BU BME Department

Graduate Handbook for Masters Students

Fall 2015
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Summary of Course Requirements for BME Graduate Students

Please note: The following courses, although offered by the College of Engineering, do not meet the requirement of a technical elective: ME 502, ME 583, ME 584, EK 731. Any other graduate-level ENG course may count. Students may also petition for a course offered outside of ENG to count as a technical elective. M.Eng students are permitted to substitute a maximum of one 400-level course for a graduate-level elective.

M.Eng Students:

Three BME graduate-level technical electives (BE 695 satisfies one)
Two ENG graduate-level technical electives (may include additional BE coursework)
Math Requirement selected from approved list (located in the handbook and online)
Two Technology Leadership Electives from the list below (BE 695 satisfies one):

- ENG ME 502 Intellectual Assets: Creation, Protection, and Commercialization
- ENG ME 517 Product Development
- ENG ME 525 Technology Ventures
- ENG ME 550 Product Supply Chain Design
- ENG ME 583 Product Management
- ENG ME 584 Manufacturing Strategy
- ENG ME 703 Managerial Cost Accounting
- ENG EC 518 Project Management for Software-Intensive
- ENG EK 731/GSM HM 801 Bench to Bedside – Translating Biomedical Innovation from the Lab to the Marketplace *
- GSM HM 703 Health Sector Issues and Opportunities *
- GSM SI 839 Managing and Leading Innovation*
- GSM SI 852 Starting New Ventures *
- GSM SI 855 Entrepreneurship *
- GSM PL 870 Government, Society and the New Entrepreneur *
- GSM SI 871 Strategies for Bringing Technology to Market *

* Requires GSM MG 800 A1 Variable credit if registering for 3 credit course

Students in the M.Eng degree program are required to complete a minimum of 32 credits of approved coursework. No master’s thesis is required. The practicum requirement is satisfied through BE 695. All students are required to submit a Program Planning Sheet for approval by the BME Graduate Committee at the end of their first semester, indicating the eight structured courses they intend to take to fulfill the curriculum requirements. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained. The department permits only four credit hours of C or C+ to be applied toward the degree. Grades of C- or lower are not acceptable. The structured courses must be at the graduate-level with the exception that (only) one course is permitted at the 400-level with advisor approval. Non-BME technical electives do not have to be from other Engineering departments; hard science courses from other colleges may be approved upon petition to the BME Graduate Committee. Technical Leadership electives outside of the provided list must be approved by Prof. Jonathan Rosen.

MS with Thesis Students:

Math Requirement selected from approved list (located in the handbook and online)
BE 605 Molecular Bioengineering or BE 606 Quantitative Physiology for Engineers
BE 790 Biomedical Engineering Seminar
Three BME graduate-level electives
Two graduate-level technical electives (may include additional BE coursework)
BE 900 Research (8 credits)

Students in the MS degree program are required to complete a minimum of 36 credits and successfully propose and defend an original MS thesis. MS students are required to hand in their final program planning sheets at the time of the MS thesis proposal to be approved by the BME Graduate Committee. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained. The department permits only four credit hours of C or C+ to be applied toward the degree. Grades of C- or lower are not acceptable. Non-BME technical electives do not have to be from other Engineering departments; hard science courses from other colleges may be approved upon petition to the BME Graduate Committee.

MS with Project Students:

Math Requirement selected from approved list (located in the handbook and online)
BE 605 Molecular Bioengineering or BE 606 Quantitative Physiology for Engineers
BE 790 Biomedical Engineering Seminar
Three BME graduate-level electives
Three graduate-level technical electives (may include additional BE coursework)
BE 955 Mentored Project (4 credits)

Students in the MS degree program are required to complete a minimum of 36 credits and complete the required 4 credit Project. A suitable project must be identified and approved by the BME Graduate Committee. The mentored project must be supervised by a primary BME faculty member or an approved outside advisor. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained. The department permits only four credit hours of C or C+ to be applied toward the degree. Grades of C- or lower are not acceptable. Non-BME technical electives do not have to be from other Engineering departments; hard science courses from other colleges may be approved upon petition to the BME Graduate Committee.

Credit for Courses Taken Elsewhere:

Students may “place out” of required courses, if they have taken equivalent courses elsewhere at the graduate level, as long as those courses were not used to meet the requirements of an undergraduate or previous degree. For example, students who have taken a grad-level physiology course may receive permission not to take BE 606. Students with extensive experience in quantitative molecular biology may receive permission not to take BE 605. This permission must be granted by submitting a petition to the BME Graduate Committee BEFORE the end of the Add/Drop period. Though students may place out of specific course requirements, this does not alter the total number of credits a student must earn at Boston University (36 for MS students) to meet the degree requirements, but it does enable the student to take other electives.

Courses that Fulfill the BME Math Requirement:

Students can choose to take one of the following courses and pass with a B+ or higher. It is highly recommended to take the math course in the first year.


CAS MA 565 Mathematical Models in the Life Sciences Pre-reqs: CAS MA 226 OR CAS MA 231. An introduction to mathematical modeling, using applications in the biological sciences. Mathematics includes linear difference and differential equations, and an introduction to nonlinear phenomena and qualitative methods. An elementary knowledge of differential equations and linear algebra is assumed.

CAS PY 501 Mathematical Physics Introduction to complex variables and residue calculus, asymptotic methods, and conformal mapping; integral transforms; ordinary and partial differential equations; non-linear equations; integral equations.

ENG ME 566 Advanced Engineering Mathematics Pre-reqs: CAS MA 225 OR CAS MA 226; senior standing, and consent of instructor. Introduces students of engineering to various mathematical techniques that are necessary in order to solve practical problems. Topics covered include a review of calculus methods, elements of probability and statistics, linear algebra, transform methods, difference and differential equations, numerical techniques, and mathematical techniques in optimization theory. Examples and case studies focus on applications to several engineering disciplines. The intended audience for this course is advanced seniors and entering MS engineering students who desire strengthening of their fundamental mathematical skills in preparation for advanced studies and research. (Formerly ENG MN 566)

GRS MA 681 Accelerated Introduction to Statistical Methods for Quantitative Research Pre-reqs: CAS MA 225 & CAS MA 242 or their equivalents. Introduction to statistical methods relevant to research in the computational sciences. Core topics include probability theory, estimation theory, hypothesis testing, linear models, GLMs, and experimental design. Emphasis on developing a firm conceptual understanding of the statistical paradigm through data analyses.

Students may petition for a different graduate-level course to count towards the Math Requirement, subject to approval by the BME Graduate Committee.

Finding a Research Home

Research Opportunities in the Department – Most students choose to do their research with a faculty member from the BME Department or affiliated research centers (Biomolecular Research Center, Center for Future Technologies in Cancer Care, Center for Memory and Brain, Center for Nanoscience and Nanobiotechnology, CompNet, Hearing Research Center and the Neuromuscular Research Center). To find out more about specific research programs, please visit the individual faculty member webpages via the BME website. Faculty, scientists or researchers (holding a PhD or MD) within or outside of Boston University can be approved by the BME Graduate Committee using the BME petition form (available online) to be a student’s principal research advisor if they have an active research collaboration with a primary BME faculty member.
who will agree to be the student’s research co-advisor.

**Research Project** – A major requirement for the MS with Thesis is a research-based thesis. Each student is responsible for finding a research project, conducting scientific studies under the guidance of an approved faculty member, presenting the proposal and results to the general scientific community in a public defense and finally turning in a thesis to be bound for the library and the BME Department.

**Academic vs. Research Advisors** – Each new student is assigned an academic advisor (Associate Chair of Graduate Programs) when entering the program. All M.Eng students will be counseled by Prof. Jonathan Rosen. Incoming MS students will be notified about their advisor prior to registration by Christen Bailey. The student’s academic advisor can provide general information about the University and help the student to complete his/her course registration for the first year.

If a student chooses the MS with Thesis option, his/her research advisor automatically becomes the student’s academic advisor as well. However, if the student’s principal research advisor is not a BME full-time primary or affiliated faculty member (but has an active research collaboration with a primary BME faculty member), then a BME co-advisor is required. A primary BME faculty member with an active research collaboration with the off-campus research advisor will become the student’s academic advisor and research co-advisor. This academic advisor is expected to be a member of the student’s committee.

**Who Can Be A Research Advisor** – Any full-time member of the BME faculty, or any affiliated or adjunct faculty member who has an appointment with the department, is eligible to serve as a research advisor. Other faculty, scientists or researchers (those holding a PhD or MD) within or outside of Boston University can be approved by the BME Graduate Committee to be a student’s principal research advisor if they have an active research collaboration with a primary BME faculty member who will agree to be the student’s research co-advisor. Students should submit a Supervisor Approval form (available online), to be approved by the BME Graduate Committee. This form should be submitted as soon as the potential advisor is selected.

After approval, and as the thesis project progresses, MS with Thesis students must identify one additional primary faculty member within the BME Department to serve as another member of the MS Thesis Committee.

**Finding a Research Advisor and Project** – Occasionally students enter the program with a specific research advisor in mind and may even plan to work on a specific project. The majority of students, however, will utilize the first two semesters to determine what their specific interests are in the field of biomedical engineering and identify the opportunities for funding in a professor’s lab.

Another valuable way of learning more about specific research opportunities is to speak with other graduate students who are currently working in the BME Department’s various labs. The best measure for learning about working in a specific lab is to make an appointment to speak with the faculty member in charge of a lab you are interested in. Once a student finds a research opportunity and has the consent of a faculty member to be his/her advisor, the process of developing a research thesis begins.

**Off-Campus Thesis** – Thesis research is usually carried out in laboratories and centers of BME faculty located on campus. In cases of non-BU advisors (see discussion above regarding required approval) the research is often performed off-campus, in the lab of the principal research advisor. There may be special problems that arise due to intellectual property and other conflicts of interest, which must be addressed prior to starting the work. Also, in the case of a non-BU advisor, typically, the funding for the Research Assistantship to pay the student’s stipend is transferred to BU through the mechanism of a sub-contract from the advisor’s institution to BU. Contact Matt Barber (meb@bu.edu) to initiate arrangement of the sub-contract.
Invention and Copyright Agreements – Students who receive support from sponsored research programs or who make significant use of BU funds and facilities are required to sign the BU Invention and Copyright Agreement. Seek counsel with your faculty advisor about this policy pertaining to intellectual property. A signed form is required before a student can be paid. Christen Bailey will provide you with the necessary form.

MS Thesis Committee Membership – After identifying a research advisor and project, each student forms a thesis committee. Any of these three members can be the primary advisor. The MS Thesis Committee must have a minimum of three (3) members:

- Two members must be from the primary BME faculty
- One member must be from outside the department (BME Affiliated faculty, Research faculty and Research Associates with a PhD and sufficient experience may count as the “outside” member)

MS Thesis Proposal – A brief written proposal (3-5 pages) of the MS research project must be submitted and defended no later than the semester before the student defends his/her thesis. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule a formal meeting with his/her Thesis Committee members for discussion and approval of the proposal document. The student must present the MS Proposal and Thesis Committee Approval Form to his/her thesis committee during this meeting. If the proposal is approved, the members of the thesis committee must sign the form, thereby indicating their willingness to participate on the thesis committee. The student must submit the signed approval form and the proposal document (signed by the advisor) to Christen Bailey. It is required that the student’s thesis committee meet with the student regularly (at least annually) throughout the remainder of his/her thesis research.

MS Thesis – An MS Thesis must be written and defended successfully for completion of the MS degree. Note that in order for a student to make full use of the critiques on the proposal offered by his/her committee, students are not permitted to defend the final thesis the same semester in which the proposal was submitted. A full description of the format requirements for the written thesis is included in “A Guide for the Writers of Dissertations and Theses”. This guide is located on the BME website under “Online Forms and Documents”. The format described in this guide must be adhered to when writing the thesis. Mugar Library will not accept the thesis if it does not follow the required format!

It is the student’s responsibility to confirm a date and time of the presentation with his/her Committee members (MS Thesis Defense Approval Form must be completed – this form should include title, abstract, names of committee members and advisor’s signatures). Once a date has been confirmed, the time and location, along with a copy of the Abstract, must be submitted to the Christen Bailey at least 10 business days prior to the presentation date. The Abstract must have the names of the student and research advisor listed together with the project title. Christen Bailey will process announcement of the MS Thesis Defense to the BME faculty and graduate students via email and add the event to the BME calendar.

The format of the defense is not rigid and is decided on by the chair of the MS defense committee. The student can expect to give a 30-40 minute seminar presenting the results of the completed project. There may be questions during the presentation or after the student has completed the presentation, depending on the decision of the defense committee.

Following a reasonable question period, the audience is dismissed, so that the committee may ask questions of the student privately; then the student is dismissed and the committee remains to complete its assessment of the thesis defense. The defense committee must vote unanimously to pass the student. The results are noted on the Thesis Defense Form and submitted to Christen Bailey, who will be responsible for obtaining the signature of the BME Graduate Committee.
Submission of the Final Thesis – The student will then follow the electronic submission guidelines provided by Mugar Library. Christen Bailey will provide departmental electronic approval for the student upon seeing the 1) original signatures page and 2) title page.

Christen Bailey will handle the binding of the additional dissertation copies. The cost for hardbound copies is $10.00 per copy (subsidized by the BME Department). Theses to be hardbound are sent to an external bindery once a year (early fall). Students should be sure to leave a correct forwarding address after graduation so that their hardbound copy of the dissertation can be mailed.

MS Program Completion Time Schedule – It is up to the student and academic advisors to complete the project in a reasonable amount of time for a MS thesis. Most students graduate from the MS with Thesis program in 2 to 2.5 years after entering, which usually includes at least one year of full-time work on the research project. It is important to keep track of the numerous deadlines that have been established to ensure that students planning to participate in graduation ceremonies are not disappointed by being prevented from participating due to missed deadlines. A list of deadlines for the MS Program is located online at http://www.bu.edu/academics/eng/graduate-program-deadlines/. Please contact Christen Bailey if you have any questions about these deadlines.

Each student has a maximum of five (5) years from the time of matriculation to complete the requirements for the MS degree. If a student has still not finished the required courses and research thesis in this time, the student must reapply and be accepted again to the department in order to continue.

Relation of the MS Program to the PhD Program – Often students who enter the MS program later decide that they would like to pursue a PhD in Biomedical Engineering. The student must formally apply to the PhD program; however, the MS program is designed so that a transition into the PhD program is straightforward, as summarized below:

- If admitted to the PhD program, the student who completed the MS degree in BME requires one additional physiology/biology course, BE 792 Literature Review plus the completion of two graduate-level electives (at least one BE), to satisfy the curriculum requirements of the doctoral program.
- MS students wishing to continue on for a PhD with the intent to extend their MS research will be encouraged to modify their MS Thesis as necessary into a PhD Prospectus. If a student wishes to change research topics, then a prospectus appropriate for the new topic will be required. It is important to note that all students must have passed the BME PhD oral qualifier prior to submitting and defending a PhD Prospectus.

Planning for Graduation – An MS student cannot defend his/her thesis and/or graduate the same semester in which the MS proposal was submitted. In order to graduate, students must be registered as part or full-time students in the semester in which they complete degree requirements and in the preceding semester.

Financial Information

Students receiving any form of financial support for graduate studies are not permitted additional employment without prior written approval from both the student’s advisor and the BME Graduate Committee. These forms of financial support include Research Assistantships and other external Fellowships (NSF, NIH, foreign government fellowships, or other foundations).

Stipend Paychecks – All students are expected to have a bank account in the U.S. Direct Deposit of payments to your bank account is the norm for most students. If you elect not to use direct deposit, paychecks can be picked up at the BU Payroll Office at 25 Buick Street on the last Friday of the month.
Research Assistantships – It is important to first recognize that Research Assistantships are not guaranteed for MS with thesis students. Research Assistantships are offered by individual faculty members with sponsored research grants. Students interested in off-campus Research Assistantships should speak with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for departmental approval (to ensure that the research project is appropriate for Biomedical Engineering and that there is direct involvement of a BME faculty member). Off-campus Research Assistants should also see Matt Barber (meb@bu.edu) regarding the details of subcontracting the Research Assistantship through the University in order to receive tuition benefits.

A Research Assistant is a member of a research group in a laboratory or center. The position offers close association with members of the faculty and is a very effective arrangement for graduate study. The association and the work with the lab or center usually lead to other opportunities. Work on the thesis is normally part of an assistant’s assignments. RA’s are expected to work full-time, with time allowed for courses during the academic year. Summer RA Contracts must be set up by April 1, 2016; Fall RA Contracts must be set up by July 15, 2016; Spring RA Contracts must be set up by December 1, 2015.

Every Research Assistant (RA) and his/her research sponsor must submit an online funding contract. If the student has any questions on how or why the RA contract is completed, he/she should speak with Christen Bailey. The Financial Administrator overseeing your sponsor’s grant will also approve the RA contract, indicating that there are funds to pay the stipend. A link to the funding contracts online form is located on the BME website. Contracts are necessary for:

- Setting-up the student on payroll; either by the BME Financial Administrator, or by the Grant Administrator overseeing the grant that funds the student’s stipend
- Settling the student’s tuition account by Isabel Tereso in the Graduate Programs Office
- Settling the student’s health insurance payment by Isabel Tereso in the Graduate Programs Office

Tuition – RA’s supported full-time by a faculty’s sponsored research grant may receive tuition coverage depending upon the funding mechanism. Check with your research advisor and/or financial administrator.

Summer Stipends and Tax Withholding – Students funded on fellowships other than NIH will have FICA taxes withheld from their paychecks during the summer (May, June, July and August).

Logistical Information

Previous MS theses are available for review in ERB 401. Please do NOT remove these from the room!

Computer Resource and Printing Facility - The BME Computational Simulation Facility consists of two classrooms containing 56 workstations, as well as a machine room containing a server farm and two 16GB RAM, ccNUMA Linux supercomputers. All machines are running BU’s own 64-bit distribution of Linux on the AMD64 Opteron architecture, and are tied together with Sun Grid Engine software for a total of 230 processors available to parallel compute jobs at any time. System enhancements and new GPU-based parallel computing resources are coming on line, for ever-growing capabilities.

Email – BME utilizes electronic mail as a medium for official communication. Please be sure to check your BU email account on a daily basis for important information, and make sure that your account is not filled up.

BME Graduate Student Lounge – The BME Lounge is located on the second floor of 44 Cummington Mall near the elevator. This room contains graduate student mailboxes. The mailing address is: Department of Biomedical Engineering, Boston University, 44 Cummington Mall, Boston, MA 02215.
Women in BME - Women in BME started in the fall of 2005 for women graduate students to gain greater access to women mentors and to help guide us in making some of the bigger life decisions (i.e. applying for postdoctoral positions, jobs, discussing family issues, etc.) While there are a handful of other avenues for graduate women to find mentors, there is something unique about having a mentor in our own program. The Women in BME hosts book club meetings throughout the academic year.

Graduate Student Concerns – Any matters concerning leave of absences, medical leave of absences or maternity leaves should be discussed with Christen Bailey and/or the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

BME Kitchenette – There is a small kitchenette (including a refrigerator) that is available for faculty, graduate students and staff in ERB 407. A copy machine is available for students. Please see the work-study student at the front desk in ERB 403 for instructions.

Getting to the BU Medical School Campus – BME students often take courses or attend lectures at the BU School of Medicine campus, which is located at 80 E. Concord Street in Boston. A number of students also conduct research at the medical center. Traveling between Boston University’s Charles River campus and the Medical Campus is now easy thanks to the enhanced Boston University Shuttle (The BUS) service. The Shuttle runs every 10-30 minutes (depending on the day and time) and makes it a snap for the BU community to access the many resources, programs, and activities throughout the University. IT IS FREE! Call 877-355-1555 to receive recorded information about The BUS service, including current reports of transportation delays and service interruptions. The closest stop to the BME department is at the corner of Blandford St and Commonwealth Ave. Schedules and real-time bus locations can be found at http://www.bu.edu/thebus/.
## Staff Directory

### BME Graduate Programs Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Smith</td>
<td><a href="mailto:msmith@bu.edu">msmith@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Chair for Graduate Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Tien</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jtien@bu.edu">jtien@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Admissions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christen L. Bailey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:christen@bu.edu">christen@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Programs Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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### BME Department Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John White</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jwhite@bu.edu">jwhite@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Barber</td>
<td><a href="mailto:meb@bu.edu">meb@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary-Ellen Palmer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mepalmer@bu.edu">mepalmer@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant to the Chair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Orzechowski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ireneo@bu.edu">ireneo@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Ford Burley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:neford@bu.edu">neford@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallon Fernandes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fallonf@bu.edu">fallonf@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tara McDonald Sorrentino</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tarmac@bu.edu">tarmac@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Prusaitis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:laurapru@bu.edu">laurapru@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Sands</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sands@bu.edu">sands@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Daley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ldaley@bu.edu">ldaley@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Program Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon Poli</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pbrandon@bu.edu">pbrandon@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Program Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
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### College of Engineering Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Lutchen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:klutch@bu.edu">klutch@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Eisenberg</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sre@bu.edu">sre@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Associate Dean for ENG Academic Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Klapperich</td>
<td><a href="mailto:catherin@bu.edu">catherin@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean for ENG Research and Technology Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domenic Lomanno</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dlomanno@bu.edu">dlomanno@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Graduate Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Hession</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hession@bu.edu">hession@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Records</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabel Tereso</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mit@bu.edu">mit@bu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director of Graduate Programs</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>