

# Prospectus Defense in the Basic and Translational Biomedicine Graduate Program

## *Prospectus:*

### Rationale:

After passing the Candidacy Exam, the student will undertake research in the lab of the student's advisor. As a step toward successful completion of the graduate dissertation, the student will write and defend a Prospectus, or dissertation research plan. The Prospectus will be based on the research the student has successfully undertaken that will culminate in the body of dissertation work.

### Format:

The format of the Prospectus is based on the structure of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant, excluding budget and facilities pages. The format includes a statement of hypothesis and specific aims, a research strategy, a discussion of the significance of the proposed research, as well as potential innovations, the approach to be used, preliminary data and references. There is no page limit to the Prospectus, but students are encouraged to aim for the level of detail typical for an NIH NRSA F31 award. Students are encouraged to solicit examples of successful NIH grants from their advisors and committee members as guides to the tone, structure, and scope of their Prospectus.

### Timing:

Typically, the student is expected to be within one year of having passed the Candidacy Exam to present and defend the Prospectus. This timing underscores the utility of the Prospectus—it is the research plan for the dissertation work.

### Committee:

The student's Advisory Committee is expanded by one member at the time of the Prospectus, to include an outside member (if not already appointed). An outside member is a graduate faculty member who is not in the department of the student's advisor. This new committee becomes the dissertation committee.

### Prospectus Defense:

The dissertation committee evaluates the Prospectus document. After the committee has found the document to be acceptable, the student provides an oral defense of the planned research with the participation of all members of the dissertation committee. There is no formal structure to the Prospectus defense. A discussion of the planned research proceeds until each committee member is satisfied that the student has a solid plan for the dissertation research.

Following the successful completion of the oral defense, the student will work with committee members to revise the Prospectus to reflect modifications suggested by the committee-student discussion. The approved Prospectus serves as a firm blueprint that describes the research to be completed by the student toward the dissertation. It cannot be significantly amended or appended without the approval of a majority of the Committee and the Program Director.

The student will submit one copy of the successfully defended Prospectus, along with a completed signature page, to the Director(s) of the BTB program.