

PhD THESIS PROPOSAL

See also: Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations and Department of Biological Sciences Supplemental Regulations (5.9 Thesis Proposal)

All students must present a Thesis Proposal early in the program within the first year, prior to beginning the research component and before the Candidacy Examination.

Goals: The goals of the Thesis Proposal and presentation are:

1. to examine the student's understanding in the area of specialization
2. to provide the student and the supervisor with a critical appraisal of the research proposed for the thesis
3. to identify specific weaknesses in the student's background relevant to the proposed research-specialty area
4. to test the student's ability to use the scientific method and formulate testable hypotheses

Format: The Thesis Proposal will consist of a written proposal and a public presentation.

The *written* proposal will be submitted to the advisory committee by the student one week prior to the date of the presentation. The written proposal should be 5-10 pages (excluding reference list, figures, tables and appendices). Details of the methods and protocols can be placed in an appendix unless new methods will be developed specifically as part of the research. The proposal should be developed between the student and the advisor, and in consultation with the advisory committee and should be made available for general review within the department at least 1 week prior to the oral presentation.

The *presentation* will be a public 20-minute presentation to the department, and should be understandable by a broad audience. The presentation will be chaired by a member of the departmental Graduate Studies Committee designated by the Chair of that committee. The presentation should highlight the goals of the work, the research strategy and the expected contribution to new knowledge. Details of methods and protocols should be avoided and replaced by a summary table or flow chart.

The Chair will provide for the audience a description of the expectations and the purpose of the presentation, at the beginning of the session.

After the presentation the audience will be allowed to ask questions for up to 15 minutes. The chair will then allow audience members to leave the room and the committee will then ask questions. The presentation and questioning by the committee will take approximately one hour. The Chair of the proposal presentation will provide the required form from the Faculty of Graduate Studies on the approval of the "Ph.D. Thesis Proposal" for completion by the committee.

Timing: The Thesis Proposal and presentation will occur at a time specified by the advisory committee and a designate from the GSC, in the first year after registration in the program soon after preliminary studies (e. g. literature review) are carried out, but preceding the major portion

of research toward the Ph.D. thesis. These requirements are the same for those students who enter the Ph.D. program directly from a BSc Honours degree program.

Evaluation will be based on the written proposal, the clarity of the proposal presentation, and the student's ability to answer questions and respond to feedback. The advisory committee (and members of the audience, if they have constructive comments) will provide useful comments and suggestions for improving the proposal.

The Advisory Committee will meet in the absence of the student immediately following the presentation and questions to deliberate on the outcome of the proposal. If the proposal is satisfactory, a copy of the final proposal (with minor revisions as appropriate) will be placed on file with the student's records in the department. If the proposal is not satisfactory, revisions will be made by the student in conjunction with the supervisor, and the revised proposal will be re-submitted to the advisory committee within two weeks. A copy of the final proposal will be filed with the Student records in the department. Once the proposal is approved, the form will be signed and returned to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.