

SELECTION OF A MENTOR AND THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

By the end of May of Year-1 in the program, students are expected to have completed the process of identifying a mentor and to have joined a laboratory. It is important that both the student and prospective advisor discuss the possibility of joining a given lab at the beginning of a laboratory rotation and again prior to completing the rotation. The decision to join a laboratory for dissertation research is a mutual decision arrived at by both the student and the prospective advisor. If a student anticipates difficulty in finding a lab in which to undertake their dissertation research, he/she should notify the CDB Program Administrator no later than May 1st.

Dissertation research should begin during the summer following Year-1. During the Fall semester of Year-2, the student, in consultation with the mentor, assembles a Dissertation Committee consisting of three faculty members in addition to the mentor for a total of four¹. At least one member should have a primary appointment in the Department of Cell Biology², the other members can be selected from any of the seven BIMS Programs. Although it is anticipated that most committee members will be affiliated with the CDB training area, members from outside the area are welcome, especially if they have potential for providing valuable input in the research topic being pursued.

The student must complete the [Dissertation Committee Declaration / Change](#) form once the committee is established and submit it to the CDB Program Administrator. The Dissertation Committee should be finalized and the declaration form submitted no later than December 1st in order for the first committee meeting to be scheduled before December 15th as required. The composition of the Dissertation Committee must be approved by the CDB Academic Committee.

The Dissertation Committee should meet for the first time during the fall semester of the student's 2nd year. The CDB Program Administrator will schedule this meeting upon receipt of the Dissertation Committee Declaration / Change Form. This initial meeting must be scheduled for no later than December 15th. This committee must meet at least once each academic year to assess the student's progress in the Ph.D. Program. The committee will have to meet more often during the student's second year because of the Comprehensive Examination. All committee meetings will be scheduled by the CDB Program Administrator in consultation with the student and/or mentor. The [Dissertation Committee Meeting Summary](#) form should be completed by the mentor after each committee meeting, approved by Dissertation Committee members and placed in the student's program file.

¹Larger committees are discouraged because of difficulties in scheduling committee meetings.

²If the mentor does not have a primary appointment with the degree-granting department, at least one committee member must meet this requirement and should be listed as co-mentor with the Graduate Programs Office.