

Basic and Translational Biomedicine (BTB) Program Dissertation Defense Policy

The Dissertation should be written and defended no later than by the end of the fifth year in the program. The Dissertation defense is the venue for a student to display his or her research achievement over years of hard work in a graduate program. It is also an opportunity for the faculty to decide whether the student has been adequately prepared for a future as a PhD scientist. The defense is divided into two parts: the public talk and the committee-led oral defense.

When the advisor has determined the student has completed the work in his/her dissertation plan. The advisor and student should 1) Notify the Program Directors whom will notify COGS Dean whom will appoint the 5th committee member (whom will also serve as the Defense moderator) if a 5th member has not been selected prior to this time. 2) With the 5th committee member selected, the Advisor and student should convene the Dissertation committee to determine a mutually agreeable time frame for the defense. 3) The committee members should have a minimum of 10- calendar days to review the dissertation. 4) After ten days, the members vote on the defensibility of the document. If all agree to proceed, the oral defense can be scheduled no sooner than 5- days later. Should a majority of the committee find the Dissertation to be inadequate, the student must comply with suggested changes. Once the committee is satisfied with the document, the defense may take place.

Dissertation Defense

PhD students in the BTB program will prepare and deliver a 30-45-minute talk for the public. The public is allowed to ask questions after the talk, though this Q&A is not meant to last more than 10 minutes.

After a short break (5 minutes), the student and the student's committee will reconvene in the seminar venue so that the committee-led oral defense can begin. It will be left to the discretion of the advisor/committee with program director approval whether to hold and open (open to the public) or closed (closed to the public and will only include the student) defense. The defense will be two rounds of questions from each committee member. In the first round, each committee member has approximately 15 minutes to question the student about the student's research or the dissertation document. The second round will be limited to 5-minutes of questioning from each member. The committee member who has been appointed by the Dean of College of Graduate Studies will serve as moderator and be responsible for ensuring participants generally adhere to the time constraints for questions. Additional, time may be requested by the committee if necessary, however, total time in this additional round should not exceed 15-minutes.

At the completion of the two rounds of questions, the student leaves the room while the committee deliberates. The committee decides whether the student has successfully defended the dissertation. If yes, each committee member signs the dissertation signature form. If no, the committee decides *whether* and *how* the student may stand again to defend the dissertation. The student returns the signature form along with a copy of the dissertation document to the Program Directors following the defense.

