

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Department of Biomedical Sciences
WADSWORTH CENTER C-236 * 473-7553

Ph.D. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM

TO: Chair, Department of Biomedical Sciences

FROM: _____, Dissertation Committee Chair

RE: Dissertation Committee for _____
(Student's Name)

This memo is to inform you of the Dissertation Committee for the above mentioned student.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Committee Chair: | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | <i>(PRINT NAME)</i> | <i>(SIGNATURE)</i> | <i>(DATE)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Track Member: | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | <i>(PRINT NAME)</i> | <i>(SIGNATURE)</i> | <i>(DATE)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Track Member: | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | <i>(PRINT NAME)</i> | <i>(SIGNATURE)</i> | <i>(DATE)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dept. Member: | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | <i>(PRINT NAME)</i> | <i>(SIGNATURE)</i> | <i>(DATE)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Outside: | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | <i>(PRINT NAME)</i> | <i>(SIGNATURE)</i> | <i>(DATE)</i> |

Institution of Outside Member _____

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | *Additional: | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| | | <i>(PRINT NAME)</i> | <i>(SIGNATURE)</i> | <i>(DATE)</i> |

* = Optional

Please check box to acknowledge receipt of qualifying examination and dissertation guidelines.

APPROVALS:

(Graduate Academic Committee Chair, Date)

(Department Chair, Date)

Date Recorded

cc: Committee Members
Student

c:\wpdocs\forms\bmsdiscomm.app

Part II: Defense of Proposal

By the end of the third semester, the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee must be formed. The Dissertation Committee is chaired (in the usual case) by the research mentor (a non-voting member) and composed of at least four other members, two BMS Department faculty members from the student's program area (track), one BMS faculty member outside the program area and one member whose primary academic appointment is outside the BMS Department, and who may be from another institution. In the case where the mentor is ineligible to chair the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee, the committee may designate another member as chair, who then serves as a voting member. The composition of the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee will be reviewed by the Graduate Academic Committee for final approval.

Within one year of successfully completing Part I of the qualifying exam, the student should complete Part II, a defense of proposal. This exam will test the student's depth of knowledge in his/her chosen area of specialization as well as the student's ability to write and defend a research proposal. This examination is to be on a topic intended to serve as the basis for the student's Ph.D. dissertation research.

The student will write the proposal in the format of a mini-grant application, equivalent to a mini NRSA fellowship. The written proposal should be no longer than 10 single-spaced pages (not including references) and should consist of an abstract, background and significance, specific aims and experimental design. **Preliminary data are not required.** If preliminary data have been obtained, then it should be included in the background materials and may be included in the oral presentation. The student may consult with anyone in the course of preparing the proposal, but the written document must represent the student's own work. The mentor may aid in the development of specific aims and construction of a topical outline for the dissertation proposal. The mentor also may direct the student to relevant literature and may edit an initial draft. However, the mentor should not act as co-author. The research proposal will be judged on standard criteria, including, but not limited to, the student's grasp of the field, significance of the proposed work, originality and depth of thought and the feasibility of the experimental approach.

The written proposal will be submitted to the department office **no later than April 1st of the second year.** The student must provide the department office with copies of the proposal for distribution to all members of the dissertation committee. The oral defense must be taken **no later than June 1st of the second year.** The department office will provide the dissertation committee chair with course grades, laboratory rotation evaluations, and Qualifying Exam Part I results to review with the committee prior to the Qualifying Exam Part II oral defense. At the oral defense, the student will answer questions on the proposal and on related topics, focusing on (but not restricted to) the student's program area.

The Dissertation Committee will provide a grade of Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. The student must pass the exam by a majority vote of the Committee. If the student does not satisfactorily complete this part of the exam, the Dissertation Committee will make appropriate recommendations to the Graduate Academic Committee, which may include modifying the proposal and re-taking the exam, completing remedial course work, or dismissal from the

program. The date and results of the exam will be communicated by the Dissertation Committee Chair to the Graduate Academic Committee and the Department Chairperson. If the student receives a Conditional Pass on the exam, the conditions must be met within three months or the student will receive a grade of Fail. If the student receives a grade of Fail, the exam may be re-taken once, and must be completed within three months.

All students are strongly encouraged to submit proposals for predoctoral training awards following completion of the Qualifying Exam Part II.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH

ROLE OF THE Ph.D. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The student's Dissertation Committee will meet regularly with the student throughout the course of his/her dissertation research to evaluate progress and advise. It is the responsibility of the student with his/her Dissertation Committee Chair to ensure that these periodic reviews are scheduled every 9 to 12 months. A Doctoral Student Annual Progress Review form, including a brief report summarizing each periodic review, should be submitted by the Committee Chair to the Graduate Academic Committee shortly after each meeting. These reports will become part of the student's academic file.

The Dissertation Committee also is responsible for evaluating and accepting the final written dissertation and conducting the student's oral dissertation defense. However, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the final document submitted to the University is prepared according to department and University guidelines. Part of the evaluative process is determination of whether the student has produced a body of work which is publishable. As a guide, doctoral students in the Department of Biomedical Sciences typically publish three peer-reviewed publications based on their dissertation research, two of which are first-authored, by the end of their tenure in the program. Acceptance of the dissertation will be by majority vote of the Dissertation Committee, and is subject to the approval of the Department Chair and the Graduate Office.

The student must submit the Thesis/Dissertation Seminar and Defense Scheduling Form to the department office **at least three weeks before** the scheduled oral defense, providing the date, time, location, and title of presentation.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines are in addition to those prescribed by the University Graduate Office (copies are available from the BMS department office). Note that failure to comply with University and Department guidelines can result in delays in acceptance of the dissertation. If the student and mentor feel that deviations from the recommendations below are necessary, then a written explanation should be submitted to the Dissertation and Academic Committees for approval prior to writing the thesis.

FORMAT

- In addition to chapters describing each sub-project, as required, the thesis should include an introductory chapter and a concluding chapter.
- The introduction should provide a rigorous review of the background that is directly relevant to the problem under investigation and be sufficiently detailed that the reader can appreciate the significance of the thesis research.
- If appropriate, the second chapter should be devoted to general Materials and Methods that are used throughout the thesis. Methodology that is specific to a particular chapter should be presented within that chapter.
- The concluding chapter should provide a unifying discussion of the findings presented in the previous chapters. It should not merely summarize the main findings, or repeat the discussion presented in the previous chapters. Rather, this chapter should contain discussion of further studies that could be done to advance understanding of the problem(s) that were investigated, as well as speculative interpretations of the results obtained in light of previous work and the future of the field.
- Figures and Tables should be placed on separate pages, and inserted near the text referring to them (do not collate them at the ends of the chapters). Figure legends may be placed on the same page as the figures, or on the preceding pages.
- A comprehensive bibliography, alphabetized according to authors, should be placed at the end of the thesis. The format used for the bibliography should include the complete titles of the papers cited. In the text, it is recommended that references be cited by author and publication date (e.g. Smith and Jones, 1999), but whatever citation format is chosen, it should be used uniformly throughout the thesis.

INCORPORATION OF MANUSCRIPTS (PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED) INTO THE THESIS

- Manuscripts for which the student and mentor are the sole authors will require minimal reformatting to be used as chapters of the dissertation.
- The Introduction, Materials and Methods, and Discussion sections may need to be edited so as to be in concordance with the introductory and concluding chapters of the thesis and to avoid duplication; the bibliography should be removed and merged with the one at the end of the thesis.
- Manuscripts that contain additional authors besides the student and mentor will usually require more extensive reformatting to clarify what work was actually performed by the student from that contributed by co-authors. It is required that all text appearing in the thesis be authored personally by the student (with guidance from the mentor), unless explicitly indicated otherwise (e.g. by quotation marks and proper attribution). It is strongly recommended that if a section of the paper involves experiments carried out without the involvement of the student, then it should be moved to the Discussion, unless this would distract from the logical flow of the chapter. Experiments that were not conducted by the student must be clearly indicated in the text as well as in the figure and table legends. It is essential that the student make clear what his/her role was in work that involved collaborations or assistance from other scientists (including technicians, postdoctoral fellows, and other students). An Acknowledgments section detailing the roles played by other individuals should be placed at the beginning of any chapter involving collaborative work. Published work in which the student played a minor role, or for which the topic is unrelated or weakly related to the theme of the thesis, should not be included as a chapter.

SUBMISSION OF THESIS TO DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- The completed thesis must be submitted to the committee at least three weeks before the oral defense. A shorter interval is permissible only if all committee members agree. It is the student's responsibility to arrange a date for the defense that is acceptable to the committee members, and to adhere to the one month interval. In the event that revisions to the dissertation are required, the committee will have two weeks in which to review the revisions.
- Reprints of published papers and manuscripts of papers accepted for publication should be included as appendices to the thesis.