

## 80.20.015 *PHD ADVISOR RELOCATION POLICY*

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### **PhD Advisor Relocation Policy**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for PhD candidates whose advisor relocates to another institution.

#### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all PhD candidates enrolled in the St. Jude Graduate School.

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

Stakeholders affected by this policy include Graduate School PhD students and Graduate School faculty.

#### **POLICY**

##### 1.1 Graduate Student Discontinues Graduate Education

1.1.1 A student who does not wish to continue their PhD studies upon departure of their advisor can leave the Graduate School with a terminal MS degree;

1.1.2 The student must have completed all the requirements for the terminal MS degree as described in the Biomedical Sciences PhD program student handbook.

#### **PROCEDURE**

##### 2.1 Junior Graduate Student Moves with Advisor – Institution Provides PhD Training

2.1.1 Advisor can invite the student to relocate to the graduate school of that institution;

2.1.2 The Graduate School will provide transcripts and other requested information to the new institution, but it is the new institution's discretion to approve and accept credits;

2.1.3 The new institution may require the student to meet other mandatory needs of their curriculum; examples include repeating or taking additional coursework and retaking the qualifying examination according to the new institution's policies and standards;

2.1.4 The Graduate School provides no financial support or medical benefits for the student.

##### 2.2 Junior Graduate Student does not Move with Advisor

2.2.1 Students in their 2nd and 3rd years who wish to remain at the Graduate School and/or cannot relocate to a graduate school at the advisor's new institution may select another dissertation advisor from the Graduate Faculty;

2.2.2 The transition should occur quickly to avoid undue delay to the student's progress;

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2.2.3 A four-week rotation will be necessary if the student has not previously rotated in the new advisor's laboratory, and a second four-week rotation is allowed if the match proves to be unsuitable;

2.2.4 If the qualifying examination has been successfully completed, a retake is not necessary;

2.2.5 If the examination has not been completed, it must be based on the new project and a delay will be granted to allow sufficient time to acquire the necessary knowledge and research data;

2.2.6 The required NIH grant application will be delayed as necessary;

2.2.7 A new dissertation committee will be convened. Members of the original committee may remain on the new committee, but the departing advisor may not continue as a committee member.

### 2.3 Senior Graduate Student Moves but Remains Enrolled in the Graduate School

2.3.1 If close to completing their PhD, the student is encouraged to apply to relocate to the advisor's new institution to complete their dissertation research and obtain their PhD from the St. Jude Graduate School;

2.3.2 Permission must be obtained from the Dean;

2.3.3 The dissertation advisor is responsible for obtaining permission from the new institution and making the necessary arrangements. The student should verify any state regulations regarding distance education and reciprocity between states that could impact their decision;

2.3.4 The student will continue to receive a stipend and health care benefits from the St. Jude Graduate School, but support for supplies and travel will not be provided. The advisor will be billed at the new institution for these costs;

2.3.5 The student will keep the formed dissertation committees, return to the St. Jude Graduate School for scheduled committee meetings or hold virtual committee meetings and defend their dissertation at the St. Jude Graduate School;

2.3.6 The dissertation advisor must attend the PhD defense;

2.3.7 The dissertation advisor is responsible for dissertation-related travel expenses;

2.3.8 The dissertation advisor is responsible for required tuition fees at the new institution.

### 2.4 Senior Graduate Student Remains in the Graduate School

2.4.1 If the student is close to the completion of his or her PhD degree but cannot relocate with their advisor, they must identify a member of the Graduate Faculty who can facilitate the completion of the PhD in a timely manner.

2.4.2 The Department Chair and the departing advisor (if available) will play an important role in identifying the most appropriate Graduate Faculty member;

2.4.3 Ideally, the student's project can continue in the new laboratory and the departing advisor can remain on the dissertation committee and provide mentorship and guidance;

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2.4.4 If that is not feasible, the new project should be closely related to the original project, involving similar techniques, concepts and fundamental mechanisms. The dissertation committee membership can be modified if necessary;

2.4.5 If a new project is necessary, data, results and publications from the original project can be included in the dissertation document.

**DEFINITIONS**

N/A

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

N/A

**FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

N/A

**POLICY DETAILS**

Policy Type	Policy Revision
Policy Number	80.20.015
Policy Category	Academic Policy
Policy Sponsor	Steven Varga
Approval Authority	Curriculum Committee
Policy Effective Date	July 1, 2023
Policy Owner (Contact Info)	Steven Varga (steven.varga@stjude.org)
Policy Alternate	Stacey Schultz-Cherry
Last Review Date	December 11, 2025
Next Scheduled Review Date	By June 1, 2026

**REVISION HISTORY**

- V1.0 – May 23, 2023
- V2.0 – August 2, 2024
- V3.0 – December 11, 2025

**APPROVALS**

- Curriculum Committee – Approved on May 23, 2023
- Curriculum Committee – Approved on August 2, 2024
- Curriculum Committee – Approved on December 11, 2025