

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

DISSERTATION & ORAL DEFENSE

It is expected that by the end of the fifth year in the program, students will be ready to propose a dissertation defense date. It is recognized that the timing of research varies and that students will have different timelines. Beyond the fifth year, it is recommended that students schedule dissertation committee meetings more frequently (e.g. every three months) to facilitate research progress toward timely completion of the dissertation and defense.

The Dissertation

Upon approval by the dissertation committee, the student will write a scholarly dissertation, formatted according to the [guidelines of the Rackham Graduate School](#). Published manuscripts are often included as chapters in the dissertation, with appropriate attributions (and recognition of contributions of others).

In addition, a scholarly introduction and discussion are included to provide an integrated dissertation. The discussion is expected to be more than a restatement of the results of the dissertation studies. A scholarly discussion includes the important implications of the work, how it expands the field, and the critical future directions for the research area. CMB recommends that students consult the [Dissertation Handbook](#) provided by the Rackham Graduate School, as they are writing and defending their theses.

The Oral Defense

The dissertation research is defended at a public seminar followed by a meeting with the dissertation committee. The student should tell the CMB office when they have scheduled a defense date and time, a minimum of 2-3 months before the scheduled oral defense.

Registration at Time of Defense

Students must be registered for CMBIOL 995 the semester in which the dissertation is defended. This includes the Spring/Summer semester. This incurs Spring/Summer tuition, which the mentor should budget for, for summer defenses.

Students who are defending do not need to register for CMB 850 in their final semester, but will be expected to attend the seminars until they defend their thesis.

Timeline and Deadlines

The [Navigating Your Degree](#) page on the Rackham website should be consulted for detailed instructions regarding the Ph.D. dissertation, defense, and finishing Rackham degree requirements. Two particularly helpful pages are: [Dissertation Timeline](#), and [Doctoral Degree Deadlines](#).

Graduating and Leaving U of M

Students should visit the [Commencement website](#) for information about graduation ceremonies; and also realize that their access to resources may change upon finishing their degree requirements. More info about this is available [here](#). Lastly, talk to CMB to confirm when your stipend and benefits will come to an end, and to wrap up any final information CMB may need from you before you leave the program.