

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 3rd/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 5th 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