Pathology draft policy on student dismissal from lab/department

Termination of a student:
If a faculty advisor is dissatisfied with the research effort or progress of a student, the advisor shall make every effort to communicate to the student the concerns he/she may have about the level of quality of the research performance. If the deficiencies persist, the faculty advisor must identify to the student in writing the unsatisfactory aspects of the student’s research performance, and allow the student a reasonable time (at least 30 days) to correct the deficiencies. The written notification can take the form of a write-up from a post-thesis committee meeting, or a separate letter. A copy of the document shall be sent to members of the student’s committee, the Pathology graduate student coordinator, and director of graduate affairs. If the deficiencies are corrected in the probationary period, the faculty advisor shall notify the student, the student’s committee, and the graduate student coordinators and director of graduate affairs in writing that the student is no longer on probation.

If the deficiencies persist at the end of the formal probationary period, it is the prerogative of the research advisor to terminate the student/advisor research relationship. Faculty shall discuss the termination process with the director of graduate affairs. The procedure shall be:

a. Faculty must provide written documentation to students about unsatisfactory progress on thesis projects. Notify the student in writing, giving reasons for the dismissal, indicating a formal termination date (must be at least 15 days after the delivery of the notice). During this time, the faculty mentor must provide salary support to the student while they actively seek a new thesis lab or position. If the student cannot find a new thesis lab within this timeframe or if they go to a different department or position, they will be dismissed from the Pathology graduate program.
b. If the student receives stipend support from the advisor, then the funding may be terminated no earlier than the date specified on the termination notice. If the student receives support from another source, it is incumbent on the student to identify a means to secure continuity in funding.
c. The student is obligated to turn over to the advisor all materials (notebooks, equipment, data) related to the advisor’s research in a manner that will allow the advisor to continue the work. If these materials are not turned over by the termination date, any pay from a new research director or department may be held in escrow until the above obligation is met.
d. An understanding shall be reached between the student and advisor regarding unpublished data and shall be made in writing. The advisor is not required to specify what will and what will not be deemed worthy of an authorship, but must state clearly the criteria that will be used to ascribe authorships.
e. Appeals by the student shall be made to the department director of graduate affairs or department chair. Students may also seek mediation from the Health Sciences Ombudsman or another resource.

In special circumstances faculty may request immediate dismissal of a student from the Graduate School due to behavioral, academic, professional, or ethical misconduct. In such an event, the procedures outlined in the “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities” shall be followed. (http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php)

Dematriculation:
In the unusual case that a student fails to make satisfactory progress toward the timely completion of a graduate degree, the faculty may consider dematriculation of the student from the program.

Student leaving a research lab:
A student who wants to leave a research group shall give the faculty advisor 30 days written notice outlining the reasons for leaving the group. During the 30 days, the experimental work shall be brought to a point where it could easily be passed on to a new person. All notebooks and data shall be returned to the advisor before the student becomes supported by another faculty member.

A student who changes research groups is obligated to notify the director of graduate affairs and the department graduate student coordinator of the move. At this time, the student shall also reconstitute the student’s thesis committee if necessary, e.g. if they have switched primary research areas.

Check-out procedures:
Upon completion of study and before leaving the department, the student is responsible for turning in all keys issued in their name. As stated on the key request (signed at the time the keys were issued): “I will return this key when my need or employment terminates.” The keys must be returned to the Pathology main office (JMRB 1100), not to the research advisor. The student must also provide information to the graduate student coordinator to provide information such as forwarding addresses and future affiliation. This information is important to the department for tracking purposes.