

RISE Undergraduate Program Contract and Policies

I am entering the RISE program and recognize that there are expectations that align with the goals with the program AND with the funding agency. I recognize that I must do the following:

Commitments:

- I recognize that RISE is a year-long, or longer, commitment.
- I will complete my undergraduate education at UTSA and not transfer to another university.
- My goal is to pursue a PhD, not an MD or professional degree or combined medical/dental/PhD degree.
- I must hold no other employment or time-consuming commitments that interfere with research or activity attendance.

Standards:

- I will remain in academic good standing with the program (see below)
- My performance in the program will be reviewed several times per year by my research mentor. If my mentor or the program detects a pattern of behavior in the lab (and activities) that shows lack of engagement, I will be evaluated for termination.
- I will maintain high standards of academic and laboratory honesty
- I will attend all required program activities, described below.

Program Activity Requirements:

- I will participate in any other activities identified as required or mandatory
- I will complete online and in person Responsible Conduct in Research within my first semester of entry.
- I will rapidly complete online Laboratory Safety and/or animal training.
- I will complete UTSA compliance requirements (these will be emailed to me)
- I will not schedule vacations in the week prior to the semester starting so that I can take part in pre-semester meetings.
- I will take the Research Careers course within two semesters of entering the program.
- I will attend the RISE/MARC Meetings and Seminars and speaker lunches, generally held on Friday.
- I will attend, once, the annually offered repeated activities such as StrengthsQuest, Leadership Challenge, Professional Communication, Budgeting, etc.
- I will enroll in two semesters of Honors Research or Independent Study research.
- I will attend an extramural summer research program before I leave the program (more info below)
- I will complete a thesis prior to graduation. A thesis plan/proposal is due at the end of two semesters of training.
- I will complete COS, COE, or Departmental Honors
- I will take the GRE prior to graduation
- I will make a final oral presentation and submit the thesis before I graduate.

Field Requirements.

- RISE is funded by the NIH and, thus, my research at UTSA and in summer programs must have an obvious biomedical or behavioral application. I will resign from the program if I choose to pursue non-medical fields of research.
- I will not change my major from an approved RISE Major: Bio, Chem, Comp. Sci., BME, Physics, Psych, Math. Changing to an unapproved major will result in me having to resign. Not telling the program about such a change will result in your having to reimburse the program for all funds received since the change.

Time Commitment

- RISE pays for 15 hours per week in the laboratory performing research during the Fall and Spring semesters
- RISE pays for 40 hours per week in the laboratory, performing research, during the Summer
- Students are expected to consistently work this number of hours, although slight fluctuations due to midterms/finals are okay, with approval of your research mentor. Working consistently fewer hours indicates a lack of interest/engagement and will lead to termination.
- At times, depending on my project, I might have to spend more than the required number of hours to finish my project; HOWEVER, if my PI is demanding more hours regularly, I will contact a program director.

Graduate Program Requirements

- I will apply for a Ph.D. program in Biomedical, Behavioral or Biochemical Sciences. If I decide NOT to apply for a PhD, or enter a non-covered field, I must notify the program directors and withdraw from the program.
- Prior to graduation, I will apply to at least seven doctoral programs in the Nov-Feb for upcoming Fall's admissions. If I do not feel ready for doctoral training, I will apply to the same number of postbaccalaureate or Master's programs.
- I will not apply to Medical School or other Professional Degree programs.

Research Requirements: Local

- I will diligently seek out a research mentor and do several short rotations (if desired) to find a comfortable lab. A permanent lab should be chosen within a month.
- I will fully engage with the research and learn the foundations and purposes of my experiments and techniques.

- I will work diligently and responsibly in the lab to earn a strong letter of recommendation
- I am expected to eventually have an independent project and drive it forward to completion.
- I will NOT plan research experiments that will interfere with required Friday program activities.
- I will establish a semester schedule of when I will be in the laboratory and provide it to my PI
- I am expected to eventually take responsibility for my own project.
- I will notify my mentor or lab supervisor if I will be absent from the lab (even if I will be at a conference!)
- I will follow laboratory/mentor policies regarding holiday and between-semester leave

Conference Requirements:

- The program will fund me, and requires me to attend, once conference annually. The first year conference will be ABRCMS or SACNAS. After this, I may attend one in my professional field. All conferences attended have to be held in the US or Canada.
- If at all possible, I must share a room at a conference with another person who can pay for the other half of the room.
- I will arrange with my course instructors to miss my courses or take labs well before the conference; the program can provide a letter of excuse.
- I will not bring significant others/family/friends with me to program-funded conferences.

Research Requirements: Summer

- I will apply to at least 7 summer research programs.
- I must attend a summer program at an academic or government institution that allows me to publically present my work.
- Unless prior written agreements are made with a program director, if I am not accepted into a summer program by the summer of my final year of the program, I will be terminated from RISE as of June 1. Graduating seniors who enter RISE in June prior to graduation are exempt from this requirement.
- I am expected to engage with the summer program and receive a strong mentor evaluation from my summer experience. If the program receives a negative report from the host institution, my continuation in RISE will be reviewed and I may be terminated.

Academic Requirements

- If there are any alternative section or course requirements, I will not take a course during the 11 – 1 timeframe on Fridays.
- If I choose to take summer courses, I will choose low intensity courses, if possible in the evenings or on weekends. At the same time I will continue to put in a full time effort in the lab.
- I must maintain full time status throughout the Fall and Spring semesters (at least 12 hours)
- I will come in and see Dr. Taylor if I am in trouble academically and am considering dropping a course.
- I must earn at least a 3.0 GPA each semester and maintain (and improve) above a 3.2
- I will be on program probation for earning a C grade.
- If I earn a C, I will take the LASSI Inventory at the TRC, take part in academic coaching, and provide the program with a plan to improve my academics.
- If I continue to earn C's in the following semester, I will be terminated from the program.

Communication Requirements

- I will provide current contact information to program staff (phone, cell, functional email)
- I will notify the program if an emergency will make I to miss a required program event (including seminar)
- I will notify RISE program staff immediately if I need to take time off for extreme personal reasons, am considering leaving my laboratory of record, or if I wish to withdraw from the program.

Evaluation

- I will participate in and quickly and accurately complete all required evaluation activities
- I will cooperate with post-graduation evaluation and tracking activities

I recognize that my participation in RISE is a privilege, not a right, and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the program listed above. If for any reason, I begin to fall short in the program, I need to keep the program staff informed and seek their assistance. If I fail to do so, I recognize that my position in this training program may be forfeited and I will be terminated from the program.

Signed:

Name (Printed): _____ (sign): _____ Date: _____

10/10/14