

Guidelines for Doctoral Students

**Department of Physiology and Biophysics
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Effective January 2021

These guidelines apply only to students that joined a Department of Physiology and Biophysics laboratory by August 26th, 2019. Students that joined after this date must adhere to the Graduate Education in bioMedical Sciences (GEMS) guidelines, described in their [website](#).

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Abbreviations and contact information:

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Graduate Education Committee (GEC).

Departmental Academic Advisor (DAA). Erin Fagan, efagan@uic.edu.

I. TIMELINE AND REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to take GC470 (Essentials for Animal Research), if their research entails work with vertebrate animals, and GC501 (Scientific Integrity and Responsible Research).

A) GEMS Students

Second Year

Fall

PHYB 571 - Clinical Applications of Physiology I (2 hours).

PHYB 591 - Departmental Seminar (1 hour. Must attend >2/3 of seminars to receive credit).

PHYB 599 - Thesis Research (12 hours).

Spring

Choose one of the following two courses:

PHYB 586 - Cell Physiology (3 hours).

PHYB 572 - Clinical Applications of Physiology II (2 hours).

PHYB 591 - Departmental Seminar (1 hour. Must attend >2/3 of seminars to receive credit).

PHYB 599 - Ph.D. Thesis Research (12 hours).

Summer

PHYB 599 - Ph.D. Thesis Research (8 hours).

Third year and beyond

PHYB 591 - Departmental Seminar (1 hour. Must attend >2/3 of seminars to receive credit).

PHYB 595 - Journal Club and Seminar in Physiology (1 hour. One semester per year. See section [V](#)).

PHYB 599 - Thesis Research (12 hours during Fall/Spring semesters, 8 hours during Summer).

- Other courses may be taken with approval from the students' Thesis Advisor, the DGS, and the GEC.

- Qualifying Examination must be completed before December 1st of the third year (see Section [IV](#)).

- The Mid-Thesis Seminar must be presented before the end of the fourth year (see Section [V](#)).

B) MSTP Students

First Year (G1)

Fall Semester

PHYB 571 - Clinical Applications of Physiology I (2 hours).

PHYB 591 - Departmental Seminar (1 hour. Must attend >2/3 of seminars to receive credit).

PHYB 599 - Thesis Research (12 hours).

Spring Semester

Choose one of the following two courses:

PHYB 586 - Cell Physiology (3 hours).

PHYB 572 - Clinical Applications of Physiology II (2 hours).

PHYB 591 - Departmental Seminar (1 hour. Must attend >2/3 of seminars to receive credit).

PHYB 599 - Ph.D. Thesis Research (12 hours).

Summer

PHYB 599 - Ph.D. Thesis Research (8 hours).

Second through fourth years (G2 through G4)

PHYB 591 - Departmental Seminar (1 hour. Must attend >2/3 of seminars to receive credit).

PHYB 595 - Journal Club and Seminar in Physiology (1 hour. One semester per year. See section [V](#)).

PHYB 599 - Thesis Research (12 hours during Fall/Spring semesters, 8 hours during Summer).

- Other courses may be taken with approval from the students' Thesis Advisor, the DGS, and the GEC.
- Qualifying Examination should be completed before December 1st of year G2 (see Section [IV](#)).
- The Mid-Thesis Seminar must be presented before the end of year G3 (see Section [V](#)).

C) Credit Requirements and Degree Deadlines

- Doctorate with prior master's degree (minimum 64 credit hours): **Maximum 7 years***.
- Doctorate without master's degree (minimum 96 credit hours): **Maximum 9 years***.

* *Students who do not graduate by these deadlines will be dismissed from the Graduate College for failure to progress. Time spent on an approved leave of absence will not count towards time to degree.*

II. YEARLY STUDENT AND ADVISOR EVALUATIONS

Six months after the joining a lab, and yearly thereafter, students shall complete a self-evaluation, as well as an evaluation of the program and advisor, that will be submitted to the DGS. Within the same time period, the Advisor will also submit an evaluation of the students' progress to the DGS. These evaluations are strictly confidential and will only be seen by the DGS. They will not be shared with anyone without consent, unless issues raised require reporting by UIC or Departmental Guidelines. The purpose of these evaluations is to ensure that student and advisor have a productive relationship, and to confirm that both parties are satisfied with progress. Based on these evaluations, the DGS may discuss any possible areas of concern with the student, advisor, or both. The DGS can request advice from the GEC or Department Head, if they deem it necessary.

III. THESIS COMMITTEE

Students must assemble a committee that will evaluate their preliminary exam (see section [IV](#)) and their continued progress at yearly thesis committee meetings (see section [V](#)). Committee selection and approval should be done by the end of the summer of the second year.

Committee makeup: The committee consists of at least five (5), but no more than six (6), members, including the thesis advisor. The committee composition must adhere to the following guidelines:

- a) At least three (3) members of the committee must be members, or affiliates, of the Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics, and members of the Graduate College.
- b) At least two (2) committee members must be tenured, one of whom must be a full, or affiliate, member of the Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics.
- c) One (1) member of the committee, other than the advisor, must serve as chairperson. The chair must be a full member of the Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics, and a member of the Graduate College.
- d) At least one (1) member of the committee must be from outside the department or academic unit. Note that departmental affiliates are not considered outside members.
- e) An individual from an outside institution may serve with prior approval from the GEC. Members from other institutions must demonstrate equivalent academic standards. Therefore, any outside members' curriculum vitae (CV) must accompany the "Committee Recommendation Form". It is the student's responsibility to obtain and provide outside committee members' CV to the DGS for approval by the GEC.

Selection Procedure: The student should discuss with their advisor who would be the most appropriate faculty members to form part of the students' thesis committee. After deciding on a prospective committee, the student should send the DGS (and copy their advisor) the list of desired faculty members, denoting which will serve as chair, before making any final arrangements for the preliminary exam. The DGS will seek approval from the GEC, after which the student will be notified of the total or partial approval of the committee. If some of the prospective members are not approved the procedure should be repeated until the entire committee is approved.

Once the committee is finalized and approved, and a preliminary examination date is set, the student should download and fill a "Committee Recommendation Form", which is found [here](#). The completed "Committee Recommendation Form" must be submitted to the DGS and the Departmental Academic Advisor (DAA) at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the preliminary exam. Therefore, the procedure of committee selection and approval begin at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to the desired preliminary examination date.

Roles: members of the thesis committee are responsible for guiding the student and advisor during the research project. The committee is also responsible for reading the thesis and for establishing whether the quality, quantity, and originality of the science described in the thesis warrants granting a Ph.D. The first task of the thesis committee is to perform the preliminary examination of the prospective student (see Section IV, below).

Students must meet with their thesis committee at least once a year. At these meetings, the student will make an oral presentation describing their progress on the research plan and any major problems encountered since the last meeting. The committee will discuss the scientific development and progress towards successful completion of the thesis research. At later stages of the student's program, the committee should advise on the appropriate time to start writing the dissertation.

Following each meeting, the chair must provide a written report to the DGS on the student's progress. This report must contain a summary of the work completed and plans for further experiments towards completion of the thesis. The DGS and GEC will use these reports to ensure that students remain on track to fulfill all requirements towards their degree.

IV. PRELIMINARY EXAM

The purpose of the preliminary examination is to determine the candidate's readiness to undertake their dissertation research, and passing it constitutes formal admission to candidacy for a Ph.D. Through this exam the committee will ensure the breadth and depth of a student's preparedness to advance in the program. The exam tests the students' general knowledge in Physiology, and their knowledge on their specific research project.

Graduate College guidelines ([here](#)) state that only students in good academic standing (grade average of "B" or above) are permitted to take the preliminary examination. Before taking the preliminary exam, students must have passed PHYB571, and PHYB572 or PHYB586.

The preliminary exam consists of two parts: a written proposal and an oral presentation and examination. Both parts must be completed before December 1st of the third year. Failure to complete the preliminary examination by this date will result in a registration hold and stipend stop. Students who do not complete the Ph. D. requirements within five (5) years of passing the preliminary exam must retake it.

As noted above (Section III), after approval of the Committee, the student must submit a "Committee Recommendation Form" to the DGS and DAA, who will then send it to the Graduate College. Once the Graduate College approves the committee, an "Examination Report Form" and cover letter is sent to the program to report the result of the preliminary exam. As discussed in Section VII, a separate "Committee Recommendation Form" must be submitted 4 weeks prior to the final Thesis Defense.

A) Written research proposal

The student must prepare a written research proposal in the format of an NIH F30/F31 (predoctoral fellowship) application. The advisor should provide only general guidance in the preparation of the proposal, as the written proposal should accurately reflect the students' ability. The components and page limits for the proposal are:

a) Title Page. Should include the date, and committee members and roles.

b) Specific Aims. One page summarizing the problems and issues to be addressed, followed by the hypotheses and a brief description of two or three specific aims that will test the hypothesis.

The following sections (c through e) should not exceed 6 pages, which is the page limit for the F30/F31 "Research Strategy" section. There are no page limits for the Bibliography (f).

c) Background and Significance. Briefly describe the scientific premise and background of the proposal. State concisely the importance of the research in the proposal by relating the specific aims to broad long-term objectives. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate your understanding of the field by critically analyzing the existing publications that provided the framework for the proposal.

d) Experimental plan and preliminary results.

- Research design and methods
- Possible outcomes
- Statistical and power analyses
- Limitations and alternatives

e) Future directions.

f) Bibliography.

Format: Use black Arial, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface fonts of 11 pt. or more. For figure legends, the font size should be no smaller than 9 pt. Use US Letter Paper size (8 ½" x 11"), with at least one-half inch margins all around for all pages. Page numbers should be included at the bottom right of all pages.

B) Oral presentation and examination

The student must schedule a date and time that is agreeable to all committee members. Reserve a room for at least 2.5 hours. At least 10 working days before the exam the student must notify the DAA as to the date, time, and location of the exam. At least one week before the exam the student should send the proposal to each member of the Committee and to the DGS. All members of the Thesis Committee must attend the oral qualifying exam.

It is strongly encouraged that the student should practice and get feedback prior to their oral exam by presenting to a group of fellow students and postdocs.

At the beginning of the preliminary exam meeting, the chair will ask the student to leave the room briefly. At this moment, the committee will evaluate the performance of the student in the courses taken. The committee will also discuss the quality of the written proposal. Finally, the chair will ask the advisor to comment on the students' progress and degree of input that the advisor provided to the qualifying exam components (ideally little to none). If the committee agrees that all conditions are optimal, the evaluation continues. If not, the student is informed of the problems, and will be given a second opportunity at a later time to present the exam.

If the evaluation continues, the student is invited to initiate the oral presentation. The advisor should be present during the examination as an observer. The student should present first an extensive and general background of the area of their thesis project. This should be no more than 10 minutes and include no more than 5 slides. The second part consists of a 20-min presentation of the background, hypothesis, specific aims, approach, and preliminary results. This part should include no more than 15 slides.

The committee will examine the student's knowledge of general physiology, intellectual merits of the proposed research topic, general methods of approach, and possible contributions to the field. The students' oral presentation and written proposal are expected to demonstrate: a) scholarly understanding of the research background and areas closely related to the proposal; b) well-designed and testable aims, objectives, and feasible experiments; c) a critical understanding of the techniques to be used; d) an understanding of potential experimental outcomes and their interpretation; and e) a clear knowledge of the statistical analyses required to determine the significance of the findings to be obtained.

After the student's presentation and questioning, the committee will again meet without the student present to discuss the proposal and assess the student's overall performance. During this portion of the meeting, the thesis advisor can express their opinion regarding the evaluation. When the student returns, the committee reports its evaluation and transmits specific advice, feedback, and recommendations to the student.

Grading: Each member of the committee assigns a grade of "pass" or "fail" on the "Examination Report Form". A candidate will not pass with more than one "fail" vote. The "Examination Report Form" must be signed by all members of the committee. The results of the examination should be submitted to the Graduate College within forty-eight (48) hours. Once the student has passed the examination, the Dean of the Graduate College will notify the students' program that they have been admitted to candidacy for a Ph.D.

The committee may require that specific conditions be met before the "pass" recommendation becomes effective. The exact conditions, and time-frame to complete them, must be specified on the "Examination Report Form". The committee chair must notify the DGS and DAA in writing as soon as the conditions have been completed, so that this information can be transmitted to the Graduate College.

For failed exams, if recommended by the committee, the GEC may permit a second examination. **A third examination is not allowed**, thus any student who fails the second attempt will be dismissed from the program.

V. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Students must present their progress to the department yearly, in the form of "work-in-progress" or "mid-thesis" seminars (sections A, B). Students must meet with their Thesis Committee at least once a year until completion of their degree (section C). Students should meet with their Thesis Committee within one month after their work-in-progress or mid-thesis seminars to fulfill the yearly committee meeting obligation. Finally, the yearly student and advisor evaluations (Section II), which will occur 6 months after each thesis committee meeting, will serve as an additional point to evaluate student progress.

A) Yearly Work-in-Progress Seminar

Students must present, during the regular departmental seminar time, a 20-minute work-in-progress seminar once a year. To receive credit for this presentation, the student must register for PHYB 595 (Journal Club and Seminar in Physiology) the semester they present. All members of the department are encouraged to attend this seminar. Students do not have to present a progress seminar the year they present their mid-thesis seminar or thesis defense.

B) Mid-Thesis Seminar

The Mid-Thesis Seminar (40-min maximum length) should be presented as a scheduled departmental seminar during the fourth year for GEMS students (year G3 for MSTP students). The purpose of this seminar is to determine whether the student is making satisfactory progress towards completion of the Thesis research. To receive credit for this presentation, the student must register for PHYB 595 (Journal Club and Seminar in Physiology) the semester they present. All members of the department are encouraged to attend this seminar. Each attending faculty member will be asked to provide feedback on the quality of the presentation, the progress of the research, and the ability of the student to address questions. This feedback will be shared with the students' Thesis Committee.

C) Yearly Thesis Committee Meetings

Students will meet with their thesis committee at least once a year, preferably on the day they present their "work-in-progress" or "mid-thesis" seminar (see Section V, A and B). Students need to register for PHYB 595 to receive course credit for their seminar presentation, so they will need to agree on the meeting date with their committee before the semester starts. If the seminar and committee meeting cannot coincide, the committee meeting should be held within one month after the seminar, and the student should provide the slides and/or a recording of the seminar to any committee member that was unable to attend the seminar. Once the date for the meeting is set, the student will ask the DAA to reserve a room, or arrange a Zoom meeting, for 2 hours on the agreed-upon date and time.

One week prior to the meeting, the student should provide to their committee, and the DGS, a document (maximum 1 double-sided page) consisting of: an abstract (<250 words), a brief introduction, results and discussion of work since the previous committee meeting, and a description with rough timeline of work proposed for the upcoming year. This document will be kept in the students' file.

The student should prepare an ~30 slide (~45 minute) presentation for the committee meeting, consisting of three to five slides of background and previous results, fifteen to twenty slides focused on work since the last meeting and proposed future work, and two to three slides for conclusions and projected timeline for completion of the proposed work. If the committee meeting is held on the same day as the students' seminar, the background and previous results sections can be shortened, as these should have been presented at the seminar.

At the start of the meeting, the student will be asked to step out so the committee can evaluate feedback from the "work-in-progress" or "mid-thesis" seminar, and to discuss student progress with the advisor. After this, the student will be invited to re-join and give their presentation. Upon finishing the presentation and follow-up questions, the student will once again be asked to leave the room so that the committee can discuss the presentation and proposed work. After this discussion, the student will be once again asked to re-join the meeting and the Chairperson will share recommendations from the committee with the student.

After the meeting the Chair must fill the "Committee Meeting Report" form describing student performance, progress, and next steps. Within a week after the committee meeting, the Chair should email this signed summary with the student, advisor, and the DGS, who will add it to the students' file.

VI. DISCHARGE FROM THE PROGRAM

1. To graduate, the student must have a cumulative grade point average of B (3.0. A = 4.00). If the grade point average falls below B, the student will be placed on probationary status. The student is warned that further registration in the Graduate College will be denied if the academic record continues to be unsatisfactory.

2. Regardless of probationary status students are required to achieve a grade of "B" or better in all required courses (see Section I) or they will be dismissed from the program.

3. Students can also be dropped from the graduate program for violation of the student disciplinary code as described under "Student Disciplinary Procedures", available in the Office of Student Affairs.

4. Students must meet the deadlines for the preliminary exam, annual seminar, committee meetings, and the mid-thesis seminar. Inability to meet these deadlines or requirements can result in dismissal from the program.

5. Students that exceed the time limit for completing the program (see Section I) shall be dismissed.

VII. DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE

The student should provide a draft of the dissertation to their thesis committee chair at least 4 weeks prior to the defense date. This will ensure that the dissertation follows the proper guidelines and is on the right track. Upon reviewing the draft, the committee chair should inform the student, the students' advisor, and the DGS whether the dissertation is on target to be ready for the defense. The student should provide a final version of the dissertation to their thesis committee and the DGS no less than 2 weeks prior to the defense date.

A) Dissertation Format

Students should follow the instruction provided by the Graduate College for the formal preparation of the thesis document. Please, consult the website of the graduate college and download the last version of the "Thesis Manual" at <https://grad.uic.edu/thesis/>.

B) Intent to Graduate Form

This form must be submitted the term you intend to graduate. Follow instructions provided by the Graduate College at <https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/academic-dates-events/>. If you complete an "Intent to Graduate" form for one term and do not graduate then, you must complete another "Intent to Graduate" form on the new term in which you are attempting to graduate. The thesis submission process is separate from declaring intent to graduate.

C) Committee Recommendation Form

The student should submit the "Committee Recommendation Form" to the DAA one month prior to the Thesis Defense. The Graduate College will review the Committee Recommendation form and, if the recommended faculty meet Graduate College guidelines, approval is given by the Dean. In addition, the academic status of the student is checked to ensure that they are in good academic standing. Then the Graduate College sends a letter to each recommended committee member asking to serve on the Thesis Committee. The Graduate College also sends an "Examination Report Form" to the DAA. This form is added to the students' folder, so it is available during the examination. The "Examination Report Form" cannot be duplicated, and changes cannot be made without prior approval of the Graduate College.

D) iThenticate Review Procedures

To help graduate students from inadvertently including previously published work in their theses or dissertations without proper citation, paraphrasing, or quoting, the Graduate College requires students to screen their theses and dissertations using iThenticate, prior to their defense. Access to iThenticate will be given to the student by the Graduate College upon submission of the Committee Recommendation Form for the final defense. See <http://grad.uic.edu/ithenticate-review-procedures>. It is responsibility of the student to obtain the iThenticate Report and bring it to the defense.

E) Oral Defense

The Oral Defense takes place after the written part has been read by the Thesis Committee. The oral presentation is scheduled as a Departmental Seminar and is open to the public. The Thesis Advisor acts as host, presenting the student and welcoming the Thesis Committee as well as the faculty, fellow students and other guests. All members of the department are invited and encouraged to attend.

The general format of the defense is as follows:

- An initial public presentation (~40 minutes) by the student providing an overview of the research and the findings. The presentation needs to address the following: What is the problem you are studying? Why does it matter? What results have you achieved? Which are the main conclusions? Are there any limitations? The student should tailor the presentation so that it can be understood by faculty and students that have a scientific background, but are not necessarily experts in the specific topic of the thesis. The presentation should be no more than 30 slides, plus "backup" slides with additional material in case of questions.

- At the end of the presentation, the Thesis Advisor opens the floor to questions from the audience; and these can be from committee members, or other attendees. There is no set time limit for questions; it is up to the thesis advisor, as host, to end this section of the defense. Some guidelines for when to stop this part of the defense

are: when the committee begins to monopolize the discussion; when non-committee audience members appear to be out of questions; or when the audience starts asking questions that are off track from the student's research. At the end of the seminar, each faculty member present will be asked to complete an evaluation form judging the quality of the presentation, the novelty and completeness of the research findings, and the ability of the student to respond questions.

- After questioning, the committee should meet in private. The chair will ask the student to step out, and the committee will discuss the student's performance. At this point, the committee chair will also summarize the comments and concerns of the faculty that attended the seminar. The chair should ask each member of the committee for feedback, comments, and concerns about the dissertation and the presentation. The chair leads this discussion and takes notes on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the project. These notes should be used when the advisor writes up a short evaluation of the project.

- Once the committee has completed this preliminary discussion, the chair invites the student back into the room. Each member of the committee asks the students about the thesis, the methodology used, the conclusions drawn, etc. All member should participate.

- At the end of this individual questioning, the chair dismisses the student again. The panel decides the appropriate grade for the thesis. The committee vote is "pass" or "fail." A candidate cannot be passed with more than one "fail" vote. If the overall vote is "fail," the committee may recommend a second defense. This second examination must be initiated by submission of a new Committee Recommendation form, even if there is no change in membership. A third defense will not be permitted. A committee may recommend "pass - with specified conditions." If this occurs, the conditions must be indicated in the "Examination Report Form" along with the name of a committee member, usually the thesis advisor, who will monitor fulfillment of such conditions. This committee member must then report to the Graduate College when conditions have been satisfied. The Thesis will be approved after all the concerns and conditions of the Thesis Committee are addressed by the student.

- The student is asked to join the panel. The chair informs the student of the outcome of the defense. If appropriate, the panel congratulates the student for having passed the defense.

- The "Examination Report Form" must be signed by all members of the committee and submitted to the Graduate College within 48 hours, even if conditions are listed on the form. The program should retain a copy and give the student copy to the student.

F) Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Procedures

After successfully defending the thesis and making all necessary revisions, the dissertation must be submitted electronically. For more information, see the University ETD website at "grad.uic.edu/electronic-thesis-dissertation". **It is highly recommended however that students review the information on the University's ETD website prior to beginning to write the thesis.**

VIII. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

A) Registration procedures

Students must be registered from the term the Preliminary Examination is taken through the term of a successful defense of the dissertation. The registration period is usually the last three weeks of the previous semester. All encumbrances must be cleared before registration. The Office of Admissions and Records will notify continuing students the proper procedure for registration.

A student who does not complete registration by the tenth day of the fall and spring semesters, or fifth day of the summer semester, will not be permitted to register after that date, will not be allowed to attend class or to participate in course work, and will not receive academic credit or financial support for the semester. Student who fails to complete registration and wishes reinstatement for the following semester must apply for readmission which will require the approval of the Graduate College Dean and Office of Admissions and Records.

B) Teaching Opportunities

Graduate students within the department who are in the third year or higher (regardless of the source of their financial support) can participate in specific departmental courses by proctoring, lecturing, conducting demonstrations, grading examinations, etc.

C) Stipends and Tuition Waivers

Graduate students receiving stipends from the Dept. of Physiology and Biophysics must be full-time students

and complete twelve (12) to sixteen (16) credit hours for each fall and winter semesters. The students must spend 100% of their effort on activities related to and approved by the Department of Physiology and Biophysics. The students should also work full time during the summer semester and complete eight (8) credit hours.

D) Publications

Publications resulting from a students' thesis research must cite "Physiology and Biophysics" as the department (or one of the departments) from which the research emanated. The citation should be read: "Department of Physiology and Biophysics (M/C 901), University of Illinois at Chicago, 835 S. Wolcott Ave., Chicago, IL 60612-7342." This is also applicable to students working with affiliated faculty.

E) Students Awards and Travel Funds

Students must attend >2/3 of departmental seminars to qualify for all awards and travel funds.

- The **Lambrecht Award** embodies a student in Physiology and Biophysics with excellent scholarship and commitment to science. To receive this award, the student must demonstrate academic and scientific achievement as evidenced by course performance, publications, fellowships, scholarships, meeting presentations, and other awards.

-The **Bárány Award** is presented to a student in Physiology and Biophysics who is diligent, conscientious, punctual, well-organized, and displays a high degree of integrity.

To qualify both awards students should have demonstrated a leadership role in the department and participation in departmental activities. Previous Lambrecht Awardees are eligible only for the Bárány Award. Past Bárány awardees are eligible only for the Lambrecht Award. The deadline for nominations to either award is 5 pm on the last Friday of October. The Graduate Education Committee will review the nominations and select the awardees. The department will present these awards during the annual Departmental Awards Night.

- **Lambrecht Travel Funds.** Thanks to the generosity of the Lambrecht family, the Department is able to provide funds for student travel related to *training*. Students can apply for these funds if they need to attend a course related to their thesis work, participate in a workshop, or visit another lab to learn new techniques. Application for Travel funds will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Please contact the DGS to discuss details.

F) Leave of absence

Students who need to request a leave of absence should follow the "Leave of Absence Guidelines" provided by the UIC Graduate College [here](#). Students are strongly encouraged to discuss issues related to taking a leave of absence with their advisor and/or the DGS.

IX. GRADUATE STUDENT CHECKLIST

A) Forming the Thesis committee

___ Six to eight weeks prior to the desired preliminary examination date: send proposed committee members, and roles, to the DGS. Needs approval by the GEC.

B) Taking the Preliminary Exam

___ At least four weeks prior to the preliminary examination date: submit the "Committee Recommendation Form" (found [here](#)), signed by the DGS, to the DAA.

___ After passing the preliminary exam, ensure that the committee chair sends a letter to the DGS and DAA stating that the student has passed the exam and may continue.

C) Work-in-progress seminars

Should take place once a year, except for when student presents their mid-thesis, or thesis defense, seminars.

___ One semester before: discuss with DGS to schedule presentation as a Departmental Seminar next semester.

___ Register for PHYB 595 (1 hour) the semester this seminar will be presented.

D) Mid-thesis seminar

This seminar should take place in year 4 for GEMS students, year G3 for MSTP students.

___ One semester before: discuss with DGS to schedule presentation as a Departmental Seminar next semester.

___ Register for PHYB 595 (1 hour) the semester this seminar will be presented.

__ Send abstract to DGS and DAA two weeks prior to the seminar.

E) Dissertation and Defense

__ Obtain approval from Thesis Committee to begin preparing dissertation. Ensure that the chair sends a letter to the DGS and DAA stating that the student has received approval to prepare dissertation.

__ One semester before: discuss with DGS to schedule presentation as a Departmental Seminar next semester.

__ Register for PHYB 595 (1 hour) the semester the thesis seminar will be presented.

__ Provide a draft of the dissertation to the thesis committee chair 4 weeks prior to defense date.

__ Complete and submit the "Committee Recommendation Form", found [here](#), four weeks prior to defense.

__ Distribute the final dissertation to the thesis committee 2 weeks prior to defense date.

X. CHANGES TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

These guidelines are in effect for GEMS and MSTP students that joined the Department of Physiology and Biophysics prior to August 26th, 2019. These guidelines were approved by the Department on 10/21/2020. The Department of Physiology and Biophysics reserves the right to change these guidelines without notice. Final changes must be approved by the departmental faculty.