

Milestones and Procedures for MCB Ph.D. Students

MCB prides itself in mentoring graduate students and recognizes that students and mentors benefit from a timely progression through our graduate program. This guide is based on requirements and procedures drawn from the graduate school, the MCB graduate program and the Department. Students and advisors should pay close attention to the sequence of events to ensure a smooth progression. Visit the [graduate catalog](#) and the [MCB web page](#) for details. Forms can be found [here](#).

Milestones:

- Major Advisor selection and **Graduate Committee formation**
- **Plan of study:** A Plan of Study signed by the students' Graduate Committee has to be submitted no later than the end of the 3rd semester.
- **General Examination:** Ph.D. students in the Molecular and Cell Biology Field of Study are required to take all components of the General Examination before the end of their 3rd year of graduate studies. All Areas of Concentration require the defense of a "Related Proposal" as part of the exam. In the Cell Biology and Microbiology AOCs, there is a written exam component that is administered beforehand. After successfully passing the general exam, students advance to candidacy and to the highest Graduate Assistant pay level. Students who do not pass this exam may retake this exam once within 6 months. A copy of the signed "Report of the General Examination for the Doctoral Degree" is given to the departmental secretary in the MCB main office.
- **Graduate Seminar participation:** MCB Ph.D. students are required to give biennial 20-minute seminars on their research project in graduate student seminar (MCB5899) starting from the 5th semester or sooner.
- **Preparation for the Dissertation:** The Graduate School requires candidates to submit the "Dissertation Proposal for the Doctoral Degree" at least three months prior to the public defense date. At least two weeks before the defense, the "Dissertation Tentative Approval Page" must be submitted and the dissertation must be made publically available.
- **Final Report:** The "Report on the Final Examination for the Doctoral Degree" must contain signatures of approval by all committee members. At least five faculty members must be present for the defense. A copy of the signed "Report on the Final Examination for the Doctoral Degree" will be given to the departmental secretary in the MCB main office.

Procedures:

- **The Advisor:** After the first year, the advisor-of-record will resign as major advisor. The student will have either found an advisor, or needs to find one within 30 days. Similarly, if a faculty member resigns from being the major advisor of a student, the student has 30 business days to identify a new major advisor. If the student does not find one, their graduate degree program status is terminated. This ensures that graduate students will be attached to a major advisor during their graduate career.
- **Exceptions:** Exceptions to the MCB requirement can be made on a case-by-case basis and are typically approved only under extenuating circumstances, such as major life events. A written request for an extension must be sent by the major advisor of the student to the Head of the Area of Concentration (AoC) and the Associate Department Head for Graduate Research and Education (GRE) who must both approve the request in order for an extension to be granted.

If a student does not meet the required timetable and was not granted an extension, the student must meet with the Associate Department Head for GRE and the AoC Heads who will decide on an appropriate course of action in consultation with the committee. Possible outcomes include ineligibility for teaching assistantships and departmental awards.

- **Financial Support:** The Department normally offers support in the form of TAs for Ph.D. students in good standing, in compliance with the milestones and continuing to make progress. However, the Department will not provide teaching assistantships to MCB Ph.D. students after their 8th year in the program. This period of time includes time as Masters student if a student remained in the same lab for the Ph.D.

Check List for Milestones:

Student's Name (Last, First):

Matriculation Date (Semester and Year):

Temporary Major Advisor's Name (Last, First):

Major Advisor's Name (Last, First):

- **Plan of study:** A Plan of Study has to be submitted no later than the end of the 3rd semester.
- **Graduate Committee formation:** The Plan of Study requirement means that a student must form a committee before the end of the third semester.
- **General Examination:** Ph.D. students in the Molecular and Cell Biology Field of Study are required to take all components of the General Examination before the end of their 3rd year of graduate studies. Some areas require a written portion that is taken first and an oral portion that is administered later.
- **Dissertation Proposal for the Doctoral Degree:** It should be submitted at least 3 months prior to the defense date and is usually signed when the related proposal is successfully defended during the oral portion of the general examination.
- **Graduate Seminar participation:** MCB Ph.D. students are required to give a seminar on their research project in graduate student seminar (MCB5899) at least every 2 years starting from the 5th semester or sooner.
- **Dissertation Tentative Approval Page:** It should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the defense date. A working copy of the dissertation needs to be e-mailed to the graduate school.
- **Announcement of the defense.** At least two weeks before, the oral defense of the dissertation needs to be announced.
- **Dissertation:** It should be made available to the public at least two weeks prior to the defense date.
- **Report on the Final Examination for the Doctoral Degree.** Two signed copies need to be taken to the graduate school.
- **Dissertation Approval page:** Two signed copies on the special paper need to be taken to the graduate school.
- **An electronic copy of the dissertation needs to be submitted to Digital Commons and a hard copy to the library**

Date Submitted:

- **Survey:** All research-based graduate students are required to complete the survey on-line at <https://sed.norc.org/survey>.

Date Submitted:

Associate Advisor:
Associate Advisor:
Assoc. Advisor/Examiner:
Assoc. Advisor/Examiner:

Written Exam Date:
Written Exam Result:

Oral Exam Date:
Oral Exam Result:

Submission Date:

Seminar date:
Seminar date:
Seminar date:

Submission Date:

Defense Date:
Defense Result: