesis research? Am I spending enough effort on my coursework?
- What primary literature should I be reading? Which reviews?
- Am I attending seminars within and outside my area to deepen and broaden my scientific knowledge base?
- What is my thesis project?
- Who will be on my dissertation committee?
- When will I take my qualifying exam? What is the format? On what criteria will I be evaluated?
- Am I spending enough time and effort in the lab to accomplish my research goals?
- Can I design an experiment that would generate a conclusive answer from the results?
- What technical skills do I need to execute my dissertation research?
- Can I execute an experiment and record the results in a form that could be published?
- Am I beginning to interpret my results and assimilate new knowledge to ask good scientific questions?
- Have I discussed expectations for publication and authorship with my research mentor and collaborators?

Communication
- Can I organize, interpret and present my research results using appropriate graphics and text?
- Can I communicate my research results effectively in an oral and visual presentation to my colleagues?
- Am I practicing talking about my research to a general audience (e.g. friends and family)?
- Will I apply for fellowships, and if so, which ones? What are the application requirements and deadlines?
- Who are key people, in addition to my PI, for helping me think through ideas?

Professionalism and Management and Leadership Skills
- Am I actively participating in departmental or program activities such as seminars, retreats, works-in-progress presentations, and journal clubs?
- When I attend seminars, do I formulate questions about the results that are presented?
- Have I formed appropriate support relationships with mentors, peers, and administrative staff?
- Am I managing my time effectively in the lab and spending enough time to prepare for qualifying exams?

Career Advancement
- Am I exploring career options to understand how to position myself for success?
- Am I reflecting on what motivates me professionally and personally?
- Have I begun to develop and practice my ‘elevator speech’ to describe my professional identity and goals?
- Have I established a contact database and begun to build my network of professional contacts? (LinkedIn and Microsoft Outlook have built-in tools for this.)

Graduate Training Year 3: **Trainee Expectations & Responsibilities**

The third year of graduate school is the first year entirely dedicated to research in the laboratory. This year, you will build multi-tasking skills, further your academic knowledge, expand your network through collaboration and technical interactions, and define and advance your research project. The third year is the pivotal point to grasp the entirety of what a good scientist must consider and do to be successful. Your sense of belonging to the scientific community should develop. Your longer term goals should emerge in order to make appropriate decisions with respect to scientific projects and your career. If you are on track to finish your PhD training within a year and you plan to do a postdoctoral fellowship, you should start contacting potential postdoctoral advisors.

General

- Have I defined my specific interests and objectives for my PhD studies?
- Have I evaluated my strengths and weaknesses and made adjustments to improve or accommodate them?
- Have I developed a focused set of goals that will lead to publication of a paper and development of my thesis within the next year?
- Have I discussed these goals with my mentor and dissertation committee members?

Scientific Knowledge, Research Skills, and Responsible Conduct of Research

- What reading must I be doing to become an expert in my field?
- What knowledge will broaden the scope of my work? How do I stay abreast of new discoveries?
- Am I attending enough, or too many, seminars? Am I critical enough of the literature or of what I hear in a seminar?
- What scientific conferences should I attend? Have I investigated sources of funding to attend conferences and present my research, such as travel awards from the Graduate School?
- How do I refine my research project and become more focused?
- Am I spending enough time and effort inside and outside the lab to accomplish my objectives?
- Am I thinking creatively, troubleshooting my own experiments, and developing my independence?
- How do I efficiently translate results into publication quality data?

Communication

- How good am I at presenting my research results?
- How can I improve my presentation skills? Whom should I get feedback from?
- Have I presented my work at and/or attended a scientific meeting? Have I written an abstract or paper? If not, how far am I from my first publication?
- How can I improve my writing?
- Can I effectively explain how my research advances my field and scientific understanding more generally?

Professionalism and Management and Leadership Skills

- Do I assume responsibility for understanding the expectations of my dissertation committee at the conclusion of a committee meeting?
- Do I understand the overall philosophy of research/the scientific method?
- How effectively do I negotiate differences of opinion with mentors, peers, and other scientists?
- How could I improve my multi-tasking skills?

Career Advancement

- Am I continuing to explore career options and build my professional network?
- Am I taking advantage of opportunities to network with seminar speakers and at professional conferences?
- Have I considered what careers may be a good match for my skills, interests, and values? (*ScienceCareers* MyIDP is an excellent tool for this.)
- Are there gaps in my knowledge or experience that I should aim to fill to prepare for my career? Have I set goals for filling these gaps? (See *ScienceCareers* MyIDP for a goal-setting tool.)

Graduate Training Year 4: **Trainee Expectations & Responsibilities**

As a fourth year graduate student you should be focused on your research, writing papers and communicating your findings. By now, you should have acquired considerable expertise in your chosen field and you should be exhibiting this expertise through more effective planning and implementation of experiments, through mentoring newer lab members and through discussions with others in your scientific community. By the end of the fourth year, your thesis project should be nearing completion, or at the very least, a detailed set of objectives for completion should have emerged. You should be able to read the literature critically, identify important new problems, develop hypotheses and design experiments to test them. These skills will be demonstrated by preparing and defending an original research proposal. Finally, you should begin planning for your postdoctoral fellowship or job search.

General

- Am I developing my original research project?
- Do I understand the expectations for successful completion of my thesis research?
- Do I have a clear plan for completing my PhD thesis research?
- Have I thought about my next career stage in light of my strengths, weaknesses, and passions?
- Have I discussed a timetable for completion and career plans with my mentor(s) and committee?

Scientific Knowledge, Research Skills, and Responsible Conduct of Research

- Am I establishing and demonstrating expertise in my chosen area of study?
- Am I staying up with the current literature in my field and becoming an expert in my area of research?
- Can I read the literature critically and identify assumptions, implications and/or alternate interpretations?
- Am I interpreting my own data, questioning my assumptions, and identifying implications of my findings?
- Am I asking important questions and independently designing experiments to generate answers?
- Am I developing good scientific judgment?
- Am I willing to learn new techniques and to take risks?
- Am I working with sufficient focus and intensity to drive discovery and complete my research objectives?

Communication

- Have I published a paper, or am I preparing manuscripts for publication?
- Can I write an original and competitive research proposal?
- What have I discovered? Why is it important? Can I articulate this? Can I deliver an effective seminar?
- Am I seeking out and taking advantage of opportunities to present my research?
- Am I at presenting my research results authoritatively?
- Am I attending local and national meetings and presenting my results?

Professionalism and Management and Leadership Skills

- Am I developing confidence as a member of the scientific community?
- Do I ask questions and enter into discussions in seminars, conferences and journal clubs?
- Am I managing my time for experiments, reading, and writing?
- Am I serving as a role model to junior students in the lab?

Career Advancement

- (*12 months in advance of thesis defense*) If I am planning to do a postdoctoral fellowship, have I started to identify and contact potential postdoctoral advisors? Have I explored postdoctoral fellowship funding options to determine if I need to apply for funding within the first year of my postdoctoral training?
- Have I started to narrow down my career interests and focus my networking efforts to build contacts and seek advice from professionals in specific career fields?
- Are there gaps in my knowledge or experience that I should aim to fill to prepare for my career?
- Is my CV or résumé up-to-date? Does it specifically highlight my skills and accomplishments that relate to my career area of interest?

Graduate Training Year 5+: **Trainee Expectations & Responsibilities**

In the fifth year you should be focused on completing your experimental work, writing research papers and your thesis, and making plans for a post-graduate postdoctoral fellowship or job. You should have an outline of your thesis approved by your faculty advisor. You are expected to be an expert in your specific field of research and have command of the literature, and you should be able to articulate how your research advances your field. By the end of the fifth year you should have defended your thesis or have a clear timeline for finishing. If you are planning a postdoctoral fellowship, you should have interviewed with potential postdoctoral advisors and investigated postdoctoral fellowship funding options.

General

- Have I set my thesis defense date?
- Have I made plans for the next stage in my career? If not, what must I do to complete these goals?

Scientific Knowledge, Research Skills, and Responsible Conduct of Research

- Can I demonstrate that I am an expert in my field?
- Can I present and defend my work in an authoritative manner?
- Can I articulate how my work contributes to the knowledge in my field?
- Can I demonstrate that I have a breadth of knowledge in areas related to my area of research expertise?
- Am I able to balance bench work with writing papers and finalizing my thesis?
- Have I reached a high level of proficiency in the laboratory?
- Do I have a clear path and timetable for completion and publication of my thesis research?
- Do I think creatively about the implications of my research to other work in the field?

Communication

- Have I presented my research in national or international meetings?
- Have I prepared and practiced my thesis defense?
- (*if applicable*) For postdoctoral interviews, have I prepared and practiced a research presentation that can be understood by a diverse scientific audience?
- Have I demonstrated writing skills through publication of my research or writing chapters of my thesis?

Professionalism and Management and Leadership Skills

- Can I confidently discuss the current literature in my area of expertise?
- Do I ask questions and enter into discussions in seminars, conferences and journal clubs?
- Have I maintained good communications with mentors, peers and administrative staff?
- Have I effectively communicated with my committee about finalizing and defending my thesis research?
- Am I a role model in the laboratory to junior students?

Career Advancement

- Can I clearly articulate my career goals?
- Is my CV or résumé up-to-date?
- Is my CV or résumé tailored to my career area of interest? Does my CV or résumé specifically highlight my skills and accomplishments that relate to that career path and omit irrelevant information?
- Have I reviewed and polished my online presence?
- Have I prepared for interviews?

Neuroscience Graduate Program 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). 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:_____ Date:_____

Neuroscience Graduate Program Laboratory Rotation Contract

Instructions: Complete all fields in this form at the beginning of your rotation and return the form with your signature (and the faculty member's signature) to Deanna Solórzano. Upon completion of the rotation, you will need to complete the rotation summary form to conclude participation in this lab, which will include the faculty members' comments and signature.

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:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Student's Summary of Research Project and Lab Experience:
(Attach additional pages if needed)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Student Signature:_____ Date:_____

Faculty Evaluation of Student's Rotation Performance:

Technical Competency:

_____

_____

Productivity:

_____

_____

Motivation to learn:

_____

_____

Faculty Name:_____

Faculty Signature:_____ Date:_____