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Please refer to the Mercer University Student Handbook and the Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) Student Handbook for the Honor Code, standards of conduct, institutional policies, and resources for students. Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences (MSPCS) students must acknowledge their understanding of the contents of these handbooks as well as the MSPCS Program Manual prior to beginning classes at Mercer. The electronic versions of the documents are available on the following webpages.

Mercer University Student Handbook and MUSM Student Handbook
https://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks/studenthandbook.cfm

MSPCS Program Manual
http://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/
MUSM ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

This is an abbreviated version of the directory found in the MUSM Student Handbook. All phone numbers are in the 478 area code.

Dean’s Office
Jean Sumner, M.D., Dean ................................................................. 301-4022
Laurie Jones, Administrative Assistant to the Dean ........................................ 301-4022

Academic Affairs
Susan Codone, Ph.D, Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.................... 301-4185
Bridget McDowell, Lead Academic Records Associate and Proctor .................. 301-4109
Yasmin Rivera, M.Ed., Academic Success Counselor ...................................... 301- 4108

Admissions
Richard McCann, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Admissions.................................. 301-4066
Ariel Morgan, Assistant Director of Admissions & Enrollment ......................... 301-5425
Jina Lane, Coordinator of Admissions .......................................................... 301-2524

Financial Planning
Susan Lumsden, Director of Financial Planning ............................................. 301-2539

Registrar
Cathy Groce, Registrar ............................................................................... 301-5137
Pricilla Hicks, Assistant Registrar ................................................................... 301-4053

Student Affairs
Candi James, M.D., Associate Dean of Student Affairs .................................... 301-2652
Helen Menchinger, Student Affairs Specialist ............................................... 301-2652

Mercer University Offices & Services
MUSM Library ....................................................................................... 301-4056
Bear Card Office ....................................................................................... 301-2929
Bookstore ................................................................................................... 301-2945
Counseling & Psychological Services ............................................................ 301-2862
Information Technology Help Desk ............................................................... 301-2922
Office of International Programs .................................................................... 301-2573
Student Health ............................................................................................ 301-2696

EMERGENCY NUMBERS
On-campus Emergency Number ..................................................................... 301-2911
Mercer Police (MERPO) ............................................................................. 301-2970
Community Crisis Line (24 hours) ................................................................ 745-9292
Macon Police ............................................................................................... 751-7500
Mercer Medicine (24 hours) ......................................................................... 301-4111
Navicent Health, Information ...................................................................... 633-1000

Mercer University Online Directory ........................................................... http://apps.mercer.edu/directory/
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM DIRECTORY

Department of Biomedical Sciences Administration
Robert Visalli, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor of Microbiology
Office: Savannah Campus
Phone: 912-721-8213
Email: visalli_rj@mercer.edu

Robert McKallip, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair and Professor of Immunology
Office: East 46
Phone: 478-301-2779
Email: mckallip_r@mercer.edu

Ernestine Waters
Administrative Assistant to the Vice-Chair
Office: East 49
Phone: 478-301-2764
Email: waters_e@mercer.edu

Master of Science Program Administration and Faculty
Susan D. Cline, Ph.D.
Director, Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences Program
Professor of Biochemistry
Course Director, BMS 623
Office: West 106
Phone: 478-301-2231
Email: cline_sd@mercer.edu

Christy Bridges, Ph.D.
Director, Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences Program
Professor of Histology
Office: East 53
Phone: 478-301-2086
Email: bridges_cc@mercer.edu

Pamela Noble
Administrative Coordinator – MS Programs
Office: West Hall (cubicle at the back of the hallway)
Phone: 478-301-4047
Email: noble_pg@mercer.edu

LaTishia Fountain
Administrative Assistant to the Directors
Office: East Hall (cubicle at the hallway entry)
Phone: 478-301-4046
Email: fountain_lw@mercer.edu
Jaehwa Choi, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Physiology
Course Director, BMS 620
Office: West 89
Phone: 478-301-2556
Email: choi_j@mercer.edu

Lee Anne Cope, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Anatomy
Course Director, BMS 621
Office: East 62
Phone: 478-301-4007
Email: cope_l@mercer.edu

James Drummond, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Microbiology
Course Director, BMS 611 & 622
Office: East 58
Phone: 478-301-4044
Email: drummond_j@mercer.edu

Jon D. Shuman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Biochemistry
Course Director, BMS 610 & 612
Office: West 99
Phone: 478-301-5315
Email: shuman_j@mercer.edu

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences (MSPCS) Program is a 32-week curriculum composed of 31 credit hours of biomedical sciences that are foundational to the practice of clinical medicine and the development of biomedical research. The MSPCS prepares its graduates for careers in science teaching, academic laboratory research, publishing or policy-making and for the pursuit of advanced research degrees in biomedical sciences or professional degrees in healthcare. The MSPCS competencies for its graduates are their ability to demonstrate an understanding of fundamental scientific knowledge that is the basis for medicine and research and to display critical thinking skills in the application of that knowledge. These outcomes will be achieved through studies in seven courses covering topics in anatomy, biochemistry, molecular and cellular biology, embryology, genetics, histology, immunology, microbiology, physiology, and virology. The Program culminates for each student with a ‘capstone’ experience that exercises the student’s critical thinking about and communication of biomedical sciences, which are skills necessary in advanced graduate-level studies and in scientific research, writing, or education careers.

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

The current admissions requirements and instructions are available at:
http://medicine.mercer.edu/admissions/preclinical/admissions
ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Registration

All students are required to register for courses by the deadline provided in the Graduate Program calendar or in official notices issued by the Office of the Registrar at the School of Medicine. Official Program enrollment, which includes the completion of a satisfactory arrangement for financial payments, is required for course registration and class attendance. Each enrolling student must complete course registration through his/her MyMercer account. The fall enrollment deposit will be applied to the student’s fall semester tuition. Registration financially commits a student to MSPCS Program courses and the corresponding Program fees. A registered student who is unable to attend classes must notify the Registrar of the School of Medicine in writing prior to the first day of class. If a student decides not to attend the Program, the deposit paid by the student to secure fall enrollment is forfeited. A student who registers after the official registration period is required to pay a $25.00 late fee.

Course Numbering System

The numbering system for graduate courses in the MSPCS Program is the prefix BMS followed by three digits at the 600 level. For example, ‘BMS 610’.

Enrollment

Full-time enrollment in the Program is fifteen (15) semester hours of BMS courses in the fall and sixteen (16) semester hours of BMS courses in the spring. No part-time enrollment will be considered. Matriculating students are expected to enroll for the full-time academic load. Full-time enrollment is required for Financial Aid (see Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid on pg. 13). The BMS courses listed below are available only to MS degree-seeking students matriculating in the MSPCS and MS in Biomedical Sciences Programs.

Mercer University Honor Code and Graduate Honor System

Students are to uphold the Mercer University Honor Code and will be held accountable for violations of the Honor Code in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Graduate Honor System. The Honor Code and Graduate Honor System can be found in the MUSM Student Handbook. Honor Code violations (as defined in the MUSM Student Handbook) may result in immediate dismissal from the MSPCS Program.

Curriculum

Total Semester Hours..................................................31 credit hours

Required Courses....................................................31 credit hours

Fall Semester (15 credit hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMS 610</td>
<td>Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS 612</td>
<td>Molecular Cell Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS 622</td>
<td>Microbial Pathogenesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spring Semester (16 credit hours)
BMS 611  Human Immunity
BMS 620  Human Physiology
BMS 621  Human Development

Required elective (select one of the following):
BMS 623  Preclinical Sciences Capstone
BMS 624  Biomedical Sciences in Rural Health Research

Course Descriptions

**BMS 610: Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics (5 credit hours)**
The goal for the instruction in biochemistry and molecular genetics is for students to understand the chemical and biomolecular composition of the human body, the importance of buffering and solute concentrations in physiological function, the metabolic processes that provide energy to sustain tissue viability, the structure and dynamics of genetic material, the regulation of gene expression, and the principles of genetic inheritance. This learning goal will be achieved by students through problem-solving in the classroom, discussion of medical case scenarios, and analysis of the biochemistry and genetics research literature.

**BMS 611: Human Immunity (5 credit hours)**
The goal for the instruction in the human immune system is for students to understand the development and organization of the human immune system, the genetic and molecular mechanisms of immunity, the role of inflammation in immunity, the initiation and detection of immune responses, and the use of vaccines to support human immunity. This learning goal will be achieved by students through problem-solving in the classroom, discussion of medical case scenarios, and analysis of the immunology research literature.

**BMS 612: Molecular Cell Biology (5 credit hours)**
The goal for the instruction in molecular cellular biology is for students to understand the fundamental structure of human cells, the function of intracellular organelles, the dynamics of organelles in different cell types, the cellular interactions within tissues to support tissue function, and the biomolecular interactions required for cellular function. This learning goal will be achieved by students through problem-solving in the classroom, discussion of medical case scenarios, and analysis of the molecular biology and cell biology research literature.

**BMS 620: Human Physiology (5 credit hours)**
The goal for the instruction in human physiology is for students to develop an understanding of the function of the human body, building upon their prior knowledge of human biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics. This course deals with body fluid compartments and body systems organization and function, including the nervous, muscular, cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary, digestive, and endocrine systems. Students will examine the concepts of homeostasis and regulatory mechanisms as they are applied in the various body functions. The learning goal will be achieved through a combination of interactive lectures, group discussions, problem-solving exercises, and medical case-based activities. (prerequisites – BMS 610 and 612)

**BMS 621: Human Development (5 credit hours)**
The goal for the instruction in human development is for students to understand the process of human development, the determinants of embryonic development, the differentiation and organization of cells into functional tissues and organs, the maternal contribution to embryonic
and fetal development, the environmental and physiological risks to human development, and the basic functional anatomy of the human body. This learning goal will be achieved by students through classroom discussion, interaction with animated programs depicting developmental processes, histological analysis of human tissues, and observation of human cadavers and plastinated models of human tissues. (prerequisites – BMS 610 and 612)

**BMS 622: Microbial Pathogenesis** (5 credit hours)
The goal for the instruction in microbial pathogenesis is for students to understand the structural and genetic differences between human cells, bacteria, fungi, parasites and viruses, the variations in structure among members of pathogenic species, the metabolic and genetic properties of microbes that facilitate their adaptation to different environments, the commensal relationship between humans and microbes, the mechanisms of microbial and viral pathogenesis, and the basic laboratory culture conditions and tests for human microbial pathogens. This learning goal will be achieved by students through problem-solving in the classroom and discussion of medical cases and research literature that illustrate clinical application of microbiology principles.

**BMS 623: Preclinical Sciences Capstone** (1 credit hour)
The goal for the course is for students to apply their scientific knowledge in critical thinking through composition and oral presentation. Students will select a topic in biotechnology or scientific research, review current literature, and author a dissertation that surveys the current knowledge of the topic and expounds on questions that could lead to scientific advancement and medical application of the research. The instructional time will provide students with information on how to format their composition, how to search the scientific literature and databases, how to analyze scientific papers, and how to properly cite resources in their compositions. Independent work is expected. Students in the course will be expected to prepare an oral presentation to be delivered during the latter half of the course. Oral presentations and compositions will be evaluated by a panel of faculty and peers who will utilize a rubric to determine student achievement of the course objective and the program competencies. (prerequisites – BMS 610, 612 and 622)

**BMS 624. Biomedical Sciences in Rural Health Research** (1 credit hour)
The goal of the course is for students to participate in community-based research in rural communities and apply biomedical sciences concepts toward understanding the cause of disease or the delivery of effective health care in rural areas. Students will learn methodology for collecting and analyzing research data on rural health conditions and will engage in data analysis. Independent work is expected. Students in the course will be expected to prepare a composition and an oral presentation to be delivered during the latter half of the course. Oral presentations and compositions will be evaluated by a panel of faculty and peers who will utilize a rubric to determine student achievement of the course objective and the program competencies. The instructional time will provide students with information on how to perform rural health research, search scientific literature and rural health databases, properly cite resources, and interpret epidemiological and statistical data. (Prerequisites – instructor permission for enrollment, BMS 610, 612 and 622)

*MSPCS PROGRAM STUDENTS CANNOT ATTEND COURSE MEETINGS OR ANY OTHER ACADEMIC SESSIONS CONDUCTED FOR M.D. PROGRAM STUDENTS. MSPCS STUDENTS CANNOT ENTER THE M.D. PROGRAM TUTORIAL ROOM HALLWAY EVEN IF THEY ARE INVITED BY A MEDICAL STUDENT.*
Course Requirements

Students must purchase access to a version (print or electronic) of the textbook for each course. Additionally, the examination process for all courses in the MSPCS Program requires that students have access to a laptop computer. Students are required to provide their own laptop computer as part of the materials required for each course in the Program. The computer must meet the specifications needed to run ExamSoft Examplify software. The latest minimum system requirements may be found through links available on the Mercer ExamSoft login page. Students should refer to these requirements when considering an operating system upgrade or the purchase of a new computer. Students are required to download and install Examplify and to install upgrades of the Examplify software, as they are released by ExamSoft, and to contact ExamSoft support for problems with installing or running the software on their computers. Instructions for Examplify download and installation will be provided through an email from ExamSoft when student Examplify accounts are created. Tablets and iPads cannot be used for examinations.


Class Attendance

Although it is recognized that absences will sometimes be necessary, students are expected to attend classes. Course Directors will state specific attendance requirements in the syllabi for their courses. It is the responsibility of students to be cognizant of their own record of absences and to consult the Course Directors and instructors regarding work missed. The decision to permit students to make up work rests with the Course Director. Absences will negatively impact grades based on participation during in-class activities, such as group work and laboratory exercises, since this work cannot be performed, as designed, outside of the context of the classroom. The Course Director has the right to assign a grade of ‘F’ for any attendance and participation portion of the course grade when a student habitually violates the attendance policy specified in the course syllabus.

Program Communication

Students will receive notifications, instructions, and assignments through their Mercer email accounts and the Canvas learning management system (LMS). Students are responsible for checking their Mercer email daily and immediately reporting problems with access to their Mercer account or to Canvas, unless Mercer Information Technology has previously notified all Mercer users of limited access to these systems. Students are expected to obtain information and to complete assignments posted on Canvas in a timely manner, as instructed by the Program faculty or staff. Problems with Canvas or email access should be reported by email to the Mercer IT Helpdesk at helpdesk@mercer.edu. Course directors and instructors will provide specific details regarding communication expectations for their courses in their course syllabi.

Program Course Examination Policies

The Program Director will communicate all policies regarding examination procedures during the fall program orientation and will notify students about changes in these policies through their Mercer email accounts. Students are expected to adhere to these policies for all examinations administered in the program. Course Directors may alter testing room protocol as needed.
Grading System

Grades within a course will be assigned on a 100-point scale and the final grade will be converted to a letter grade. The final course letter grades will then be converted to a 4-point scale for determining the overall GPA for the Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>100-point</th>
<th>4-point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 70</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree-seeking students enrolled in graduate courses will receive letter grades for all graduate work. The grading of “Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory” are not options for graduate students.

The following grading marks may be used when students do not complete courses within the curriculum, do not perform all required activities in courses, or elect to withdraw from courses. A grade of AU is not applicable for the MSPCS Program, because students cannot audit courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABX</td>
<td>Excused absence from exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>Audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>In Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Grade not reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A grade of IP is awarded only in a graduate practicum or in research project courses, which may extend beyond the end of a semester. A student is expected to finish "in progress" work based on the timetable established by the professor issuing the IP grade, and, at the latest, by the course withdrawal deadline of the semester after the IP was earned. If the student does not complete the required work within the time specified, the grade automatically converts to an F.

The grade of ABX denotes that a student was absent from an examination because of in illness or another valid and compelling reason deemed satisfactory by the professor. A makeup exam must be completed by the course withdrawal deadline of the semester after the ABX was earned. If the student does not complete the required work within the time specified, the grade automatically converts to an F.

The grade of IC Indicates that a relatively small part of the semester's course work remains incomplete because of a student's sickness or reasons satisfactory to the professor. The work must be completed by the course withdrawal deadline of the semester after the IC was earned. If the student does not complete the required work within the time specified, the grade automatically converts to an F.
The grade of W (withdrawal) indicates that a student officially withdrew from a course on or before the last day for course withdrawals as designated in the current. Withdrawals are not used when computing grade point averages.

Withdrawal Procedure

An official withdrawal occurs only if a student completes the withdrawal process on or before the withdrawal deadline date for the semester (see Academic Calendar on page 16). A student cannot be registered for a partial course load in the MSPCS Program and must withdraw from all semester courses. To complete official withdrawal, a student must meet with the MSPCS Program Director to discuss the withdrawal, then he/she must complete the Online Withdrawal Form through his/her MyMercer account. If the student elects to discontinue class attendance and does not complete the withdrawal process by the deadline, a grade of F will be recorded for each course and the student will be ineligible for re-enrollment in the MSPCS Program. A student cannot attend classes after his/her official withdrawal.

Program and Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback to the School of Medicine regarding their experience in MSPCS Program and its courses. In evaluating the Program, students will provide feedback on Program administration, organization, and goals. In evaluating courses, students will evaluate Course Directors and instructors, textbooks, and class assignments and activities. Anonymous feedback will be gathered from students in the form of surveys administered at the end of each semester. Students are expected to be professional and constructive when providing comments. Student responses to surveys are essential in improving and maintaining the quality of MSPCS education.

Letters of Recommendation

Students may seek 'verification of enrollment', 'Academic Progress Reports', and Letters of Recommendation to support their applications to professional schools and other graduate programs. Letters to verify MSPCS enrollment may be obtained from the MSPCS Program Director after the first day of classes for the fall semester. After the fall withdrawal deadline, the MSPCS Program Director may agree to provide an 'Academic Progress Report' to support students who have at least a 'B' average on course examinations at that time. These reports will be submitted through an 'individual letter' request from the professional program application submission system.

Letters of Recommendation are only written for students who have completed the coursework for MSPCS Program. Letters should be requested from individual faculty BEFORE the date of the graduation ceremony. Faculty may request meetings with students after graduation, but initial contact with faculty must occur before graduation. Students must provide the letter writer with the appropriate information for submitting the letters through letter collection services, such as Interfolio, or application systems, such as AMCAS, AACOMAS, CAS, and AADSAS. Letter updates for subsequent admissions cycles may be provided at the discretion of the letter writer. The MSPCS Program does not offer a Committee Letter.

The Program Director or faculty may be asked to serve as a reference for job applications or shadowing opportunities.
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ADVISING

The Program Director will assign a faculty member to serve as an academic advisor to each enrolled student. Each student must meet with his/her advisor by the end of the second week of the fall semester. The academic advisor will have access to the student’s academic records and will provide academic and career guidance to the student throughout the Program. The advisor may consult with course directors and the Program Director to discuss issues affecting a student’s academic performance and to offer recommendations to the student about study skills. The academic status of the student is based on the academic performance standards as outlined below. Academic advisors keep the academic information of the student and any personal information shared by the student in confidence. An academic advisor may recommend additional personal and academic support for students (refer to the Mercer University and MUSM Student Handbooks for support resources). If a student’s academic advisor feels that the student is under duress, the academic advisor will consult the Program Director, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and/or Mercer Counseling and Psychological Services for guidance in the best interest of the student. Any faculty member will directly contact the Mercer Campus Police, if a student appears to pose an immediate threat to himself/herself or the University community.

Academic Performance Standards

A student seeking the MS degree should complete all Program requirements within the two-semester academic calendar of the Program as a full-time student. The maximum amount of time between initial enrollment in the Program and completion of degree requirements is four consecutive fall and spring semesters. Students should meet with the Program Director and make timely decisions about enrollment if circumstances outside of the academic program are affecting their academic performance. Students who fail to meet the academic standards for the fall semester, for the MS degree, or for repeating courses (see below) will not be approved for additional time in the MSPCS Program.

The academic status of the student is determined by academic performance in terms of course grades and cumulative grade point average (GPA). A student is in good academic standing within a course as long as his or her examination scores remain at a letter grade of “C” or above. When a student receives an examination grade of below “C” in a course, he/she must meet with the course director to discuss his/her academic progress and a plan to improve his/her performance in the course. Course directors report all student exam scores to the Program Director. Notifications of changes in academic status will be issued to students by email from the Program Director. Final course grades below “C” do not count toward the Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences degree and will result in dismissal from the MSPCS Program.

In addition to the course grade requirement, a student must also achieve a fall semester GPA of 2.5 or above to remain enrolled in the MSPCS Program. A student failing to achieve a GPA of at least 2.5 for the fall semester will be dismissed and will not be eligible to take additional classes in the Program. A student who is dismissed from the Program for academic reasons will not be considered for re-admission to the Program as an applicant.

Academic Caution

A student will be notified by email that he/she has been placed on ‘academic caution’ following his/her first examination grade below “C” in a course. Within one week of the email notification, the student must schedule a meeting with the course director to discuss his/her performance in
the course. The student remains under ‘academic caution’ until he/she completes all semester courses with a final grade of “C” or above.

A student with a fall semester GPA of 2.81 – 3.0 is considered to be in jeopardy of not meeting the GPA requirement for the MS degree, because he/she must obtain a 3.0 - 3.19, accordingly, as a spring semester GPA. A student with a fall semester GPA of 2.81 – 3.0 will be notified that he/she has been placed under ‘academic caution’ and must meet with the Program Director during the first week of the spring semester. The student will remain under ‘academic caution’ until the completion of the Program unless subsequent poor academic performance results in ‘academic warning’.

**Academic Warning**

A student will be notified by email that he/she has been placed on ‘academic warning’ following his/her second examination grade of below “C” during a semester. The two deficient exam grades may be in the same course or in different courses. Within one week of the email notification, the student must schedule meetings with the course director and the Program Director. The student remains under ‘academic warning’ until he/she completes all semester courses with a final grade of “C” or above.

A student with a fall semester GPA of 2.50 – 2.8 is considered to be in jeopardy of not meeting the GPA requirement for the MS degree, because he/she must obtain a 3.2 - 3.5, accordingly, as a spring semester GPA. A student with a fall semester GPA of 2.50 – 2.8 will be notified that he/she has been placed under ‘academic warning’ and must meet with the Program Director during the first week of the spring semester. The student will remain under ‘academic warning’ until completion of the Program coursework. A student under ‘academic caution’ for a fall semester GPA of 2.81 – 3.0 will be placed on ‘academic warning’ following his/her first examination grade below “C” in a spring semester course.

**Academic Exclusion**

A student is under ‘academic exclusion’ when he or she fails to meet the minimum academic requirements for the degree. A student who receives a final course grade below “C” or a fall GPA below 2.5 becomes academically ineligible to achieve the Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences degree due to failure to meet the minimum academic requirements for the degree. The student will be notified by email that he/she has been placed on ‘academic exclusion’ and has been dismissed from the Program. **The student cannot re-enroll in the Program or continue to attend classes in the Program.**

A student who fails to achieve the final minimum GPA of 3.0 after the completion of all MSPCS courses is ineligible for the MS degree and cannot participate in commencement exercises.

**Policy for Repeating Courses**

Students who do not achieve a 3.0 final GPA but have a final cumulative GPA of 2.76 or above may file a request to repeat a maximum of two courses for the purpose of improving his/her cumulative GPA to 3.0 for degree eligibility (see the paragraph below for instructions). An MSPCS student is eligible to repeat courses only if he/she has a final cumulative GPA of 2.76 or above, has completed the two-semester program as a full-time student, AND has a GPA of 3.0 or above in one of the two semesters. The MS degree is conferred at the end of the semester in which a cumulative 3.0 GPA is achieved (either December or May). A graduate cannot enroll in additional MSPCS courses after receiving the MS degree. The grade achieved when a course is repeated will replace the previous grade in the cumulative GPA calculation, but both grades received for the course will appear on the student’s Mercer transcript.
Students who meet the criteria described above and wish to repeat courses must email his/her request to repeat courses to the MSPCS Program Director within 14 days after the May commencement date for the academic year of his/her enrollment. In the email, the student must specify which courses he/she wishes to repeat and must describe his/her plan for achieving improved grades in these courses. The Program Director may request a meeting with the student to discuss the plan before approving the request.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid**

Students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to receive financial aid. The [MUSM Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy](#) is available on the [Financial Aid website](#).

**Degree Application & Audit for May Graduation / Commencement**

In March of the spring semester, MSPCS students must submit an Application for Graduation to the MUSM Registrar for verification of academic standing and eligibility for participation in commencement. The degree auditing process is initiated from these applications and is a joint responsibility of the Office of the Registrar in the School of Medicine and the program administration to insure that students are on track for successful completion of the degree program.

**Final GPA Check & Recommendation for May Graduation**

The Office of the Registrar in the School of Medicine will check final grade point averages and spring semester final course grades to verify graduation eligibility for MSPCS students according to the degree requirements as defined below. Those meeting the degree requirements will be cleared for graduation. The Registrar's Office or the Program Director will notify students, who failed to meet the requirements, that they cannot participate in commencement.

**Degree Requirements**

The MS degree requirements are the completion of all required course work with a minimum, cumulative GPA of 3.0 and with all final course grades of “C” or above. Both academic performance requirements must be met for successful completion of the degree program and awarding of the MS degree.

Clearance for graduation must be granted by the Office of the Registrar.

**Participation in Commencement Ceremonies**

Only students who have completed all Program degree requirements in good academic standing by the end of spring semester will be eligible to participate in commencement.

**Diplomas**

Diplomas are not distributed during commencement. Diplomas are ordered by the Office of the Registrar in the School of Medicine after all MSPCS degree requirements are met. Diplomas are mailed to the address provided on the Application for Graduation. Graduates should contact the Office of the Registrar with questions about their diploma.
SPECIAL ACADEMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Student Appeals Process: Grievance Procedures

Students with appeals or grievances should follow the procedures for Academic or Nonacademic Grievances, as described in the respective sections of the MUSM Student Handbook. The Vice-Chair of the Department of Biomedical Sciences in Macon serves as ‘department chair’ for MSPCS Academic Grievance and Appeals proceedings.

Testing Accommodations Policy (ACCESS and Accommodations)

Testing accommodations (additional time for exams and/or isolated testing rooms) are available for students according to the ACCESS and Accommodations section of the MUSM Student Handbook. Students seeking testing accommodations may initiate the process by approaching the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The course instructors and Program Director will not grant testing accommodations for students outside of the procedure described in the MUSM Student Handbook.

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND STUDENT WELLNESS

MSPCS students will serve as representatives on the MUSM Student Council and the Wellness Program Committee. These two groups discuss issues within the MUSM learning environment and plan activities to promote student well-being and to bring together students from all of the degree programs. See the MUSM Student Handbook for more information.
Mercer University School of Medicine  
*Master of Science in Preclinical Sciences Program*

**Academic Calendar 2019 - 2020**

**Class of 2019**

**Fall Semester 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 16</td>
<td>Graduate Student Orientation &amp; Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 19</td>
<td>First day of the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Last day to drop/add/late registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23*</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw/resign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 28-29</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2-6</td>
<td>Finals week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>Last day of the semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spring Semester 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>First day of the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>Last day to drop/add/late registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11*</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw/resign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Good Friday (no classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20 - 24</td>
<td>Finals week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Last day of the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Medical School Commencement Ceremony (tentative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*After these dates, tuition is non-refundable. Prior to these dates, tuition is refunded on a prorated basis.*