NEUROSCIENCE, PHD

The Department of Neuroscience offers an interdisciplinary program designed to train doctoral students for independent research and teaching in neuroscience. It is the goal of the program to ensure that candidates for the Ph.D. and M.D./Ph.D. degrees obtain a background covering molecular, cellular, systems, and cognitive approaches to neuroscience, as well as receive training that brings them to the forefront of research in their particular area of interest. A series of core courses in neuroscience, along with advanced electives, seminar series, laboratory rotations, and original independent dissertation research, form the Neuroscience Graduate Training Program.

Students enter the program from different backgrounds and the laboratories in which they elect to work cover different disciplines; therefore, the program is tailored to fit the needs of individual students. The academic year at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is divided into four quarters plus a summer semester. Courses are designed so that students have ample time to become involved in laboratory rotations. These laboratory rotations expose the student to a variety of current research techniques in neuroscience and provide an opportunity for the student to select a laboratory in which to conduct dissertation research. Scheduling of the three rotations is adjusted to make the most convenient schedule for each student. The rotations are usually completed by the end of the first full year in the program. Most students begin their thesis research at the beginning of their second year.

For more information, please visit The Solomon H. Snyder Department of Neuroscience webpage: http://neuroscience.jhu.edu. (http://neuroscience.jhu.edu)

Financial Aid

The program provides tuition remission plus a stipend at or above the National Institutes of Health Predoctoral level for all students. All entering and first-year students are encouraged to apply for individual fellowships such as those sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Admission Requirements

Applicants should have a B.S. or B.A. with a major in any of the biological or physical sciences. Recommended course requirements for entry into the program are mathematics through calculus, general physics, general biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry; laboratory research experience is desirable but not required. Students with deficiencies in one or more of these areas may be admitted, provided they remedy the deficiency within their first year of graduate training.

Applications for admission are available online at http://www.neuroscience.jhu.edu. Applicants are required to take the Graduate Record Examination or Medical College Admission Test, and are encouraged to take the examinations in November or earlier. Two letters of recommendation, transcripts of undergraduate grades, and a statement on interest are required. December 8 is the deadline for receipt of the application form and all application materials.

Program Requirements

Courses

A year-long core course provides an integrated overview of molecular and cellular neuroscience, neuroanatomy and systems, and cognitive neuroscience. This course is aimed at providing Neuroscience graduate students with a foundation for posing meaningful questions in their area of interest. In addition to the core course, each student selects advanced electives offered by members of the Neuroscience Training Program or other departments at the Medical School. A list of Neuroscience courses can be found in the department statement on page 219.

Seminar Program

The Neuroscience Training Program conducts several seminar series to ensure that students are exposed to recent work by researchers from across the country and the world as well as by Hopkins faculty and fellows. Graduate trainees participate actively in these series throughout their training, including inviting and hosting three speakers each year. A weekly lecture is given by an outstanding researcher in some field of neuroscience. Seminars are selected so that an overall balance of subject matter is covered yearly. Students are given an opportunity to meet with each speaker for questions and discussion. Weekly lunchtime talks are presented on current literature by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Since an ability to communicate scientific work clearly is essential, graduate students receive close guidance in preparing and evaluating their journal club presentations. Once a month, the faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students from one laboratory present and discuss the ongoing research in that laboratory. This provides an informal setting to discuss research being conducted in the laboratories of the Neuroscience Training Program and gives advanced graduate students and postdoctoral fellows a forum for presenting their work.

Requirements for the PhD Degree

A minimum residency of two academic years is required. During the course of graduate study, the student must successfully complete the required course requirements. An oral examination, conducted as prescribed by the Doctor of Philosophy Board, must be completed by the end of the second year. The student must then conduct original research and describe this research in a written thesis dissertation, which must be approved by the students Thesis Committee and the Doctor of Philosophy Board.

Training Facilities

The Training Program is centered in the Department of Neuroscience. The Training Program utilizes laboratory facilities located in the Department of Neuroscience plus several other basic and clinical departments closely associated with the Neuroscience Department. All of these laboratories are within a short distance of each other. Modern state of the art facilities for research in molecular biology, neurophysiology, pharmacology, biochemistry, cell biology, and morphology are available. The Mind/Brain Institute, located on the Homewood Campus of the University, is a group of laboratories devoted to the investigation of the neural mechanisms of higher mental function and particularly to the mechanisms of perception. All of the disciplines required to address these questions are represented in the Institute. These include neurophysiology, psychology, theoretical neurobiology, neuroanatomy, and cognitive science. All of the faculty in the Mind/Brain Institute are members of the Neuroscience Graduate Program.

Combined M.D./Ph.D. Program

About one quarter of the current predoctoral trainees in the Neuroscience Program are candidates for both Ph.D. and M.D. degrees. Applications for admission to the combined program are considered by the M.D./Ph.D. Committee of the School of Medicine. Application forms for the School of Medicine contain a section requesting information relevant to graduate study. Applicants interested in the combined M.D./Ph.D. program should complete this section also, and indicate specifically their interest in

the “Neuroscience Training Program”. If application to the combined M.D./Ph.D. program proves unsuccessful and the applicant wishes to be considered for graduate studies, they must notify the Admissions Office of the Neuroscience Training Program by separate letter.