

Professionalization 10/27/2012: Giving Talks: Thesis Committee Meetings

What role does a thesis committee play in my future?

- Assist in creating and executing an original, publishable research project
- Help prepare an acceptable dissertation
- Administer the final oral exam
- Administer Part 2 Qualifying exam
- An outside party who can provide unbiased opinions on data, experimental directions or student/mentor relationships

What is the purpose of a thesis committee meeting?

- To document a student's progress on their thesis
- Discussion of the interpretation of data/ experimental approaches
- Time to set reasonable goals

What is an ideal thesis committee meeting?

- Scientific conversation among colleagues
- Focused and Goal Oriented
- Addresses specific questions (these questions change with progress through thesis)

What is NOT an ideal thesis committee meeting?

- An exam
- "Look how hard I work"

How do committee meetings change as I progress through my PhD?

- Begin: Plan and Approaches for the thesis
- Middle: Interpretation of data, how does data make a story
- End: Wrapping up-submitting later papers, writing and defending the thesis

How do I prepare for a thesis committee meeting?

- Brief Summary of highlighted accomplishments since last meeting
 - Includes: professional accomplishments, necessary background, experimental results, questions or discussion about data, goals
- PowerPoint of data for discussion

What's a potential format of a thesis committee meeting?

- Review your summary
- Go over PowerPoint
- **Discussion- interpretation, questions, approaches**
- Next steps/paper
- Goals

How do I document the meeting?

- BCDB Form
 - Signed by committee
 - Summary- written by student, approved by mentor and sent to committee
 - Summarize the meeting and set reasonable goals

Doodle Poll:

When do you hold a thesis committee meeting?

- A) Every few years
- B) When my PI reminds me to
- C) Every six months up to year six and every four months after year six
- D) Once a year

What documents do you send you thesis committee prior to the meeting?

- A) Brief summary
- B) NIH-style Biosketch
- C) Your recently published papers
- D) Agenda for the meeting
- E) A & B only
- F) A & D only
- G) All are required
- H) A & B Required, potentially C & D

What do you do at a thesis committee meeting?

- A) Show your committee every piece of data that you've accumulated to prove to them that you've been working hard.
- B) Address specific questions about data, discuss progress needed towards publishing
- C) Introduce your project and then have your mentor and you committee have an hour long conversation
- D) I have no idea

How might a thesis committee help you progress though your Ph. D? (Select all that apply)

- A) I don't know, the guidelines just tell me I have to have one.
- B) Provide experimental advice and interpret data
- C) They're a constant source of exams: Qual II, committee meetings are exams, and then the dissertation- 6 years of torture!
- D) They serve as scientific colleagues who may write me letters of recommendation in the future
- E) They're faculty who fall asleep in my meetings, but tell me I'm a great baker!