Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis

jbn@hsc.wvu.edu

Degrees Offered

• Doctor of Philosophy
• Joint Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Objectives

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis will prepare students from diverse backgrounds to serve as professionals that are knowledgeable about the immune system of humans and other mammals, how the immune system functions, and the consequences of its malfunction on the health of the host. Knowledge of the immune system will be fully integrated with an excellent understanding of the diversity of microorganisms that cause disease in humans and other mammals and mechanisms of disease pathogenesis. Graduates will possess the laboratory skills and knowledge needed to assess the functional status of the immune system and to assess the mechanism used by microbial agents to cause disease in mammals. Graduates will be qualified to pursue several professional career paths in private industry, state and federal government, and academic institutions.

The doctoral program in Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis emphasizes extensive laboratory research in microbiology, immunology, microbial pathogenesis, and/or cell biology, i.e. the major purpose of graduate education in the program is research training. The basic philosophy of the program is that students acquire a strong foundation in the basic concepts of immunology and microbial pathogenesis and have flexibility in choosing advanced coursework in their specific areas of interest. Each student will complete an original, in-depth research investigation. Its learner-centered curriculum integrates both classroom and hands-on research experiences to produce students capable of designing and doing independent research and teaching.

Completion of the Ph.D. degree is realized when the student successfully presents the research results to faculty of the graduate dissertation committee and program/department. Typically, four to five years are required to realize this goal.

Faculty members and students explore diverse areas of inquiry related to the medical implications of microbes and the human body’s response to them.

Current Research Areas

• Immunology
• Effects of man-made pesticides and herbicides on the immune system
• Effects of heavy metals on the immune system
• Biochemistry of inflammatory cytokines
• Immune response in bacterial and viral diseases
• Regulation of signal transduction in immune responses
• Molecular aspects of cell signaling as it relates to cancer chemotherapy and cell growth
• Peptide and DNA vaccines for contraception
• Microbiology
• Physiology of pathogenic microbes
• Microbial genetics
• Mechanisms of bacterial pathogenesis
• Chemotaxis and motility
• Interactions between microbes and their hosts
• Molecular mimicry and structure-function relationship of bacterial virulence factors
• Microbial biofilms

FACULTY

GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
• John Barnett - Ph.D. (University of Louisville)

PROFESSORS
• Nyles Charon - Ph.D. (University of Minnesota)
• Christopher Cuff - Ph.D. (Temple University)
• Laura F. Gibson - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
• Vazhaikkurichi Rajendran - Ph.D. (University of Madras)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS
• Tim Eubank - Ph.D. (The Ohio State University)
• Slawomir Lukomski - Ph.D. (University of Lodz, Poland)
• Karen Martin - Ph.D. (Duke University)
• Edmidio Pistilli - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
• Cory Robinson - Ph.D. (Miami University of Ohio)
• Lisa Robinson - Ph.D. (Cornell University)
• Rosana Schafer - Ph.D. (Temple University)
• James M. Sheil (Emeritus) - Ph.D. (University of Kentucky)

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS
• Amanda Ammer - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
• Mariette Barbier - Ph.D. (Universitat de les Illes Balears)
• Candace Brown - Ph.D. (Duke University)
• Kathy Brundage - Ph.D. (University of Pennsylvania)
• Duaa Dakhallah - Ph.D. (The Ohio State University)
• F. Heath Damron - Ph.D. (Marshall University)
• Meenal Elliott - Ph.D. (University of Alabama)
• Jennifer Franko - Ph.D. (Case Western Reserve University)
• Ivan Martinez - Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh)
• Gordon Meares - Ph.D. (University of Alabama)
• Xuefang "Sophie" Ren - M.D., MSc (Ulm University, Germany)
• Edwin Wan - Ph.D. (City University of Hong Kong)
• Valerie Watson - M.S. (West Virginia University)

ADJUNCT PROFESSORS
• Don Beezhold - Ph.D. (University of Illinois Medical Center)
• John Noti - Ph.D. (Purdue University)
• David Weissman - M.D. (Northwestern University)

ADJUNCT ASSISTANT PROFESSORS
• Stacey Anderson - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
• Alexandra Elliott - Ph.D.
• Brett J. Green - Ph.D. (University of Sydney)
• David Klinke - Ph.D. (Northwestern University)
• Yong Qian - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
• Jenny Roberts - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)

Doctor of Philosophy

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

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### Suggested Plan of Study*

#### First Year

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#### Second Year

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### Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis

**Third Year**

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Dissertation Proposal

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**Fourth Year**

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Total credit hours: 86

NOTE: The graduate curriculum is finalized with a plan of study once the mentor and laboratory have been selected in the first year. The plan of study is developed by the graduate committee in consultation with the student. The courses listed above include the required and elective coursework necessary for the student to finalize his/her plan of study. When the student enters the laboratory of his/her doctoral dissertation mentor repetitive enrollments in research, seminars, and colloquia are typical and will determine total hours necessary for degree completion.

*This is a suggested plan of study. Course sequences and length of time in program may vary depending on student and altered total credit hours.

## Major Learning Outcomes

### IMMUNOLOGY AND MICROBIAL PATHOGENESIS

Students will:

- Demonstrate a general knowledge of basic concepts of microbiology, microbial pathogenesis, and immunology, and a detailed knowledge of his or her area of research
- Be familiar with the research literature in microbiology and immunology and in their specific field of study and should have the ability to keep abreast of major developments and to acquire a working background in any area
- Demonstrate skill in the recognition of meaningful problems and questions for research in Microbiology and Immunology
- Possess technical skill in laboratory manipulation
- Demonstrate that oral, written, and visual communication skills have been acquired
- Demonstrate skill in designing experimental protocols and in conducting productive self-directed research