

# Graduate School Resource Guide

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## Section 1. Introduction and Intent

This resource guide is intended to supplement the general Student Handbook and Graduate School Catalog by serving as a central repository of common information for students governed by the Graduate School at Vanderbilt University.<sup>1</sup> The [general Student Handbook](#) addresses standards and protocols for all students and the [Graduate School Catalog](#) focuses on academic and campus resources for graduate students. *The resource guide should not replace either resource or direct, open, and frequent communication between students and their respective advisors, Directors of Graduate Studies, and Department Chairs.*

We hope that you are reading the resource guide before you begin your program, but we realize many students may consult this document when addressing specific issues later in their career. The resource guide includes logistical information about traditional academic concerns, such as the structure of the Graduate School and general degree requirements across the school. But it also includes information about issues that affect the quality of life of graduate students, such as parking and transportation, health insurance, and resources for wellbeing and professional development (including teaching and other opportunities).

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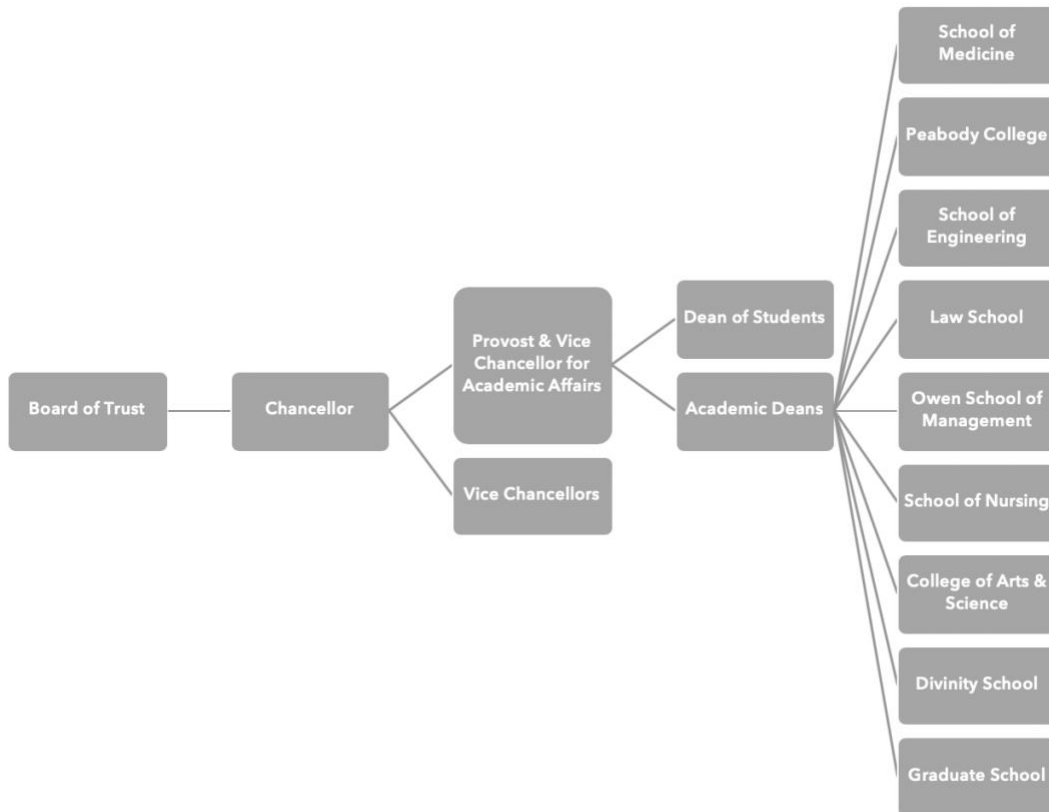
<sup>1</sup> If there is a conflict between the resource guide and the Student Handbook or Graduate School Catalog, the Student Handbook and Graduate School Catalog shall govern.

Note: each academic school or department within the Graduate School may have different practices, so please refer to the specific school to which you belong, as well. We encourage students to ask questions and seek clarification of information set forth in this guide or in any of the references cited herein.

The content of this resource guide was developed by the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Council (GSC). The information in this handbook will be reviewed annually by the GSC, and updates will be communicated by the Graduate School to the student body at-large.

## Section 2. University Organization

The university is governed by a Board of Trust which includes 24 Trustees, each of whom can serve up to two five-year terms. The Chancellor, who is chosen by the Board of Trust, is the Chief Executive Officer of the University. The Provost oversees multiple academic aspects of the administration, including admissions, commencement, research, centers and institutes, and colleges and schools. Deans of Colleges and Schools report directly to the Provost. More about the university structure can be found [here](#).



Graduate students are considered part of their academic school (e.g. College of Arts and Science or School of Engineering) as well as part of the Graduate School. The Graduate School is the pathway and official school of record for Graduate School student applications, admissions, registration and enrollment, monitoring and recording of academic progress and milestones (residency, qualifying

examinations, candidacy, defense of dissertation), and the awarding of degrees. The Graduate School enrolls about 2,200 students. About 52 percent are women, and 23 percent come from foreign countries. The Graduate School is located in Alumni Hall and the Graduate School staff and responsibilities can be found [here](#).

## Section 3. Complaint and Grievance Procedure

Vanderbilt University is committed to creating a campus culture based on mutual respect that embraces and welcomes [all](#).

In this section (3), we have listed direct quotes the Student Handbook followed by *comments and guidance* (in italics) to help students understand the processes and resources available to them.

### **Discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct**

The University generally prohibits discrimination or harassment (including sexual harassment) based on race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, military service, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. (For a full discussion of what constitutes unlawful or prohibited discrimination, see the Student Handbook section on “[Equal Opportunity](#)”).

In addition, the University does not retaliate against individuals for filing or encouraging another to file a complaint of unlawful or prohibited discrimination, participating in an investigation of unlawful or prohibited discrimination, or opposing unlawful or prohibited discrimination. “Retaliation” includes any adverse action or act of revenge against an individual for filing or encouraging another to file a complaint of unlawful or prohibited discrimination, participating in an investigation of unlawful or prohibited discrimination, or opposing unlawful or prohibited discrimination. If a student believes that he/she/they has been discriminated against, harassed, or retaliated against, the student should report the matter to the [Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disabilities Services Department](#) (EAD). The EAD will seek to assist the student with the resolution of the complaint as described below in the Complaint Procedure.

The [Equal Employment Opportunity](#) and [Title IX and Student Discrimination](#) Offices serve as resources in the following capacities:

- to assist in keeping the administration informed of the University’s obligations under state and federal equal opportunity laws;
- to coordinate and monitor the University’s Affirmative Action Program in compliance with equal opportunity laws;
- to serve as a source of information for faculty, staff, and students who may have questions or complaints pertaining to equal opportunity in employment practices, University-sponsored programs and activities, and educational opportunities;  
to provide training to the Vanderbilt community on issues of equal opportunity and affirmative action; and
- to provide reasonable accommodations for religious practices.

*Specific information about University policies and resources regarding sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence are outlined in [Chapter 7 of the Student Handbook](#) as well as in the [Sexual Misconduct Investigation Flow Chart](#). More general Human Resources policies and procedures for sexual misconduct are outlined in the [Campus SaVE Act Policy](#). Additional sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence resources specifically for students can be found [here](#) – this reference includes information on what resources are confidential and which are mandatory reporters. Please note that the Graduate Life Coach is also a mandatory reporter. Generally, with the exception of the confidential resources discussed [here](#), a University employee to whom a community member reports an incident of sexual misconduct is a mandatory reporter. This includes faculty members, teaching assistants, and most staff. Learn more about the roles of mandatory reporters under [Resources and Support](#) in Chapter 7 of the Student Handbook, and review the non-exhaustive list of mandatory reporters [here](#).*

### **Grades and student records**

Situations may arise in which a student believes that he/she/they has not received fair treatment by a representative of the University or has a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the staff or faculty, affecting the student. A student who wishes to have a complaint addressed by the University should first use the **Complaint Procedure**, below, and **then use the Grievance Procedure** if the Complaint Procedure proves unsatisfactory. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the office of the appropriate academic dean in cases involving classes, grades, or faculty members; the Office of the University Registrar in cases of unauthorized release of student educational records; and the Dean of Students office for release of accountability records or other matters; or, in regard to complaints of unlawful or prohibited discrimination, the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disabilities Services Department. Decisions of the Appellate Review Board, and decisions of appellate officers for cases of sexual misconduct, are not subject to the Complaint and Grievance Procedure.

*The Office of the University Registrar assists in the release of official University academic records and transcripts and addresses cases of the unauthorized release of student educational records. The Dean of Students office assists in the release of accountability records. Additionally, the Appellate Review Board reviews appeals from findings of administrative offices and bodies that have the authority to impose sanctions upon students in academic and co-curricular matters, such as the Graduate School Honor Council. The Appellate Review Board hears appeals from Honors Council decisions.*

### **Complaints and Grievances**

A complaint should be directed as soon as possible to the person or persons whose actions or inactions have given rise to the complaint, but not later than six months after the event. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem fairly and promptly (usually within thirty [30] days, at this level.

If the complaint involves allegations of sexual harassment, this step is not appropriate. (See [Chapter 7](#), “Sexual Misconduct and Intimate Partner Violence.”) In addition, in a complaint alleging prohibited discrimination, as noted above, the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disabilities Services Department (EAD) should be consulted as soon as possible. The EAD will conduct an investigation of the allegations (usually within ninety [90] business days), will issue a finding to the appropriate University official, and will seek to resolve the matter. If the EAD is unable to complete the investigation within this

time period, then the EAD will contact the complainant and provide an estimated time frame for completing the investigation.

If the student is not able to resolve the complaint satisfactorily at this level, the student may appeal the decision within thirty (30) days through the appropriate administrative channels of the academic or administrative unit, or through the Provost or appropriate vice chancellor. Students uncertain about the proper channels or process are encouraged to seek advice from the Dean of Students office. If the student is not satisfied with a resolution proposed by the EAD, then the student may pursue the Grievance Procedure, below.

*Ideally, any issues that a student has with a program would be first discussed with the advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or department chair. In situations where these communication pathways are infeasible (or found ineffective), the student may schedule a meeting with the [Graduate Life Coach](#), [Graduate School Associate Dean of Academic Affairs](#), or the [Dean of the Graduate School](#) to discuss further steps. Situations may arise in which students believe that they have not received fair treatment by a representative of the University, or they may have a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the staff or faculty that has affected them. Students who wish to have a complaint addressed by the University should first use the Complaint Procedure. If the Complaint Procedure proves unsatisfactory, then students may use the Grievance Procedure.*

### **Grievance Procedure**

A student who believes that he/she/they has not received fair treatment, or who has a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the faculty or staff, and believes that he/she/they has not received appropriate redress through the Complaint Procedure in the preceding section within a reasonable period of time, including for complaints of prohibited discrimination investigated by the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disabilities Services Department (EAD), may file a written grievance with the Office of the Chancellor within thirty (30) days. Upon ascertaining that the complaint procedure has been exhausted, the Chancellor's office shall refer the grievance to the Faculty Senate Committee on Student Affairs, usually within thirty (30) days during the academic year. For this purpose, the membership of the committee shall be augmented by three student members appointed by the Chancellor at the beginning of each academic year. The undergraduate Vanderbilt Student Government will nominate students for the one undergraduate position, and student governing bodies of the professional/graduate schools will nominate students for the other two student positions on a rotating basis.

Upon receiving the grievance referral from the Office of the Chancellor, the Student Affairs Committee shall inform, in writing, both parties to the grievance that a preliminary investigation will take place. The preliminary investigation will usually be completed within thirty (30) days. After the preliminary investigation, if the committee decides that the grievance is not frivolous, the committee shall follow procedures necessary to ensure a fair hearing of the matter, including the opportunity for the student to present relevant evidence, to challenge adverse evidence, and to have the complaint heard by an impartial committee. Committee members may recuse themselves if they believe their objectivity is subject to question, and the grievant may request any committee member recuse himself/herself/theirself if the grievant believes that a committee member will not view the grievance with sufficient objectivity. If

vacancies occur, the chair of the Faculty Senate shall appoint Senate members to fill faculty vacancies and the Chancellor shall appoint students to fill student vacancies.

The student filing the grievance may be assisted during the hearing by a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) not trained in the law, and is encouraged to seek such assistance. Although all parties to the grievance are free to consult with, and receive advice from, attorneys concerning the grievance, no party shall be represented by an attorney at the hearing. For hearings or complaints of prohibited discrimination, a representative from the EAD shall be present in an advisory capacity. The committee may call upon any individuals who it believes may be helpful in resolving the grievance.

The grievant and the person or persons against whom the grievance was filed shall be present during the hearing until such time as the committee is ready to begin deliberations. The student may withdraw the grievance, with the consent of the other party, at any time prior to the decision of the committee.

After each case the committee shall write its report. The report should be completed within three weeks and shall include a statement of the committee's findings, the basis for those findings, and, if necessary, recommendations for any corrective action that should be taken. If any disciplinary action is anticipated, the appropriate University disciplinary procedures shall be followed. The report, including the vote and any dissenting statements, shall be sent to the Chancellor within one week after completion. Except as disclosures are reasonably necessary in the investigation, hearing, and final disposition of a grievance, the grievant, members of the hearing bodies, and others having knowledge of a grievance are expected to preserve the confidentiality of the grievance.

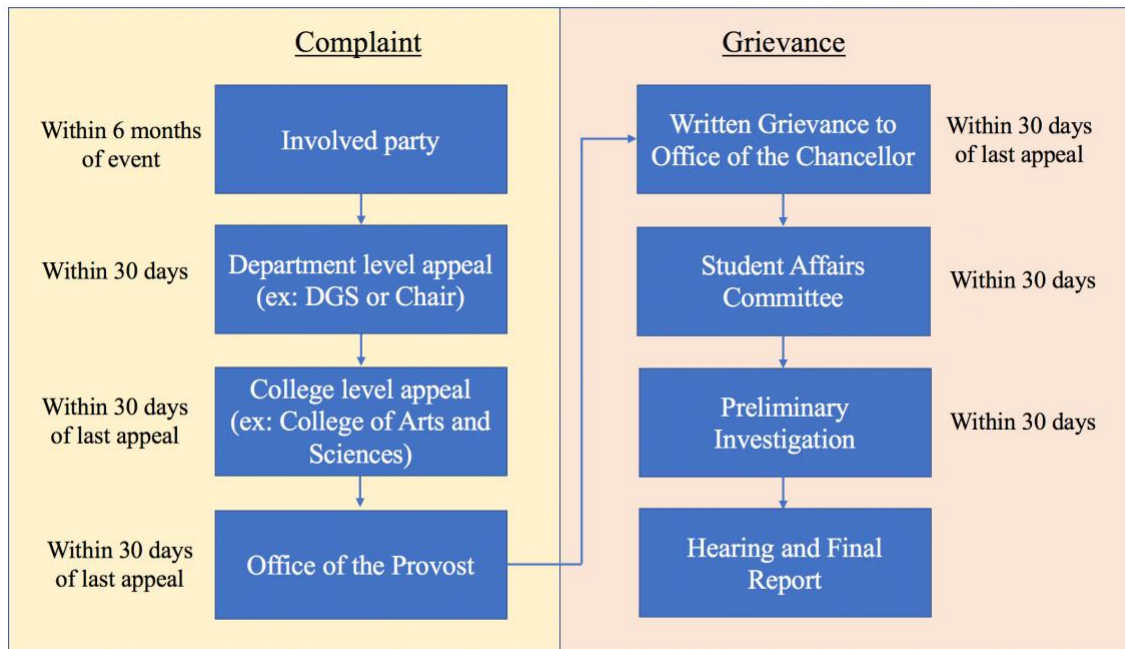
The Chancellor shall communicate his decision to the committee. In any case in which the Chancellor does not follow the decision or the recommendation of the committee, the Chancellor shall report to the committee his/her/their reasons for so doing. The Office of the Chancellor shall then notify the student and the other affected persons, in writing, of the final decision, usually within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Committee's report, during the academic year.

*Within the Grievance Procedure, following the Complaint Procedure, the student may file a written grievance with the Office of the Chancellor. The Chancellor's office will refer the grievance to the Faculty Senate Committee on Student Affairs, which shall write to inform both parties to the grievance that a preliminary investigation will take place. The preliminary investigation will usually be completed within thirty days, after which the committee can decide to follow procedures necessary to ensure a fair hearing of the matter. At the hearing the student has the opportunity to present relevant evidence, to challenge adverse evidence, and to have the complaint heard by an impartial committee. The student may be assisted during the hearing by a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) not trained in the law. For hearings or complaints of prohibited discrimination, a representative from the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services (EAD) shall be present in an advisory capacity. The grievant and the person or persons against whom the grievance was filed shall be present during the hearing. Complete details regarding the hearing are found [here](#).*

*The committee shall write a report within three weeks that includes a statement of the committee's findings, the basis for those findings, and, if necessary, recommendations for any corrective action that should be taken. The report, including the vote and any dissenting statements, shall be sent to the Chancellor. The Chancellor makes the final decision, which is then communicated to the committee, the student, and the other affected persons.*

If the Grievance is not resolved, the student has the right to call on the state of Tennessee and its appropriate agency to determine the course of action. Please see the Student Handbook for the appropriate agencies with which complaints may be filed.

**Diagram of Complaint/Grievance Procedure**



**Note:** Students should progress through the process above sequentially and advance if they believe that the previous level has not properly addressed the issue. It is recommended that students document the steps that they have taken as they go through the process.

**Graduate School assistance and advocacy**

The following resources are available to all graduate students for assistance during the complaint and grievance procedure:

- [Graduate School Life Coach](#)
- [Student Life Liaison of the Graduate Student Council](#)
- Graduate School Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
- Dean of the Graduate School
- [Student Care Network](#)



## Section 4. Stipends and Fees

Financial assistance, graduate fellowships and scholarships, and teaching and research assistantships are available across the graduate and academic schools. Types of awards and assistantships are described in the [Graduate School Catalog](#). Teaching Assistants receive a stipend ranging up to \$16,650 for nine months or \$30,000 for a calendar year, and they normally receive an additional service-free full-tuition scholarship. In some graduate programs, research assistantships are also available, ranging up to \$30,000 for twelve months, and full- or partial-tuition scholarships may accompany this stipend.

Other than university assistantships and fellowships, various types of financial assistance are available, including a number of private, business, and industrial firms fellowships. The U.S. Government provides training grants for Ph.D. programs through the U.S. Public Health Service, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies.

Students with questions or concerns about stipend or financial aid should consult their departmental handbooks and/or contact their respective advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and Department Chair. If this chain of communication is insufficient, students may schedule a meeting with the Associate Dean of Graduate Education or Associate Dean of Graduate Affairs.

### **Student Health Insurance**

Vanderbilt University requires all eligible students to be covered by a health insurance plan that is comparable to or exceeds the [Student Injury and Sickness Insurance Plan](#) (SHIP), provided by Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk (see [Section 9](#)). Health insurance premiums are billed twice a year on the Fall and Spring semester tuition bills, to be paid for by the student or funding source. TA-ships and RA-ships may include coverage of the insurance plan premium payments. Students may add coverage for spouses and dependents at an additional expense, but they are responsible for payment of the additional premium.

### **Recreation and Activity Fee**

All registered students are assessed mandatory activity and recreation fees, which are set by the Vanderbilt Board of Trust and billed through the Office of Student Accounts. Activity and Recreation fees appear as a combined charge on University statements as “Ac/Rec Fees” and are published annually in the [Student Handbook](#). The required student activities and recreation fees entitle degree-seeking students to use the facilities of Sarratt Student Center and the Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center. The fees also cover admission to certain social and cultural events and subscriptions to certain campus publications. The activities fee for graduate students also includes funding for activities sponsored by the Graduate Student Council as well as other student organizations across campus. By payment of an additional fee, students and their spouses may use their identification cards for admission to athletic events. The student activities fee and the student recreation fee will be waived automatically for the fall and spring semesters if the student is a part-time student registered for four or fewer semester hours and not registered in a thesis or dissertation research course. Full- or part-time students residing outside a circle of approximately sixty miles from the Vanderbilt campus may also be eligible for waivers.

## Section 5. Parking and Transportation

### **Parking on Vanderbilt campus**

Graduate students may purchase parking passes for one year, beginning at the start of the Fall Semester. Parking passes purchased mid-year are pro-rated. For information on pricing and zoning of parking passes, refer to the [Vanderbilt Parking](#) website. If you are interested in a month-to-month payment program for parking passes (rather than purchasing one in a single lump sum), contact Vanderbilt Parking.

### **Vandy vans**

The Vanderbilt University Department of Public Safety administers the [Vandy Vans shuttle bus service](#). The shuttles operate on designated routes during the academic year while students are present. The hours of operation are 6:00 p.m. to 3:30 a.m., seven days a week.

### **Public transportation to and from campus**

By swiping their student ID card upon boarding the bus, all Vanderbilt graduate students can ride to and from Vanderbilt on a Metro Transit Authority bus for free. The ID can be used only for rides to and from Vanderbilt. For more information on bus routes and schedules, visit the [Metro Transit Authority](#) website or download the Music City Transit Tracker app.

### **Vanpool/carpool**

All Vanderbilt students who have a Vanderbilt.edu email address may apply for the [VU Ride Matching Program](#). This program matches people from similar general locations who wish to share a ride to Vanderbilt.

### **Emergency Ride Home Program**

[The Emergency Ride Home](#) service is intended to provide free emergency rides home for registered commuters who travel in Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, or Wilson counties, who cannot ride home with their normal carpool, vanpool, train, or express bus. Commuters must be pre-registered in the program and will receive a voucher for a taxi or rental car for transportation home.

The Emergency Ride Home service is not available during periods of bad weather.

### **VUPD emergency ride**

Students who feel unsafe crossing campus, or who have experienced an unexpected loss of mobility (for example, a broken leg) may contact Vanderbilt Police at (615) 322-2745 (from a campus phone 2-2745) to be picked up and dropped off anywhere on Vanderbilt campus, 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

### **Zipcar**

All Vanderbilt students and alumni are eligible to apply for the [Zipcar program](#), for rental of cars by the hour or by the day. Reservations include gas, insurance, and 180 free miles.

### **Enterprise CarShare**

All Vanderbilt students and alumni are eligible to join [Enterprise CarShare](#), a membership-based car sharing program. “Wecars” may be rented by the hour or by the day. Reservations include gas, insurance, and 200 free miles.

### **Nashville B-cycle**

Nashville has rental bicycle stations dispersed throughout the city. There is a [B-Cycle](#) station near the Law School at the intersection of 21st and Broadway. Rates begin at \$5 for 24 hours.

### **Lime and Bird Scooters**

Motorized, dockless scooters are available to students on Vanderbilt’s campus. To unlock a scooter for use, download either the [Lime](#) or [Bird](#) app and follow directions. Rates are \$1 plus 15 cents per mile. Follow safety guidelines while riding scooters on campus and do not block sidewalks, accessibility ramps or doorways once finished.

## **Section 6. Parental, Vacation, and Leave Policies**

### **Parental leave**

All students enrolled full-time in the Graduate School receive six weeks of parental leave prior to and/or following childbirth or adoption of an infant. This policy applies to the primary caregiver, whether mother or father. During this period, the student’s current stipend and funding for health insurance and tuition will be continued without interruption. Please refer to the [Graduate School Catalog](#) for more information.

### **Vacation and sick leave**

The Graduate School has no guidelines for vacation or sick leave. To discuss vacation and sick leave policies and expectations, you are encouraged to check your departmental website as well as communicate with your faculty advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies in your department.

### **Leave of absence**

Students who want to interrupt their graduate study must petition the department, who on their behalf applies to the Graduate School for an authorized leave of absence. Leave of absence is granted for a maximum of one year. If the student wants to resume graduate study at Vanderbilt, the student must petition the department for reinstatement. So they may be well informed, students should discuss how any leave of absence affects their funding or visa related matters with the appropriate resources.

## **Section 7. Travel Policies**

Students are encouraged to present their research at major regional, national, and international conferences. Below are general guidelines to help you navigate the process of planning a trip and getting reimbursed for the expenses associated with the travel.

Please initiate the planning process as soon as you intend to travel. By following expectations and guidelines, your needs will be met in the most efficient manner.

Stages	Steps*
Planning	Ask advisor for approval to travel, and identify funds for traveling
	Check with Program Coordinator about any required paperwork
	Review <a href="#">VU travel policy</a>
	Proceed booking your registration, airfare, hotel, and any ground transportation necessary before your travel. Please note travelers are expected to utilize the Concur Travel online booking tool or the university's travel agency, World Travel, to make reservations
Traveling	Get itemized receipts for all expenses
Reporting	Submit expense reports as soon as you return
	Ask Program Coordinator to help with the appropriate center numbers for allocating expenses

\*Travel procedures may differ by program, so students should check with the departmental Program Coordinator before proceeding.

### Travel grants

The following resources are available to help you finance your travels:

- Graduate School**  
 After completing at least one academic year at Vanderbilt, students may apply for a travel grant from the Graduate School for up to \$500 per budget year (July 1-June 30) for domestic or international travel. Students are allowed a total of three travel grants during their entire tenure at Vanderbilt. Complete details can be found [here](#).
- Graduate Student Council**  
 The Graduate Student Council offers a [travel grant](#) up to \$500 given to five students each semester through monthly lottery drawings. The travel awards are intended to aid students in covering travel expenses related to attending academic conferences, symposia, workshops, etc. Funds are only available to students who will be presenting personal research. To qualify, students must be active members of GSC. All travel funds must be approved by the GSC travel award committee prior to the conference. Contact the [GSC VP of Academic Affairs](#) for more information.
- Programs & Departments**  
 Many programs and departments encourage their students to present their research and are interested in offering financial assistance for travel. Check with your Director of Graduate Studies or Program Coordinator to determine if there is funding available from your department.

### Reimbursement

The University uses [SkyVU for all finances](#). You must submit expense reimbursement in Oracle Expense system (review the [Student Travel Reimbursement Guide](#) on how to navigate the system). However,

travel bookings should still be made in Concur. Please contact your Program Coordinator for more information.

### Frequently asked questions

- **Where can I find detailed information on travel policies?**  
Please review the [Vanderbilt Travel and Expense Policy](#) document online, as well as the Finance department's [Travel website](#).
- **Where do I log into Concur?**  
Vanderbilt University users can access Concur via the link on the Vanderbilt University SkyVU [webpage](#). This brings VU users to the VU Single Sign On screen where you input your VUnet ID and Password for a secure log-in to the VU Concur site.
- **What are the policies related to alcoholic beverages included in a meal?**  
Alcoholic beverages are generally considered personal expenses and need to be identified and segregated during the reimbursement process. The [VU Travel Policy](#) will provide more detailed information on this subject matter.
- **Do I need to obtain original receipts for all expenses?**  
Original itemized receipts for all expenditures greater than or equal to \$75 are required. However, we encourage you to obtain an itemized receipt for all expenses. The [VU Travel Policy will](#) provide more detailed information on this subject matter.
- **Are there any procedures specific to international students traveling on VU business?**  
If you not a US Citizen or PR, you need to notify the International Tax Office of your travel dates and purpose of the trip via email ([ito@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ito@vanderbilt.edu)).

## Section 8. Program Requirements

The requirements that apply to all graduate students at Vanderbilt University are enumerated in the [Graduate School Catalog](#). Candidates for graduate degrees must have satisfactorily completed all residency, academic course, and thesis or dissertation requirements; have passed all prescribed examinations; and be free of indebtedness to the University at the time of graduation. Individual degree programs may have additional requirements. Students are advised to refer to the various program descriptions listed in this catalog and to consult their major advisers for requirements in the specialty of interest.

### Requirements for academic integrity

Vanderbilt's students are bound by the Honor System inaugurated in 1875. All work submitted as a part of course requirements is presumed to be the product of the student submitting it unless credit is given by the student in the manner prescribed by the course instructor. Cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise falsifying results of study are specifically prohibited under the Honor System. Students are expected to become familiar with the Rules Governing the Graduate Honor Council of Vanderbilt University, available in the [Graduate School Catalog](#) and the webpage of the [Graduate Honor Council](#).

### Responsible conduct in research

Vanderbilt University is commitment to model, teach, and actively promote the responsible conduct of research in scholarship and science. Students are expected to participate in online education and

discussion-based sessions to further explore the issues and challenges in conducting ethical research and scholarship. All new graduate students are required to take the CITI course for their discipline during their first semester of study. Some are also required to participate in additional discussion-based RCR education, prior to completing their degrees. To find out more about your department's requirements, please check with the department Director of Graduate Studies.

## Section 9. Health and Wellbeing

### **Student Health Center**

The [Zerfoss Student Health Center](#) (SHC) serves the primary care needs of the Vanderbilt student community. There are no office co-pays for routine visits, and all registered students are eligible for care, regardless of insurance coverage. The SHC operates primarily on an appointment system, so appointments are always recommended and encouraged. However, in order to assure that all urgent matters can be handled on a same-day basis, the SHC also offers an Acute Care Clinic. Similar to an Emergency Room, the waits tend to be longer, as patients are seen on a first come, first serve basis after being assessed by a nurse for seriousness of illness. Patients with serious illness or injuries will always be triaged to the front of the line.

### **Student health insurance**

Vanderbilt University requires all eligible students to be covered by a health insurance plan that is comparable to or exceeds the [Student Injury and Sickness Insurance Plan](#) (SHIP), provided by Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk. All graduate and professional students registered in degree programs of four or more credits, or who are actively enrolled in research courses that are designated by Vanderbilt University as full-time enrollment, are eligible for the student insurance. If you have other insurance and do not wish to participate in the SHIP Plan offered through the University, you must complete an [online waiver form](#) by the published deadline each year, indicating your other insurance information. Students who meet the eligibility requirements are automatically enrolled in and billed for the SHIP Plan. Insured students must actively attend classes for at least the first 31 days after the date for which coverage is purchased to remain enrolled.

The SHIP Plan has referral requirements for students enrolled on the plan. This means that care outside of the SHC requires an annual referral before the claim will be processed. Students can request the referral from their primary care provider at the SHC. Students who wish to maintain a relationship a primary care provider outside of the SHC are welcome to do that, but the insurance still does require an annual Student Health referral for those visits before the claims will be paid. In the following cases, referrals are not required:

- Care that occurs when the SHC is closed
- Medical Emergencies
- Medical care received when an Insured Student is more than 40 miles from the Vanderbilt University campus
- Medical care received when an Insured Student is no longer eligible to use the SHC due to a change in student status (for example, while a student is on medical leave of absence)
- Medical care for Insured Dependents
- Maternity, obstetrical and gynecological care

- Mental Illness Treatment and Substance Use Disorder Treatment.

Health insurance premiums are billed twice a year on the Fall and Spring semester tuition bills, to be paid for by the student or funding source. TA-ships and RA-ships include coverage of the insurance plan premium payments. Students may add coverage for spouses and dependents at an additional expense, but they are responsible for payment of the additional premium. For additional information or frequently asked questions visit the Graduate Student Council [website](#) on the SHIP.

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

The [Student Care Network](#) is a holistic network of services and resources pertaining to health and wellness available to all Vanderbilt University students. Primary offices include the [Office of Student Care Coordination](#), the [University Counseling Center](#), the [Student Health Center](#), and the [Center for Student Wellbeing](#). Students also have access to a wide range of additional on-campus and community resources through the Student Care Network.

The Office of Student Care Coordination at Vanderbilt is the central and first point of contact for any undergraduate, graduate, or professional student who may have an academic, personal, emotional, medical, and/or other concern. Student Care Coordinators individually assess each student's needs and explore resources within Vanderbilt's Student Care Network and/or the Nashville community to facilitate connections to the most appropriate supports. Because a successful plan may include multiple resources, Student Care Coordinators can provide continuity of care and accountability through supportive follow-up meetings with students to evaluate successes, barriers, and/or gaps in support.

It's important to note that care coordination is not counseling or therapy. Rather, Student Care Coordinators have the opportunity to develop close helping relationships with students while coaching them toward appropriate resources, self-care, and self-advocacy. If therapy is recommended, Student Care Coordinators can assist with scheduling an appointment at the University Counseling Center (UCC). Many students need or want ongoing mental health support that may be more specialized, personalized, or for longer duration than is available at the UCC. Student Care Coordinators are available to help you understand your health insurance benefits and connect you with a mental health provider off-campus.

The University Counseling Center is committed to supporting short-term and time-effective therapy focused on mental health and wellbeing. Specific and tailored treatment plans and referrals are developed for each client. For more information and a list of available UCC resources and services, please visit their [website](#).

To access the UCC resources, students will meet with a Student Care Coordinator. The following diagram highlights the process.

**If this is an emergency, please do not follow these steps. Go to your nearest Emergency Room, call VUPD at (615)-421-1911, or 911 off-campus.**

**If you have an urgent crisis, you can visit Crisis Care Counseling at the University Counseling Center during the hours of 12:00 p.m – 4:00 p.m. or call the UCC After-Hours line at (615) 322-2571.**

The [Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center](#) (VRWC) is a 289,000-square-foot facility that houses a 25-yard, 15-lane swimming pool; four courts for basketball, volleyball, and badminton; five racquetball and two squash courts; a four-lane bowling alley; five group fitness classrooms, more than 14,000 square feet of weight/fitness room space; rock climbing wall; mat room; seven multipurpose rooms; locker rooms; and a 120-yard turf field surrounded by a 300-meter track in the indoor field house. VRWC's exterior spaces include a sand volleyball court and more than seven acres of field space including three natural grass fields and one turf field. Most students pay a mandatory activity & recreation fee, which provides students access to the center. Students may add memberships for additional family members (spouse or children) at an additional cost per semester. The student activities fee and the student recreation fee will be waived automatically for the fall and spring semesters if the student is a part-time student registered for four or fewer semester hours and not registered in a thesis or dissertation research course. Part-time students wishing to use the VRWC will be required to pay the recreation center membership fee for access.

The [Center for Student Wellbeing](#) coordinates support efforts on campus to assist students facing challenges, stressors, and barriers that impede academic and personal success. Among the services currently offered at the Center are individual coaching appointments, an addiction recovery program, a peer-coaching program, and meditation, yoga, and wellbeing workshops.

The [Graduate Life Coach](#) assists Graduate School students and postdoctoral scholars in their academic and professional development during their time at Vanderbilt. This position was created to support students through individual coaching and group programming around effective time and stress management, resilience, conflict resolution, navigating academic relationships, and juggling work/life responsibilities. The Graduate Life Coach works collaboratively with the Student Care Network students who have questions about resources and processes available to them on campus to support their academic, physical and psychological well-being, in addition to serving as an advocate for graduate student needs within the university's organizational structures. The Graduate Life Coach works closely with the leadership of the Graduate Student Council (GSC), including the Student Life Liaison.

The [Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center \(BCC\)](#) is a home away from home. It offers cultural and educational programming, student support, and community outreach and service. The center promotes respect, understanding, and greater appreciation for cultural and racial diversity. The BCC offers a dedicated graduate student study area as well as providing space for the Organization of Black Graduate and Professional Students (OBGAPS) programming and meetings.

The [Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center](#) is an affirming space for women and for all members of the Vanderbilt community that actively resists sexism and all forms of oppression by providing resources and educational programming. The Women's Center offers programs aimed at undergraduates, graduate students, staff, and faculty members, as well as by-request peer education workshops. Of particular interest to Graduate Students, the Women's Center has hosted workshops and series related to salary



negotiation, work-life balance, and women in academia. They also provide access to breastfeeding support resources.

[University Chaplain and Religious Life](#) seeks to function in an educational capacity, not only for those students and groups who are traditionally religious, but by way of raising ethical questions and issues of value and character among the student body as a whole. Because we seek to educate the “whole person,” we view ethical and spiritual formation as integral to the University’s overall educational mission and religious life as an important dimension of the co-curriculum made possible by the Dean of Students office.

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, & Intersex \(LGBTQI\) Life](#) is a cultural center and a place of affirmation for individuals of all identities, and a resource for information and support about gender and sexuality. LGBTQI Life serves all members of the Vanderbilt community — students, faculty, staff, and alumni — by creating educational, cultural, and social opportunities. The office also supports and advises LGBTQI-related campus groups and activities. LGBTQI Life hold socials/mixers for graduate student community members.

## Section 10. Teaching and Research Assistantship Responsibilities

Teaching Assistantship duties are assigned by the program director and require up to twenty hours of work each week. Graduate teaching assistants are expected to pursue graduate study full time. All persons who have responsibility for instruction, including graduate teaching assistants, are subject to university policies as outlined in the Faculty Manual, and any additional school and departmental policies that govern instruction. Graduate teaching assistants with major instructional responsibilities must have a master’s degree or the equivalent. Please consult the [Graduate School Catalog](#) or respective departmental handbook for additional information.

Research Assistants are expected to assist an individual faculty member in research. Responsibilities for RAs are not outlined by the Graduate School, so please consult your department handbook, Director of Graduate Studies, or Department Chair for program specific responsibilities.

## Section 11. Opportunities and Resources

Below is a list of graduate student opportunities and resources.

### Teaching

- [Vanderbilt Center for Teaching](#)
  - Certificate in College Teaching (1 semester coursework, 1 semester practicum)
  - Certificate in Humanities Teaching and Learning
  - Course Design Institute
  - Graduate Teaching Fellows program
  - An Introduction to Evidence-Based Undergraduate STEM Teaching workshop
  - Learning Communities
  - Teaching statement revisions

- Become a staff member (several openings)
- [Vanderbilt Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning](#)
  - Teaching-as-Research Fellows program
  - An Introduction to Evidence-Based Undergraduate STEM Teaching workshop
  - Tiered Mentoring Program
  - Blended & Online Learning Design program
  - Future faculty Classroom Experience
- [Vanderbilt Program for Talented Youth](#)
  - Summer Academy at Vanderbilt for the Young (SAVY)
  - Weekend Academy at Vanderbilt University (WAVU)
  - Vanderbilt Summer Academy (VSA)
- [Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach](#)
  - Scientist in the Classroom program postdoc
  - Day of Discovery program lab visit
  - Young Scientist Journal editor

### Policy

- [Annual Vanderbilt STEM Policy trip to D.C](#)
- [Life Science Tennessee Mid-TN Academic Alliance](#)
- [Vanderbilt Science Policy Group](#)

### Writing

- Department newsletters (e.g., BioVU investigator, Results and Discussion, etc.)
- VUMC Reporter newspaper
- [Vanderbilt Editors Club \(currently on hiatus\)](#)
- [Vanderbilt Hustler](#)
- [Vanderbilt Writing Studio](#)
  - Walk in appointments
  - Dinner and a draft
  - Dissertation Writers Retreat
  - 3 Minute Thesis workshop
  - On Writing seminar series

### Communication

- [Vanderbilt Toastmasters](#)
- [3 Minute Thesis](#)
- [Nashville Science Club](#)
- BRET symposium/career connections moderator

### Outreach

- [Turner Family Center for Social Ventures](#)
  - Project Pyramid
  - Regular lunch and learns
  - TFC Summer Fellowships

- Advising hours with TFC director
- [Vanderbilt Student Volunteers for Science \(VSVS\)](#)
  - BrainBlast event (every Spring)
  - MegaMicrobe event (every Fall)
- [Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy](#)
  - Curb Scholars Program
  - Public Scholars Program
  - Racial Equity in Arts Leadership program

### **International**

- [International Student & Scholar Services \(ISSS\)](#)
  - iLEAD mentor
  - Spouse and Family Programs
- [English Language Center](#)
  - English for Academics and Professionals Program
  - 1-1 speaking consultations
  - 1-1 writing consultations
  - Effective Teaching Strategies for International Faculty
  - Dissertation workshops
  - Supportive resources for spouses/partners of students

### **Career Development Resources**

- [BRET Career Development](#)
- [Graduate School Career Development](#)

### **Entrepreneurship**

- [TechVenture Challenge](#)
- [Vanderbilt Innovation and Entrepreneurship Society](#)
- Life Science TN Academic Alliance Beer and Biotech events
- [Wond'ry](#)
  - [Entrepreneur Prelaunch](#)
  - [Entrepreneur Postlaunch](#)
  - [Innovation Garage](#)
  - [iCorps](#)

### **Certificate Programs**

- African American and Diaspora Studies
- American Studies
- Asian Studies
- Global Health
- Jewish Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Latino and Latina Studies
- Medicine, Health, and Society

- Women's and Gender Studies
- Mobile Cloud Computing
- Surgical and Interventional Engineering

## Section 12. Departmental Handbooks

The following links lead to departmental and program guidebooks. In cases where guidebooks do not exist, the links lead to curriculum requirements.

Note that program guidebooks and website links change often. For broken, missing, or incorrect links please notify Denise Malone ([denise.malone@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:denise.malone@vanderbilt.edu)).

Department/Program	Guidebook
Anthropology	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/anthropology/graduate/phd.php">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/anthropology/graduate/phd.php</a>
Astrophysics	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/physics/documents/AstroPhD_Chronology_2015.pdf">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/physics/documents/AstroPhD_Chronology_2015.pdf</a>
Biochemistry	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/public_files/PhDProgram/2016Requirements/Biochem_PhD_Prog_Descript_7_2016_fin_ver_.pdf">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/public_files/PhDProgram/2016Requirements/Biochem_PhD_Prog_Descript_7_2016_fin_ver_.pdf</a>
Biological Sciences	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/biosci/graduate/programrequirements.php">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/biosci/graduate/programrequirements.php</a>
Biomedical Engineering	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/bme/GraduateProgram/DegreeRequirements.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/bme/GraduateProgram/DegreeRequirements.php</a>
Biomedical Informatics	<a href="https://www.vumc.org/dbmi/curriculum">https://www.vumc.org/dbmi/curriculum</a>
Biostatistics	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/biostatistics-graduate/current-program/phd-program/1756-2/">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/biostatistics-graduate/current-program/phd-program/1756-2/</a>
Cancer Biology	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cancer-biology/graduate-program">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cancer-biology/graduate-program</a>
Cell and Developmental Biology	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cdb/guidelines-procedures">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cdb/guidelines-procedures</a>

Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/chbe/GraduateProgram/">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/chbe/GraduateProgram/</a>
Chemical & Physical Biology	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cpb/students/program-policies-for-students/">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cpb/students/program-policies-for-students/</a>
Chemistry	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/chemistry/graduate-coursework.php">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/chemistry/graduate-coursework.php</a>
Civil and Environmental Engineering	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/cee/graduate-student-handbook.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/cee/graduate-student-handbook.php</a>
Community Research and Action	<a href="https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/hod/graduate-programs/phd-in-community-research-and-action/community-research-and-action-student-handbook/index.php">https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/hod/graduate-programs/phd-in-community-research-and-action/community-research-and-action-student-handbook/index.php</a>
Computer Science	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/eecs/Graduate/Programs.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/eecs/Graduate/Programs.php</a>
Creative Writing	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/creativewriting/description-of-program/about-the-mfa-program/">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/creativewriting/description-of-program/about-the-mfa-program/</a>
Cyber Physical Systems	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/academics/meng/CPS/courses.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/academics/meng/CPS/courses.php</a>
Earth and Environmental Sciences	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/ees/uploadfiles/EES_Grad_Handbook.pdf">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/ees/uploadfiles/EES_Grad_Handbook.pdf</a>
Economic Development	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/gped/about/program-overview.php">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/gped/about/program-overview.php</a>
Economics	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/econ/documents/Ph.DRequirementsAPPROVEDAugust2014.pdf">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/econ/documents/Ph.DRequirementsAPPROVEDAugust2014.pdf</a>
Electrical Engineering	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/eecs/Graduate/Programs.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/eecs/Graduate/Programs.php</a> ; <a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/docs/eecs-files/EE_Ph_d_regulations_V13.pdf">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/docs/eecs-files/EE_Ph_d_regulations_V13.pdf</a>
English	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/english/graduate/program-guidelines.php">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/english/graduate/program-guidelines.php</a>

Epidemiology	<a href="https://www.vumc.org/epi-phd/epi-phd/Objectives">https://www.vumc.org/epi-phd/epi-phd/Objectives</a>
French & Italian	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/french-italian/phd-guidelines-6-14-16/">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/french-italian/phd-guidelines-6-14-16/</a>
Germanic, Russian & Eastern European Studies	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/grees/graduate/degree-requirements.php">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/grees/graduate/degree-requirements.php</a>
History of Art	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/historyart/graduate.php">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/historyart/graduate.php</a>
History	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/history/docs/HandbookGuidelines8.15.2018.pdf">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/history/docs/HandbookGuidelines8.15.2018.pdf</a>
Human Genetics	<a href="https://www.vumc.org/vgi/files/vgi/public_files/HGEN%20phd%20program%20%20guidelines%202016.pdf">https://www.vumc.org/vgi/files/vgi/public_files/HGEN%20phd%20program%20%20guidelines%202016.pdf</a>
Interdisciplinary Materials Science	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/materials-science/graduate-program/phd-program-study.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/materials-science/graduate-program/phd-program-study.php</a>
Jewish Studies	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/jewishstudies/graduate/degree-overview/">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/jewishstudies/graduate/degree-overview/</a>
Latin American Studies	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/clas/graduate-programs/ma-latin-american-studies/">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/clas/graduate-programs/ma-latin-american-studies/</a>
Law and Economics	<a href="https://law.vanderbilt.edu/phd/Law_and_Economics_Graduate_Student_Handbook_October_2015.pdf">https://law.vanderbilt.edu/phd/Law_and_Economics_Graduate_Student_Handbook_October_2015.pdf</a>
Leadership and Policy Studies	<a href="https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/lpo/graduate_and_professional_programs/phd/handbook-2017.pdf">https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/lpo/graduate_and_professional_programs/phd/handbook-2017.pdf</a>
Learning, Teaching and Diversity	<a href="https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/forms/PhD-Handbook-Fall2016.pdf">https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/forms/PhD-Handbook-Fall2016.pdf</a>
Liberal Arts and Science/Liberal Studies	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/mlas/academicpolicy/">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/mlas/academicpolicy/</a>
Mathematics	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/math/graduate/ph-d-regulations-for-students-admitted-in-2003-or-after/">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/math/graduate/ph-d-regulations-for-students-admitted-in-2003-or-after/</a>

Mechanical Engineering	<a href="https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/me/Prospectives/tudents/Graduates.php">https://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/me/Prospectives/tudents/Graduates.php</a>
Medicine, Health and Society	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/mhs/graduate/m-a-program/">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/mhs/graduate/m-a-program/</a>
Microbe-Host Interactions	<a href="https://www.vumc.org/pmi-education/files/pmi-education/public_files/MHI%20Student%20Handbook-2017.pdf">https://www.vumc.org/pmi-education/files/pmi-education/public_files/MHI%20Student%20Handbook-2017.pdf</a>
Molecular Pathology & Immunology	<a href="https://www.vumc.org/pmi-education/mpi">https://www.vumc.org/pmi-education/mpi</a> (Click on Molecular Pathology and Immunology Handbook to download)
Molecular Physiology & Biophysics	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/mpb/the-mpb-graduate-program/graduate-program-information-for-current-students/">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/mpb/the-mpb-graduate-program/graduate-program-information-for-current-students/</a>
Neuroscience	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/brain-institute/program-requirements">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/brain-institute/program-requirements</a>
Pharmacology	<a href="https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/pharmacology/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/public_files/Graduate%20Student%20Handbook%20%282017-2018%29.pdf">https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/pharmacology/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/public_files/Graduate%20Student%20Handbook%20%282017-2018%29.pdf</a>
Philosophy	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/philosophy/graduateprogram/PhilosophyDepartmentGraduateProgramGuidelines.pdf">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/philosophy/graduateprogram/PhilosophyDepartmentGraduateProgramGuidelines.pdf</a>
Physics & Astronomy	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/physics/documents/PhDchronologyDec2016.pdf">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/physics/documents/PhDchronologyDec2016.pdf</a>
Political Science	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/graduate/ps-graduate-program-requirements-2016.pdf">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/political-science/graduate/ps-graduate-program-requirements-2016.pdf</a>
Psychology (Arts & Science)	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/documents/Graduate-Handbook.pdf">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/psychological_sciences/documents/Graduate-Handbook.pdf</a>
Religion	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/gdr/degrees/phd.php">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/gdr/degrees/phd.php</a>
Religious Studies	<a href="https://www.vanderbilt.edu/gdr/degrees/program-guidelines.php">https://www.vanderbilt.edu/gdr/degrees/program-guidelines.php</a>

Sociology	<a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/vu-wp0/wp-content/uploads/sites/233/2017/09/21134621/GraduateProgramGuide2.pdf">https://s3.amazonaws.com/vu-wp0/wp-content/uploads/sites/233/2017/09/21134621/GraduateProgramGuide2.pdf</a>
Spanish & Portuguese	<a href="https://as.vanderbilt.edu/spanish-portuguese/graduate/GuidelinesforGraduateStudiesfinal6.13.17.pdf">https://as.vanderbilt.edu/spanish-portuguese/graduate/GuidelinesforGraduateStudiesfinal6.13.17.pdf</a>
Special Education	<a href="https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/sped/special_education_phd/index.php">https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/sped/special_education_phd/index.php</a>