

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

FIRST DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Scheduling

The first meeting should occur no later than November of the 3rd/G2 year, unless exceptional circumstances pertain, with approval of the Director.

Written Proposal and Oral Presentation

At this meeting the student is expected to present a detailed written proposal for their dissertation research. This proposal may borrow from the student's preliminary exam proposal, if appropriate, but should be prepared in consultation with the dissertation mentor, unlike the preliminary exam.

The written proposal should follow standard proposal format: specific aims, background/significance, summary of preliminary data, and research plan. The written and oral presentation should include a hypothetical timeline. In the oral presentation, preliminary data may be presented, but the focus of the first meeting should be on articulating a well thought-out research plan and on getting constructive feedback from the committee.

Submission Timeline

Before the Meeting – submit written proposal at least 3 days in advance to committee members

At the Meeting - The student will provide the committee members with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation of the research proposal at the meeting.

After the Meeting – The student will send CMB a copy of the research proposal, within 2 weeks of the meeting. Additionally, at each meeting, the committee should work on filling out the Dissertation Committee Meeting Addendum of the Semester Report (part 2) on page 3 of the “candidate” form. This addendum requires the mentor to collect input from the committee, and should be signed by both the mentor and student. It should be saved and submitted at the end of the semester with the student's Fall or Winter Semester report.

For subsequent meetings, students should include a progress report in lieu of the proposal (discussed further below). Dissertation committee meeting forms can be found on the [CMB Forms](#) page.

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SUBSEQUENT DISSERTATION MEETINGS

Scheduling

Must be scheduled every 6 months – the student and mentor are responsible for scheduling these meetings, and for telling the CMB office the date and time it will be held.

To facilitate timely meetings, the CMB office may automatically schedule the next meeting on a date (same day of the week and same time) that is 6 months later. If there are conflicts, it is the responsibility of the student and committee to reschedule, ideally ± 2 weeks from the given date.

Lack of research progress is not an excuse to delay a committee meeting; rather, it is a compelling reason to have one.

A student who has not had a committee meeting within a 9-month period will be considered 'not in good standing'.

The mentor of such a student will not be permitted to accept additional CMB students until this situation is rectified. In special circumstances, a waiver of this rule may be granted by the Director of the CMB Program upon receiving a clear explanation for the delay.

Submission Timeline

Before Meeting:

Submit Progress Report to Committee

The student and mentor should discuss the content of the dissertation committee meeting prior to the meeting and the student should provide committee members with a brief written **Progress Report** (1-2 pages) at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

The Progress Report should include a brief restatement of the aims, a summary of progress, a discussion of problems encountered and a plan for future work. The plan for future work should be organized in terms of 6-month research goals and longer-term goals. The Progress Report should include a list of the student's publications and abstracts for national/international meetings attended; manuscripts planned, submitted and in preparation should be indicated

Submit Manuscripts to Committee for Review

Manuscripts accepted for publication should be provided electronically to committee, but students may provide drafts if they would like to have comments from the faculty.

Bring Dissertation Committee Meeting Addendum

The dissertation committee meeting addendum is page 3 of the student's Semester Report form, which can be found on the [CMB Forms](#) page.

Prepare PowerPoint for meeting

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SUBSEQUENT DISSERTATION MEETINGS (continued)

During Meeting:

Provide PowerPoint to Committee Members

Ensure the committee fills out the Dissertation Committee Meeting Addendum

This addendum should be filled out by the committee at the student's meeting and saved to be submitted with the Semester Report for Fall or Winter. The meeting addendum may be reviewed by a director and/or the Program Committee along with the Semester Report.

After Meeting:

Format of Meetings:

There is no fixed length for a meeting but in most cases meetings will be 2 hours in length.

- ***Research Progress***
Oral presentation should focus on progress on the specific aims, problems encountered, plans for publication and future research plans – the latter organized in terms of immediate and long-term goals. If results indicate that aims need to be modified or discarded, this should be discussed and new aims may be proposed or recommended.
- ***Career Development***
During the 4th/G3 year and later, time should be reserved at the end for discussion of career goals. The student should include a slide or two in the presentation on this topic.
- ***Candidate Timeline:***
Student should present a formal timeline for completion of the dissertation research, including realistic estimates for research aims. They should also use the Candidate Timeline document (found on the [CMB Forms](#) page) to track their progress in program requirements as well as expectations such as writing research papers for publication and presenting research at meetings.