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Associate Dean, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

## Welcome to Brown University!!

Dear Entering PhD student,

You are one of a select group of students admitted to full time PhD study in a Graduate Program within the Division of Biology & Medicine.

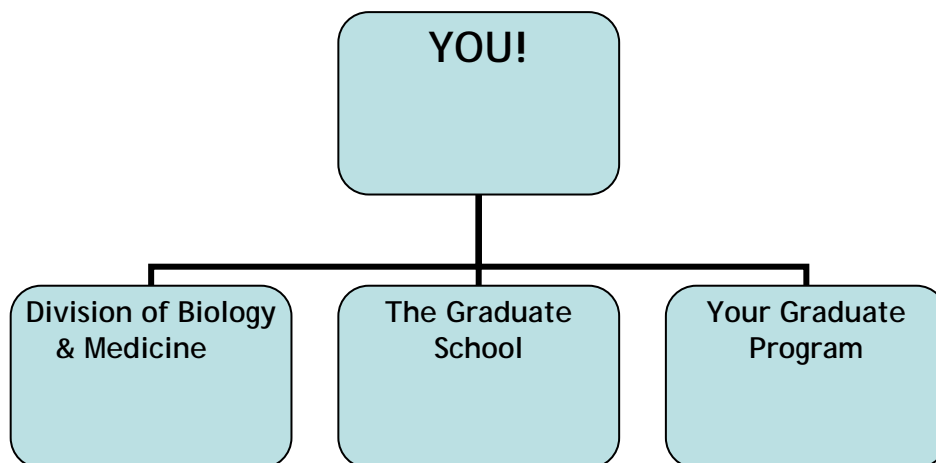
As the Associate Dean for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, my staff and I serve as liaisons between Graduate Programs and the Division, and the Graduate School. My office is a resource for you. We have information on career development, and external funding opportunities, we give advice on fellowship applications, academics, and career plans, and we can help you “trouble-shoot” a variety of problems that might arise during your time at Brown. We’re here to help.

Graduate training is challenging but rewarding. You will acquire new knowledge and skills and develop into an independent scientist. The enclosed introductory guide will help you begin this exciting journey!

Please feel free to contact my office with any questions or if you need additional information (extensive contact information is listed at the end of this guide). Your fellow students and faculty trainers are also excellent sources of information and will provide support during your time at Brown.

~Nancy

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**A**s a student in a Graduate Program in BioMed, you are a part of the Graduate School, The Division of Biology & Medicine and your own Graduate program. All three are committed to your success at Brown and will work with you to make your time here as successful as possible. They will be a source of information and support as you begin and as you continue in your studies. Students admitted to BIOMED PHD programs are admitted by THE GRADUATE SCHOOL and are students within the Graduate School. Students in BioMed are also part of the Division of Biology & Medicine. Valuable information is contained on each of the websites referenced below. Take time to browse these sites soon. Note that some policies related to PhD students differ between the Graduate School and BioMed. Please be aware of this distinction when you are reading through the web sites (for example, conference travel for PHD students in BioMed is handled by BioMed - there is no additional contribution from the Grad School).

We encourage you to check out these websites:

**The Graduate School:** <http://gradschool.brown.edu/>

Contains information about academic and personal development, rules and regulations, events of interest, resources available at Brown and many other areas.

**Division of Biology & Medicine - Office for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies:** <http://biomed.brown.edu/grad-postdoc/>

This is our site and it offers a lot of information for PHD Students in BioMed. It is the primary source of policies and information pertinent to you as a student. This is where you will find "Useful Links", "Funding Opportunities" and event announcements that will be of interest to you. These events include mentoring workshops, Graduate Student Research Seminars, specially invited guest speakers, and other informational sessions.



## Starting Out

**Y**ou will soon receive an invitation to attend the GRADUATE SCHOOL ORIENTATION scheduled for Friday, August 29, 2008. We strongly encourage you to attend. You will find a lot of information about how to navigate Brown, important administrative / technical concerns, and key resources available to you at Brown. There will be several sessions available during the day. This is a great opportunity to meet Deans, Professors as well as your new colleagues. You will receive important information about receiving your stipend, getting access to Brown resources, and obtaining your Brown ID.

Upon your arrival, you will need to complete paperwork in order to receive your stipends twice a month. ALL Students must complete an "I-9" form IN PERSON. The Graduate School will notify you about the appropriate place to complete this application. Here is a link to the I-9 form and the necessary documentation you will need to have with you. This link is provided for your reference only - you will need to fill this out in person and have your compliance documented.  
<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf>

**If you do not complete the I-9, you will not receive your paycheck.**

Students may choose and, indeed, are encouraged to select Direct Deposit for their payroll. Here is the link to the information and forms required:  
[http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Controllers\\_Office/forms/formhelp10.html](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Controllers_Office/forms/formhelp10.html)

The payroll office is in the Brown Office Building (on top of the Brown Bookstore) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

# Appointments & Support

## Your Appointment and Support information

As you know from your Admission Offer letter, full-time PhD students admitted in 2008-09 receive a stipend as well as full tuition, health fee and health insurance. Each Graduate Student receives an "Appointment" at Brown that stipulates the terms of your stipend and support. Graduate Students are paid twice a month - once on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and then on the last day of the month. There are four possible appointment types:

- FELLOW
- TEACHING ASSISTANT
- RESEARCH ASSISTANT
- TRAINEE

## Appointment Explanations

**FELLOW:** A student is appointed as a FELLOW when they are being supported by their own External Fellowship OR when they are being supported by the Division of Biology & Medicine prior to being assigned to a lab or research group. Typically, students are DIVISIONAL FELLOWS in their first year (although many 1<sup>st</sup> year students receive other types of appointments).

Students who are awarded their own Fellowships are also appointed as Fellows. Each granting agency has specific rules and our office will work with you, your program and Grants administration to be sure that your appointment reflects the terms of the grant. Even students who receive grants that pay them directly should receive an appointment at the Grad School. Typically, payroll taxes and income taxes are not withheld from students appointed as Fellows. If your fellowship award is less than the published Brown BioMed stipend, your award will be supplemented so that your stipend level is the same as other BioMed PhD students (as long as the terms of your award do not prohibit supplementation).

**TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA):** A student is appointed as a TA when they are assigned to be a Teaching Assistant. Most programs require at least one semester of teaching experience. Typically, students are appointed as a TA in their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Typically, payroll / income taxes WILL be withheld while a student is a TA.

**TRAINEE:** A student who is funded through a program's training grant will be appointed as a "TRAINEE". These are grants awarded to Brown and administered by a faculty member. The grant is devoted to the training of students. Each training grants is different and has different objectives - the terms of the grant will dictate the selection of students who are appointed. Typically, students who are appointed as TRAINEES will not have income or payroll taxes withheld.

**RESEARCH ASSISTANT (RA):** Students who are working in a lab and are being funded by their professor's grant or program are appointed as RA's. Most students in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year and above are appointed as RA's. Typically, income and payroll taxes are withheld from RA paychecks.

Appointment type is coupled to funding source. Be aware that the source of your funding can change from year to year and even from semester to semester. This affects your taxes and net pay.

➔ **Due to complex government regulations, your tax withholdings will vary and, thus, your Net pay will vary depending upon your appointment.** Unfortunately, neither you nor Brown has the ability to dictate these terms so you should be prepared for changes in your net pay as your appointments change. Advanced students in your graduate program can give you an idea of the variations you are likely to encounter. Additional information can be found below.

In consultation with your advisor, program director, and the Dean, your appointment will be decided prior to the start of each semester and you should expect a letter from the Graduate School that will notify you of each appointment. You may also contact your Program Director or this office if you have any questions about your appointment.



It is important to keep in mind that any money that you receive from Brown may be considered taxable income and it is your responsibility to file appropriate tax returns. ***The impact of the appointment types dictate only whether taxes will be withheld from your check - NOT whether you owe taxes.*** This can be a complicated process and you are encouraged to consult the IRS and/or a tax specialist for specific information. We bring this to your attention only to make you aware of the situation. Please review this site that is part of Brown's Medical School financial information -it has important information about TAXATION ISSUES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS as well as Medical Students: <http://med.brown.edu/financialaid/personal/planning.html>

***SUMMER STIPEND: Stipends that are paid in the Summer are subject to ADDITIONAL payroll taxes (FICA, etc), therefore, your NET pay in the Summer may be lower than the academic year.***

## Other Aspects of Your Student Support

- **TUITION:** For students entering PhD study with a Bachelor's degree, your support includes the remission of tuition. A minimum of 24 tuition units is required for Graduation. (Individual program academic requirements for graduation will vary) Students who are entering PhD programs with a related masters degree will also receive tuition remission but they may be able to transfer credits to Brown and thus reach the 24 units more quickly. In this case, support is typically guaranteed for four years. Duration of support is specified in your letter of admission and is contingent upon satisfactory progress as evaluated by your graduate program.
- **HEALTH INSURANCE** - Each new student receives insurance coverage through the Brown Student Insurance program. You will receive your insurance card via campus mail. Here are links to two sites that provide additional information:  
<http://gradschool.brown.edu/go/healthinsurance>  
[http://brown.edu/Administration/Office\\_of\\_Insurance\\_and\\_Risk/](http://brown.edu/Administration/Office_of_Insurance_and_Risk/)  
*Dental insurance and Health insurance Coverage for dependents are available at additional charge to the students. See the links above.*
- **HEALTH FEE:** All students in residence will have their health fee paid and thus, have access to the Brown University Health Services during the academic year. The Brown University Health Services Office provides on-campus medical care - here's a link to their site for comprehensive information about services, hours, etc: [http://www.brown.edu/Student\\_Services/Health\\_Services/About\\_HS.htm](http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/About_HS.htm).

Health Services is on a greatly reduced schedule in the Summer and your support does NOT cover their Summer fee. (Summer health care fee changes year to year so please consult their web site for more info. You should receive a memo from Health Services about the Summer fees during 2<sup>nd</sup> semester). Because your HEALTH INSURANCE coverage is year round (August to August), you are able to visit local clinics / doctors offices covered by your insurance plan during the Summer.

# IMPORTANT

## Information and Requirements for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students

- **REQUIRED FOR ALL 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR STUDENTS: "TRAINING IN THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT IN RESEARCH":**

The Division of Biology & Medicine requires that each 1<sup>st</sup> year student participate in the RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT IN RESEARCH class that is offered on Tuesday afternoons in September and October from 4pm - 6pm. *The first session in Fall 2008 is on September 9, 2008.* There are approximately 7 sessions that are 2 hours long. Exact schedule info will be e-mailed to you but it is important that you attend this required training. A final exam is given and successful completion of this material is a requirement for Graduation. It's important that you are aware of these issues before you start your research career. Here is the link to the statement about RCR Training at Brown.

<http://biomed.brown.edu/grad-postdoc/RCRTraining.pdf>

- **REGISTRATION FOR COURSES / BANNER:**



BANNER is the student system of record at Brown. It will be important for you to familiarize yourself with this on-line system. You will find the link at the Bottom of Brown's Home page, "BANNER WEB". You should receive information about BANNER at orientation - you may also want to check out this site for new students:

<http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/CIS/welcome/>

You will need to access BANNER to register for courses as well as to update your personal information, check your billing, etc. The Graduate School will offer BANNER information during Orientation - be sure to take the time to understand how to access all services and information available to you in BANNER. There are some on-line tutorials for BANNER at:

<http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/CIS/Training/onlinetraining/>

- **YOUR STUDENT BILL~~~~~ \$\$\$\$**

Pay attention to the charges on your bill! Most charges like tuition, health fee, and health insurance will be covered by the Division. Your first bill will probably show these charges as outstanding. By September, tuition, health fee and health insurance should be offset due to the support from the Division. *Students are responsible for the Activities fee.* You should keep track of the charges on your bill - IF THERE ARE PROBLEMS, contact your bursar representative (Bursar's office - [http://brown.edu/Administration/Financial\\_Services/Bursar/](http://brown.edu/Administration/Financial_Services/Bursar/)). Unpaid charges can add up. If not paid or otherwise removed, you will not be able to access services like registration. Ultimately, unpaid bills will mean that a student will not be allowed to graduate. Don't wait to address any problems that you see on your student bill.



## ■ Key Communication Info

- Please be aware that key communications will be sent to your Brown e-mail address and through Morning Mail (particularly information from the Graduate School). It's your responsibility to check your Brown email regularly and to review Brown's Morning Mail.
- Please update your BANNER profile with "*ICE*" (*in case of emergency*) and other important contact information. IF there is an emergency, this is the official source of information and we want to be able to contact the appropriate people on your behalf. Access to this information is very selective and will only be available to authorized Brown University officials when the situation is warranted.
- Dean Nancy Thompson doesn't have set office hours but is usually available to students within 24 hours to discuss any concerns. You are encouraged to call the office or send her an e-mail first so that an appointment can be scheduled.



There are many groups and services at Brown. You are encouraged to look into these groups and take advantage of the opportunities they present.

Some are student groups and some are offered by the University.

## *Resources at Brown*

- **GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SEMINARS - BIOMED:** A great way to learn about research AND meet your fellow students in other programs! There are several Graduate Student Research Seminars held throughout the year. These are inter-disciplinary student-run sessions and feature 2 Graduate Students who will showcase their research. Presentations usually last about 20 minutes followed by some Q&A. These sessions offer a chance to learn about research being done by your colleagues and to socialize with students throughout the Division. After the presentations, you're invited to enjoy some munchies and beverages (usually soft drinks, beer, wine).

- **Student Organizations / Networking:** There are many student organizations that you may want to look into. Some are focused on professional goals and some are focused on lifestyle issues. These can serve as excellent support for you. Some resources for you to consider:

### **Women in Science and Engineering**

Contact: [Barbara\\_Dancheck@brown.edu](mailto:Barbara_Dancheck@brown.edu) for more info.

### **Graduate Student Council (including wiki's, grad lists, etc):**

<http://www.brown.edu/Students/GSC/website/>

### **Diversity Programs & Services at Brown:**

[http://www.brown.edu/Administration/diversity/programs\\_struct.html](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/diversity/programs_struct.html)

### **Graduate Student - Student Life:**

<http://gradschool.brown.edu/go/studentlife>

### **Office of International Students and Scholar Services:**

<http://brown.edu/Administration/OISSS/>

- **TRAINING.BROWN.EDU** - Brown offers short training sessions and on-line tutorials on software applications as well as other types of training you might find helpful - they are open to you as Grad Students. There may also be on-line tutorials on environmental health and safety, protection of human research subjects, etc. Some of these courses having to do with lab training may be required so check with your program. Here's the link - classes are being offered all the time so you should check this site periodically: <http://training.brown.edu/>



## *Career Development*

Brown offers many resources for career and professional development. Among them are:

The Sheridan Center (for development of teaching skills):

[http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan\\_Center/](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/)

Many students take advantage of the Center's resources and teaching certificate programs.

Career Development Center: <http://careerdevelopment.brown.edu/index.php>

You should also plan on visiting the Career Development Center in person - they have a lot of valuable guides, insight and contacts for Brown Graduates.

Look for "MENTORING MONDAY" announcements from our office and on our website.

These events are generally held on Mondays from 4 - 6pm and offer practical advice for your career plans. Past featured events include, "TIME MANAGEMENT", "PI 101 -KEY ADVICE FOR NEW INVESTIGATORS", "WRITING TIPS FOR SCIENTIFIC PAPERS, PROPOSALS, GRANTS", "CAREERS OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA", etc.

# OTHER MISC ISSUES

## Parking / Transportation

Parking is definitely a problem - not only for students but also for faculty and staff! Parking permits can be obtained but there are few lots. You will be charged for parking. There is some street parking but, again, it's limited and subject to very aggressive ticketing practices!

- One possible alternative is the State's transportation system, RIPTA. Buses run fairly frequently and, with a BROWN ID, *it's free!* Here's the link to RIPTA: <http://www.ripta.com/>. Check to see if one of the schedules will work for you. If a bus goes to Kennedy Plaza in downtown Providence, there are several bus routes that will take you from Kennedy Plaza "up the hill" to "The Tunnel & Thayer" stop and others around campus.  
*Another way to check out the RIPTA system to see if it works for you is to go to [www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com). Type in the address you are starting from and the address you are going to, click on the Public Transit option. This gives you very clear directions on which buses to take to get between the two points, as well as the times for the next three buses.*
- Also, keep in mind that Brown runs a shuttle service that runs continuously throughout the day - check out this link to their site:
  - ◆ [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Finance\\_and\\_Admin/transportation/saferide/browndowncity.htm](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Finance_and_Admin/transportation/saferide/browndowncity.htm)
- You should also know that Brown operates "SafeRide" which is a transportation service available to the Brown community - please check this link for more information about Brown's Transportation office and its services:
  - ◆ [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Finance\\_and\\_Admin/transportation/resources/for\\_students.html](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Finance_and_Admin/transportation/resources/for_students.html)

## Problem with check??

If you don't receive your payroll check or there's a problem with your check, contact Tracey Cronin in the Office for Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies right away - 863-3281. Tracey will investigate the cause and work to make any corrections.

## Off-campus Labs

Brown University has trainers that work at the MBL (Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, MA) and at several RI Hospitals. You should contact your mentor's office directly for any information about ID's, security, etc that may be in place at these locations. Regardless of the site of your research, your appointment will still be through Brown and your payroll will be handled through Brown.



## *Welcome to Providence, Rhode Island!*

Here are some links to informational sites about Providence and Rhode Island. We hope these might be helpful but your best resource will probably be your fellow students -

*The City of Providence's Web site:* <http://www.providenceri.com/> Offers info about "things to do", events, transportation, etc

*Rhode Island visitors' site:* <http://www.visitrhodeisland.com/>

*Rhode Island - official State site:* offers info about auto registration, driver's licenses, voting, other official type of info: <http://www.ri.gov/>

*The Providence Phoenix:* This is a weekly newspaper that also offers good listings on art, music, theatre events: <http://thephoenix.com/PROVIDENCE/>

*The Providence Journal* - this is the largest newspaper serving the State -- <http://www.projo.com/>

*Indie Arts Rhode Island* - Hosts arts and culture events in Providence - <http://www.indieartsri.com>

*RentProv.Com* - A resource for apartment hunting in Providence and the surrounding areas! <http://www.rentprov.com>



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**Comments:**

- ❖ This publication was put together with the help and support of the BIOMED PHD GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE DEAN - I am extremely grateful for their input and suggestions.
- ❖ I am indebted to Tracey Cronin in my office for her work in developing this as well.