

## Microbiology Theme - Committee Meetings, Qualifying Exam, and Admission to Candidacy Summary of Guidelines

Links to these guidelines, the Detailed Guidelines, the Proposal and Progress Report Guidelines, and Forms are on the Microbiology Theme website.

Send the Summary of Guidelines (this document) to committee members as they are added to the committee (and probably again at time of Qualifying Exam). You should also direct them to the links for the Detailed Guidelines and Forms.

### Failure to meet deadlines may result in (in no particular order) –

- **an Incomplete (I) grade for Non-dissertation or Dissertation credits**
- **delays in stipend increases**
- **ineligibility for special recognition rewards**
- **suspension or termination of stipend**
- **dismissal from program**

Where indicated, email information to Theme Director (Janet Yother, [jyother@uab.edu](mailto:jyother@uab.edu)) and Process Manager ([Nan Travis ntravis@uab.edu](mailto:Nan Travis ntravis@uab.edu)).

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**TABLE 1. TIMELINES**

Second Year Preliminary Mtg	Qualifying Exam	Admission to Candidacy	Subsequent Meetings
Fall of 2 <sup>nd</sup> year (by October 15)	Spring of 2 <sup>nd</sup> year (submit proposal by April 30)	Fall of 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Twice yearly after Admission to Candidacy

**TABLE 2. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED**

	Preliminary Meeting	Qualifying Exam	Admission to Candidacy	Subsequent Meetings
<b>Biographical Sketch*</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>Career and Training Goals*</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>Specific Aims / Abstract**</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>Research Plan**</b>		x	x	
<b>Progress Report***</b>			x	x

\* To be updated for each meeting

\*\* To be updated if plans change from previous meeting

\*\*\* Provide new report for each meeting; results, plans for next 6 months to one year

**SECOND YEAR PRELIMINARY MEETING**

- Complete by October 15 of 2<sup>nd</sup> year
  - 3 faculty – mentor + 2 faculty expected to be on dissertation committee
  - Documents to be sent (emailed) to faculty before meeting – collate into a single pdf
    - Biosketch
    - Career Goals
    - Abstract of Project (and Specific Aims, if developed). Not to exceed one page.
  - Meeting
    - Relatively short (<30 minutes should suffice)
    - Student provides 10-12 minute overview of progress in graduate school and basics of project
    - Discuss research topic, academic and career progress and plans
    - Meeting format at discretion of committee (e.g., may be informal, student may have slide presentation, may be general discussion with committee, individual meetings)
  - Evaluation and Committee's role
    - Ensure that student's progress is adequate for this stage; recommend specific plans
    - Suggest improvements to written documents; require revisions as necessary
    - Committee completes form - "Approval - Second Year Preliminary Meeting" and provides to/discusses with student. Form on Microbiology Theme website.
  - Summary of documents and other information to send to Theme Director and Process Manager
    - Names of committee members (student sends; copy mentor and committee members)
    - Date, time, and location meeting (student sends)
    - Final document (revised if necessary) (single pdf) containing Biosketch, Career Goals, Abstract/Specific Aims (student sends)
    - Approval Form
      - Must be signed, scanned, and emailed to Theme Director and Process Manager by student or mentor
- OR**
- MENTOR emails completed form (no signatures) to Theme Director and copies Process Manager, committee members, and student.

**QUALIFYING EXAM (submit proposal March – April of 2<sup>nd</sup> year, no later than April 30)**

- Committee = 3 faculty expected to be on dissertation committee. Mentor is NOT on committee.
- Mentor and student decide on committee members and chair; request their service on committee
- Mentor or student emails names of committee members (indicating chair) to Theme Director and Process Manager. Copy committee members (and mentor or student).
- Documents to be emailed to committee (copy Theme Director, Process Manager) by designated due date – collate into a single pdf
  - Biosketch
  - Career and Training Goals
  - Abstract/Specific Aims
  - Research Plan (on dissertation topic)
- Review of proposal - Responsibility of Committee
  - Review all documents; require revisions as necessary
  - Provide written review to committee chair within ~2 weeks of proposal submission
    - Review Criteria – review can be short (≤1 page) but should include -
      - Overall evaluation with score (1 – 10; 1 = best) and recommendation (e.g., revise; proceed to oral without revision, etc)
      - Comments on significance

- **Evaluation of research plan (we are not evaluating data; it may be included but it is not necessary and its presence/absence should not help/hinder the evaluation)**
- Comments on investigator (training, academic and career plans and progress)
- Scoring –
  - Average >4 REQUIRES revision before proceeding to oral exam.
  - Average ≤4 – revision prior to the oral exam is at the discretion of the committee
  - Expect most students to revise proposal either before or after the oral exam
- Revisions
  - Should be completed in 1 – 2 weeks (or time specified by committee)
  - Committee reviews and scores; brief written reviews may be provided
  - If revision is not acceptable (average >4), student fails; has one opportunity to extensively revise proposal and repeat process (see Full Guidelines)
- Oral Defense – should occur ~1 week after proposal is approved
  - Student provides ~30 minute presentation of proposal
  - Questions address hypothesis, approach, alternate approaches, background, and general knowledge.  
**Note again – evaluation of data (quality and quantity) is not a part of the qualifying exam (but if a student presents data, their interpretations could be questioned).**
- Final Evaluation –
  - Inform student of decision immediately following Oral Defense
  - Complete evaluation form on Microbiology Theme Website - Indicate Pass, Pass with Qualification(s), Fail
- Responsibility of chair
  - Ensure committee members provide reviews within two weeks of proposal submission
  - Determine whether revision is necessary; notify student and committee members
  - Guide Oral Defense meeting
  - Inform student, mentor, and committee of outcome after all requirements completed
  - Ensure that Theme Director and Process Manager receive copies of all documents, reviews, and evaluations
- Summary of documents and other information to email to Theme Director and Process Manager
  - Names of committee members and chair (Student or mentor sends)
  - All versions of Proposal and associated documents (Student sends)
  - Date, time, and location for Oral Defense (Student sends)
  - All reviews (Chair sends)
  - Evaluation form and subsequent completion of any conditions (Chair sends)

### **ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY (fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> year)**

- Full committee – mentor + 4 faculty
- Mentor/student emails names of all committee members to Theme Director and Process Manager **as soon as confirmed** (copy all committee members).
- Required forms:
  - Before the meeting – The committee must be approved by the Graduate School –
    - Graduate Study Committee Letter (<https://www.uab.edu/graduate/images/acrobat/forms/commit.pdf>) - Email the completed form to Theme Director for signature
    - NOTE - Your mentor is also the chair and advisor for your committee
  - At / After the meeting –
    - Admission to Candidacy Form (<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/images/acrobat/forms/admitphd1.pdf>)
    - Obtain signatures of mentor and committee members
    - Bring form to Theme Director for signature

- Take completed form to Process Manager
- At / After meeting –
  - Student and mentor emails Evaluation Forms Theme Director and Process Manager (GBS Website <https://www.uab.edu/gbs/home/images/FORMS/GBS-MSTP-Committee-Meeting-Eval-Form---Student-Portion-11.26.12.pdf-2.pdf> AND <https://www.uab.edu/gbs/home/images/FORMS/GBS-MSTP-Committee-Meeting-Eval-Form---Mentor-Portion-11.26.12.pdf-2.pdf>)
- Documents (single pdf) to be emailed to committee **ONE WEEK** prior to meeting
  - Biosketch, Career and Training Plan – updated
  - Abstract/Specific Aims, Proposal – updated if plans have changed since Qualifying Exam
  - Progress Report – see Full Guidelines
- The purpose of the meeting is to evaluate the science and upcoming plans.
- Summary of documents and information to be emailed to Theme Director and Process Manager
  - Names of committee members (Mentor/student sends)
  - All of the above documents (Student sends)
  - Date, time, and location for meeting (Student sends)
  - Evaluation form (Mentor sends)

### SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS

- Twice yearly, approximately every six months after Admission to Candidacy
- Progress Report and updated documents to committee **ONE WEEK** prior to meeting (single pdf).
- Committee and student complete Evaluation Forms (as above, from GBS website); email to Theme Director and Process Manager
- Summary of documents and information to be emailed to Theme Director and Process Manager
  - Date, time, and location for meeting (Student sends)
  - Progress report and other documents (Student sends)
  - Evaluation (Mentor and student send)

### H. DISSERTATION DEFENSE – note that the deadlines below require that you submit the dissertation to your committee one month before the final public defense

- See Graduate School deadlines for submitting Application for Degree and last dates for final (public) defense (<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-school-quicklinks/deadline-dates>)
- Notify Theme Director and Process Manager of dates for private and public defenses as soon as they are set

#### H1. Private defense:

**Two weeks before** private defense, send to committee –

- dissertation (email or printed, as desired by committee members)
- updated Biosketch, Career and Training Plan

**After meeting**, email to Theme Director and Administrator:

- outcome of private defense and evaluation (use these forms <https://www.uab.edu/gbs/home/images/FORMS/GBS-MSTP-Committee-Meeting-Eval-Form---Student-Portion-11.26.12.pdf-2.pdf> AND <https://www.uab.edu/gbs/home/images/FORMS/GBS-MSTP-Committee-Meeting-Eval-Form---Mentor-Portion-11.26.12.pdf-2.pdf>)
- pdf of final dissertation (revised as recommended by committee)

#### H2. Public Defense – approximately **two weeks** after private defense

#### H3. Announcements:

- Notify Dean of the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to anticipated final public defense - <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/request-thesis-or-dissertation-approval-forms-theses-and-dissertations>.
  - Send title, date, time, and location of the public defense to the Process Manager as soon as known.
- Public defense must be advertised for AT LEAST ONE WEEK prior to its occurrence but not before the private defense has been completed.