

# GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

## FORMING A DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

### Timeline:

- The student should start forming the committee within **one month** after passing the prelim exam
- The student should compile their materials to be approved by the Program Committee **by July**
- The student should hold their first meeting with the committee **no later than November** of their 3<sup>rd</sup>/G2 year. The committee does not have to be formally approved for them to start meeting.

### Purpose of Committee

- Monitors quality, efficiency and significance of the research,
- Helps keep the research timeline efficient and on track to minimize the time to degree
- Encourages peer-reviewed publication of research findings
- Provides advice on career paths

### Requirements of Committee Membership:

- Rackham Graduate School has certain [requirements for dissertation committee service](#)
  - Committee should include 4 members at a minimum – ideally 5 (6+ is tricky to schedule)
  - 4 members must be graduate faculty; a 5<sup>th</sup> can be a “special” member
- In addition to Rackham requirements, CMB has the following requirements:
  - Dissertation mentor chairs the committee
  - At least 3 members of the committee, including the chair, must be CMB faculty

### Approval of Committee:

#### Students should submit:

- The names and email addresses of proposed dissertation committee members
- An abstract of the proposed project for approval by the CMB Program Committee  
*The abstract should be one page, following the format of the Specific Aims page of an NIH research grant, including the following: Background, Specific Aims and Significance of the questions to be addressed.*

Changes in the composition of the committee membership at later times may be advisable and will be permitted if approved by the CMB Program Committee.

### Areas to be Assessed by the Committee:

- Feasibility of the proposed project/aims
- Quality of the experimental design and results
- Progress on aims
- Focus of the research
- Level of student's effort and productivity
- Quality of the student's writing
- Quality of the student's oral presentation skills
- Progress towards independence
- Progress to publication
- When the student should be expected to begin writing the dissertation
- Ways in which the mentor could facilitate the student's research and professional development