

## 80.40.004 *STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM POLICY*

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### **Student Professionalism Policy**

#### **PURPOSE**

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences ("Graduate School") has developed guidelines designed to establish standards of professionalism and professional behavior for students at the Graduate School. The Graduate School expects students to conduct themselves in accordance with good professional and ethical standards at all times. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear understanding of expectations regarding professional conduct for students in all educational and non-educational settings.

#### **SCOPE**

This policy and its accompanying procedures apply to all students at the Graduate School. This policy applies to student conduct on the St. Jude campus and in activities representing the Graduate School off the St. Jude campus.

#### **STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY**

Stakeholders affected by this policy include any Graduate School stakeholder, including any individual, student, faculty member, administrator, staff member, group, or committee that participates in a Graduate School activity.

#### **POLICY**

##### 1.1 Statement of Academic Integrity

1.1.1 Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students shall act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed.

1.1.2 Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and fabricating or falsifying information or citations; facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others; having unauthorized possession of examinations; submitting work of another person as the student's own or work previously used without informing the instructor; and tampering with the academic work of other students.

1.1.3 The Graduate School uses educational technologies to monitor academic integrity. This includes the use of anti-plagiarism software to screen documents (including papers, theses, dissertations, etc.) for copied text to ensure originality and the proper use of citations. The Graduate School also uses proctoring software to monitor the examination process and ensure the integrity of online exams.

##### 1.2 Academic Freedom and Responsibility

1.2.1 Academic freedom is the unrestricted search for knowledge and truth and its free expression in the academic community. Academic freedom is vital to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of the faculty, educational officers, students, administrators, the institution, the academic community, and the public. All members of this community must be able to pursue knowledge and express and defend their viewpoints in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

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1.2.2 Persons engaged in research, dissemination of knowledge, and student advisement and advocacy are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results. Any academic related and creative activities are subject to the Graduate School policies. Students are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, maintaining awareness of the relevance of their contribution to the course or to the mission of the Graduate School. Quality education requires a climate of academic freedom and academic responsibility.

1.2.3 Professional responsibility is the logical correlative of academic freedom. As members of a profession possessing the right of self-government, the academic community has an obligation to define the rights and responsibilities necessary for research and teaching. All members of the academic community are responsible for conducting themselves in ways that will promote the achievement of the purposes for which academic freedom exists. All members of this community shall be free from institutional censorship and retributive measures in response to exercising academic freedom. Students shall attempt, at all times and in good faith, to be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and clarify that they are not speaking for the institution.

### 1.3 Professionalism Expectations

1.3.1 Professional and ethical behavior is essential to the Graduate School mission. We are only as strong as our reputations as individuals and as an institution, which includes a commitment to ensure a culture of excellence, innovation, mutual respect, inclusion, and creativity in research, scholarship, and everything we do. It also includes a commitment to respect ethnic, cultural, religious, and lifestyle differences of faculty, staff, colleagues, students, and supporters. Specifically, the Graduate School expects and seeks to foster:

- A drive and sense of urgency to succeed;
- Honesty, integrity, and accountability in actions and decisions;
- A culture of trust and teamwork;
- Respect for employees and other students and trainees;
- A commitment to the continuous development of our employees and students;
- A commitment to diversity and inclusion;
- A commitment to local, state, national, and global social responsibility and institutional citizenship.

1.3.2 Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and foster a safe and effective learning environment. Professional behavior includes acting with integrity and honesty and exhibiting care, compassion, and respect for others. Students are also expected to behave professionally when representing the Graduate School outside of the St. Jude Campus.

1.3.3 The Graduate School's expectations for student professionalism apply to both the in-person and online environments. The classroom and learning management system are academic environments and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as "netiquette."

1.3.3.1 When communicating in writing, whether online or otherwise, students are expected to:

- Treat instructors and classmates with respect in email or any other form of communication;
- Use the instructor's proper title (e.g., Dr. Smith or, if in doubt, Mr. or Ms. Smith);
- Use clear and concise language;

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- Remember that all graduate level communication should have correct spelling and grammar (this includes discussion boards);
- Avoid using slang terms and texting abbreviations;
- Use standard fonts and a font size of 12 point;
- Avoid using the caps lock feature;
- Limit or avoid altogether the use of emojis;
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is often misunderstood in an email or discussion post and your attempt at humor might be taken seriously or sound offensive;
- Do not send personal and/or confidential information – remember student privacy and confidentiality and HIPAA.

1.3.3.2 In addition to the above-mentioned guidelines, when sending an email to an instructor, teaching assistant, or classmate, students should:

- Use a descriptive subject line;
- Be brief;
- Avoid attachments unless it is certain the recipients can open them;
- Use plain text instead of HTML;
- Sign the message with their name and return email address;
- Think carefully before sending the email to more than one person;
- Be mindful about the use of “reply all”;
- Do not forward an email message from someone else without their consent.

1.3.3.3 When posting on the discussion board in an online class, students should:

- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material;
- Review and edit posts before sending them;
- Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment;
- Always give proper credit when either referencing or quoting another source;
- Be sure to read all discussion points in a thread before replying;
- Do not repeat someone else’s post without adding something of their own to it;
- Avoid short, generic replies such as, “I agree.” Students should include why they agree or add to the previous point;
- Always be respectful of others’ opinions even when they differ from their own;
- Express their differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way;
- Do not make either personal or insulting remarks;
- Be open-minded.

### 1.4 Breaches of Professionalism

1.4.1 The Graduate School will use reasonable methods to address breaches of professionalism. Retaliation against students, faculty, or staff for reporting breaches of professionalism in good faith will not be tolerated (see the Non-Retaliation Policy).

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1.4.2 Breaches of professionalism or violations of professionalism may trigger other Graduate School policies and result in disciplinary action.

1.4.3 Breaches of professionalism when conducting activities on behalf of the Graduate School or when representing the Graduate School outside of the St. Jude campus will be subject to this policy.

1.4.4 Examples of minor breaches of professional behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- Occasional tardiness
- Inappropriate use of mobile devices during class or within the lab
- Failure to dress appropriately in classroom and other Graduate School settings
- Failure to respond in a timely manner to multiple communications

1.4.5 Examples of moderate breaches of professional behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to submit assignments without a valid or approved excuse
- Excessive or habitual tardiness and absence from courses or research commitment
- Disrespectful behavior towards other students, faculty, or staff
- Habitual non-responsive communication to faculty and staff
- Failure to collaborate with peers or clarify responsibilities

1.4.6 Examples of serious breaches of professional behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- Having more than three moderate breaches of professionalism
- Committing forgery or altering or misusing Graduate School documents, records, instruments of identification, computer programs or accounts
- Expressing criticism or issues, in in-person and virtual academic settings, in a threatening, abusive, and/or negative manner. This does not include simple disagreements or differences of personal views, opinions, or beliefs).
- Committing a violent act
- Engaging in illegal activity, including but not limited to illegal activities related to alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, and gambling violations (see the St. Jude Drug Free Workplace Policy)
- Falsely accusing another student of violating this policy
- Retaliating against someone who has reported a violation of this policy or participated in the Graduate School's review of a suspected violation of this policy
- Engaging in academic misconduct, which includes but is not limited to the following actions:
  - Violating the statement of academic integrity (see section 1.1 above)
  - Submitting the same assignment for credit in more than one course without prior authorization
  - Using, providing, or receiving unauthorized assistance or materials for any assignment or examination (especially in the instance of online assessments)
  - Collaborating with others on independent assignments and activities
  - Sharing materials with individuals not enrolled in the Graduate School
  - Posting lectures or resource materials to external sites
  - Substituting for another student or having another student substitute for oneself to complete exams or assignments

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- Forging a signature or allowing forgery of any academic-related document
- Engaging in any activity that places another student at an unfair disadvantage, such as taking, altering, or withholding resource materials
- Failing to follow faculty instructions on exams or assignments that may compromise the integrity of the assignment
- Misrepresenting or falsifying academic status and records
- Unauthorized tampering with faculty, administrative, and staff office property
- Engaging in research misconduct (see the Research Misconduct Policy)
- Violating the alcohol use policy (see the Alcohol Use Policy)
- Being complicit in any serious breach of professionalism prohibited by this policy
- Engaging in disruptive conduct, which includes but is not limited to disrupting classes and academic activities and/or interfering with course instruction or exam administration to the detriment of other students
- Participating in endangering behavior, including but not limited to carrying or transporting a firearm (see the St. Jude Weapons Policy)
- Failing to comply with security directives
- Engaging in fire safety violations
- Furnishing false information to Graduate School officials
- Engaging in harassment, discrimination, or bullying. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Making derogatory remarks based on an individual's membership or perceived membership in a protected group
  - Making inappropriate jokes and comments
  - Communicating offensive imagery
  - Making unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive comments and gestures (see the Sexual Harassment Policy)
- Engaging in sexual misconduct or harassment (see the Sexual Harassment Policy)
- Committing an act considered invasion of privacy and unauthorized recording
- Engaging in misuse or unauthorized possession or use of campus property
- Entering facilities that one is not authorized to enter
- Committing an act considered public indecency
- Obstructing the Graduate School student complaint process or student professionalism process

### 1.5 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Anti-Hazing Policy

1.5.1 Tennessee state law requires all institutions of higher education to adopt a policy prohibiting hazing. Under Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-7-123, hazing is defined as "any intentional or reckless act in this state on or off the property of any higher education institution by one (1) student acting alone or with others that is directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student or that induces or coerces a student to endanger the student's mental or physical health or safety. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization."

### 1.5.2 Examples of act prohibited by the Graduate School's Anti-Hazing Policy:

- Violating federal, state, or local laws

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- Coercing individual(s) to consume food, liquid, alcohol liquid, drug, or other substances in any non-customary manner
- Coercing individual(s) to perform activities intended to produce, mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule
- Coercing individual(s) to perform activities that are humiliating, intimidating, or demeaning, or that endanger the health and safety of others
- Engaging in abuse, humiliation, or threats for non-cooperation

### **PROCEDURE**

#### 2.1 Reporting Professionalism Concerns

2.1.1 Any student, faculty, staff member, or individual associated with the Graduate School may report a student for lack of professional behavior. The individual who reports a professionalism concern is referred to as a "Reporter." The student who is alleged to have violated the professionalism policy is referred to as a "Respondent."

2.1.2 Breaches of professionalism should be reported through [EthicsPoint](#). Complaints can also be filed through EthicsPoint by calling 1-800-433-1847. EthicsPoint is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and individuals may submit a report confidentially and anonymously. All professionalism concerns that are reported through EthicsPoint will be categorized by the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs as minor, moderate, or serious breaches of professionalism.

#### 2.2 Addressing Professionalism Breaches of Minor or Moderate Concern

2.2.1 Breaches of professionalism deemed to be minor or moderate are remediated by an informal meeting with the course leader, the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs (or designee), and/or the Associate/Assistant Dean(s) of the relevant program to provide feedback and offer guidance about unprofessional behavior.

#### 2.3 Addressing Professionalism Breaches of Serious Concern

2.3.1 Alleged breaches of professionalism deemed to be serious are triaged to the Student Affairs Committee for review and adjudication. If the serious breach of professionalism is related to discriminatory harassment, Sexual Harassment, or Research Misconduct, the policy and procedures outlined in the Nondiscrimination Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and the Research Misconduct Policy, respectively, will be followed. The Student Affairs Committee is chaired by the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs and its membership is outlined in the Student Complaints Policy. A representative from the St. Jude Office of Legal Services shall act as legal support to the Student Affairs Committee. If one or more of the members of the Student Affairs Committee is temporarily unavailable to serve, the Dean may appoint designees for this purpose. If a conflict of interest exists, a member must recuse themselves. The committee is charged with determining, based on a preponderance of the evidence, whether a Respondent's actions constitute a serious breach of professionalism and, if so, determining appropriate sanction(s). The committee will review materials from the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs prior to the Student Affairs Committee hearing.

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2.3.2 The Student Affairs Committee may place a student on a temporary leave of absence while the professionalism process is pending in circumstances when the committee has received credible information that the student has (1) engaged in, or threatened to engage in, behavior that creates a direct threat to the safety or health of individuals, or (2) the student has engaged in, or threatened to engage in, behavior that significantly disrupts the programs, services, or activities of the Graduate School. The student shall be provided an opportunity to meet with the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, either in person or electronically, within two (2) business days from the effective date of the temporary leave. During this meeting, the student may present information relevant to the question of whether the student poses a threat to health or safety or significant disruption. After considering all the information presented, the Chair will determine whether to continue the temporary leave, and the student will be notified of the decision within two (2) business days. The outcome of the meeting shall not preclude, render irrelevant, or predetermine the outcome of any subsequent action taken.

2.3.3 Both Reporter and Respondent may be accompanied to any meeting or hearing held pursuant to this policy by an advisor (limited to Graduate School faculty). An advisor may not be an attorney or witness. During any such meeting or proceeding, an advisor may advise and provide support to the party but may not speak on the party's behalf or otherwise participate or address or question the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs/conduct administrator or Student Affairs Committee, or other parties or witnesses.

2.3.4 The hearing is a closed proceeding, meaning that no one other than the Respondent, Respondent's advisor, committee members, and necessary Graduate School personnel, may be present. The Reporter (if not anonymous), Reporter's advisor, and witnesses called to the hearing will be present in the hearing room only when making a statement or being questioned by the committee. In general, hearings will proceed as follows, although the committee has discretion to alter the order or way it hears or receives evidence, and to impose time limits on any stage of the process.

- Upon receiving the report, the Student Affairs Committee will typically meet within 30 [thirty] business days, but no more than 60 [sixty] business days to:
  - Meet to discuss the report;
  - Meet with the Reporter (if identified) to discuss the report;
  - Meet with the Respondent(s) to discuss the report;
  - Meet with any witnesses;
  - Determine if a serious breach of professionalism occurred;
  - Render a decision by majority vote and possible sanction and/or corrective actions;
  - If, under extraordinary circumstances, this deadline cannot be met, the chair of the Student Affairs Committee shall inform the Reporter and Respondent of the delay.

2.3.5 Once the decision has been made by the Student Affairs Committee, the following notifications will be sent:

- The Reporter and the Respondent(s) will be notified of the decision and any required follow up on actions in writing from the Student Affairs Committee.
- The Reporter and the Respondent(s) will be notified of the appeal process.

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2.3.6 If follow-up corrective actions or sanctions are required, the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs will ensure these requirements are met and documented. These records will be kept in the appropriate student file with the Registrar.

2.3.7 Possible sanctions as a result of the adjudication may include but are not limited to:

- **Formal Warning:** Respondent is notified that the Respondent's actions constituted a violation of the Professionalism Policy and that further violations will result in further disciplinary action.
- **Educational Activity:** Respondent is required to complete corrective measures designed to be educational, developmental, or restorative in nature that promote enhanced ethical decision-making.
- **Restitution:** Respondent is required to make restitution for misuse, damage or destruction of or to Graduate School, public or private property or services. Examples include without limitation costs of repair, replacement, recovery, cleaning, or otherwise restoring the property or services affected.
- **Denial of Privileges or Associations:** Respondent is notified that, for a specified period, certain privileges or associations within or related to the Graduate School are withdrawn. This sanction may include without limitation the termination of housing contracts and revocation of the privileges of using certain campus facilities.
- **Probation:** Respondent is notified that their status with the Graduate School for a specified period is such that further violations of any applicable Graduate School policies will result in them being considered for a "higher level" sanction, including deferred suspension, suspension, or dismissal from the Graduate School. If at the end of the specified period no further violations have occurred, the Respondent is removed from active probationary status.
- **Deferred Suspension:** In some cases, a sanction may be held in abeyance for a specified period. This means that if the Respondent is found responsible for any violation of Graduate School policy during that period, the Respondent will be subject to the deferred sanction without further review in addition to the disciplinary action appropriate to the new violation. For serious misconduct, the conferring of an academic degree will be deferred for the duration of the sanction.
- **Suspension:** Respondent is notified that they will be separated from the Graduate School for a specified period. The Respondent must leave campus and vacate student housing, if applicable, within the time prescribed and is prohibited from St. Jude and St. Jude Graduate School property and events. A suspension may be effective immediately or at a later date under the discretion of the Dean based on consideration of relevant factors, including without limitation the nature of the misconduct and the health and safety of the Respondent and others in the Graduate School community. Any requirements for re-enrollment at the conclusion of the suspension will be listed in the written notice to the Respondent. The Respondent's academic transcript will contain a notation of the suspension stating that the Respondent was suspended by Graduate School action. The conferring of an academic degree may be deferred for the duration of the suspension. The Respondent must receive written permission from the Graduate School Dean prior to re-enrollment.
- **Dismissal:** Dismissal means the permanent removal of the Respondent from the Graduate School, which includes a forfeiture of all rights and degrees not actually conferred at the time of the dismissal, notification of the dismissal to the Graduate School community (as necessary), permanent notation of the dismissal on the Respondent's Graduate School records, and withdrawal from all courses. Any Respondent dismissed from the Graduate School is prohibited from St. Jude and St. Jude Graduate School

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property and events and will not be readmitted to the Graduate School. **Note:** This definition refers to the *student*. In a separate context in this policy, 'dismissal' can also refer to a *complaint, case or appeal*.

2.4 The confidentiality of all students will be maintained during the professionalism process to the extent possible.

2.5 It is prohibited to interfere with or obstruct the professionalism process, by any means and through any medium, including but not limited to the following:

- Knowingly filing a false report that a violation was committed.
- Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information relevant to the process.
- Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of any meeting as outlined in this policy.
- Attempting to influence the impartiality of a Student Affairs Committee member prior to, or during, the professionalism process.
- Harassment or intimidation of a Student Affairs Committee member, and/or participant, prior to, during or after any meeting as outlined in this policy.
- Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an obstruction of the Graduate School professionalism process.
- Threatening or attempting to threaten a Student Affairs Committee member, a witness, or a participant.
- Retaliating or attempting to retaliate against a Student Affairs Committee member, witness, or participant.

### 2.6 Student Rights and Responsibilities

2.6.1 While the Graduate School encourages the parties to participate fully in the professionalism process, the Reporter and/or Respondent(s) may decline to participate. The Graduate School may, however, continue the process without the Reporter and/or Respondent's participation, including, without limitation, cases in which a party has withdrawn, transferred, or graduated from the Graduate School. A Respondent must comply with any disciplinary measures or sanctions/corrective actions issued pursuant to the professionalism process, even if the Respondent has declined to participate in the process.

2.6.2 Any student or student group/organization who participates in the professionalism process, whether as a Reporter, Respondent, witness or otherwise, has the following rights in the process, as may be applicable to the party:

- Treated with dignity and respect throughout the process.
- A prompt, fair, and impartial adjudication of the alleged misconduct.
- Allegations adjudicated by individuals who are appropriately trained and impartial.
- Confidential information protected as provided in Graduate School policies.
- Maintain privacy in the proceedings.
- Report any potential conflict of any Graduate School personnel or student participating in the professionalism process. The Student Affairs Committee will determine if a conflict exists.
- Accompanied by an advisor (other than an attorney or witness) to meetings and hearings, if any, in the process (see below).

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- No retaliation for participation in the process.
- Receive notice of the outcome of the process in writing.
- Advised of the appeals process.

### 2.6.3 Respondents in the process have the following additional rights:

- Notified by the Graduate School of the allegations at least five (5) business days prior to any proceeding;
- Opportunity to respond to information considered.

### 2.7 Appeal

2.7.1 A Reporter or Respondent may appeal the outcome of a hearing in writing to the Dean within five (5) business days of the date of the notice of outcome on the grounds of:

- A procedural error that could have affected the determination or sanction(s); and/or
- New information that was not available at the time of the investigation or hearing and that could reasonably have affected the determination or sanction(s); and/or
- Excessiveness or insufficiency of the sanction(s).

2.7.2 The appeal is not a re-hearing of the case, but an opportunity to provide a written statement specifically stating the grounds for the appeal and any supporting information. The burden is on the Reporter or the Respondent bringing the appeal to demonstrate why the finding or sanction should be altered. Appeal requests will be denied if there are insufficient grounds for the appeal.

2.7.3 The Dean or their designee (“appellate officer”) is responsible for deciding the appeal. The appellate officer may, in their discretion, request to meet with either party to discuss the appealing party’s basis for the appeal, review evidence and/or consult with other individuals as deemed appropriate. If the appellate officer meets with one party, the appellate officer will extend an invitation to meet separately with the other party. The appellate officer may also request that the non-appealing party submit a written response to the appeal. The appellate officer will then decide the appeal and notify both parties of the decision in writing. The appellate officer may decide to deny the appeal and uphold the initial decision and sanction; impose a greater or lesser sanction; or refer the matter back to the Senior Associate Dean of Student and Faculty Affairs or Student Affairs Committee for further consideration with instruction.

### DEFINITIONS

- **Reporter:** the individual who reports a professionalism concern
- **Respondent:** the student who is alleged to have violated the professionalism policy

### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Non-Retaliation Policy
- Research Misconduct Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Student Complaints Policy

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- Alcohol Use Policy
- St. Jude Drug Free Workplace Policy
- St. Jude Weapons Policy

**FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

N/A

**POLICY DETAILS**

Policy Type	Policy Revision
Policy Number	80.40.004
Policy Category	Student Policy
Policy Sponsor	Stacey Schultz-Cherry
Approval Authority	Dean of the Graduate School
Policy Effective Date:	July 1, 2023
Policy Owner (Contact Info)	Stacey Schultz-Cherry (stacey.schultz-cherry@stjude.org)
Policy Alternate	Stacey Schultz-Cherry
Last Review Date	May 30, 2025
Next Scheduled Review Date	By June 1, 2026

**REVISION HISTORY**

- V1.0 – May 23, 2023
- V2.0 – August 19, 2024
- V3.0 – February 13, 2025

**APPROVALS**

- Dean of the Graduate School – Approved on May 23, 2023
- Dean of the Graduate School – Approved on August 19, 2024
- Dean of the Graduate School – Approved on February 13, 2025