

Guidance for Genetics Graduate Program Annual Committee Meetings

Every Genetics student must have a committee meeting annually, i.e. once every 12 months. Please append this form to the email to your committee confirming the meeting is scheduled, and please cc the Grad Assistant (Susan White, swhite@uga.edu). It is Genetics policy that students do not provide food or beverages at their committee meetings or exams; if food is desired the advisor shall provide it.

The annual committee meeting, with the exception of the oral exam, is an opportunity for graduate students to present their research and goals in a venue that focuses on the student. This document provides some pointers for graduate students and committee members on ways to enhance the use of these annual meetings.

Reminders for graduate students:

1. A productive committee meeting is often between 60-90 minutes. Schedule the meeting for up to two hours, but completing in less time is okay. (Note this does not apply to the oral exam.)
2. Your committee is here to support you and your goals. Committees could be viewed as adversarial due to their role during the written and oral exams. However, remember the reasons you selected each person to serve on your committee and try to use your committee to its fullest potential to help your research progress and to attain your future goals.
3. Committee meetings are not just updates. They are meant for you to get advice and support. These meetings are an opportunity for you to discuss your research and career goals, and thus they should be forward-looking. What does this mean? For instance, your committee can help you design experiments, interpret results, determine when to move on from a project, what is sufficient for a publication, when to start writing, when to look for internships/jobs, when to focus and reduce side projects, provide career planning advice, course suggestions, and when to seek out additional collaborations/support. This requires you to focus your meeting and presentation on areas where you need the most feedback. It may be helpful for you to think in advance about what questions you want to ask your committee members, and to come up with 2-3 objectives for your committee meeting.
4. Students should carefully consider what to present to their committee to enhance discussions about their research. Well-crafted presentations will seek advice/feedback on specific topics/points instead of just presenting research in an open-ended format (such as in GENE 8880, EDGE, PFG, etc). Your presentation should include sufficient introductory slides to remind your committee of your project, perhaps no more than 10 minutes. Although research updates on previous publications/completed research is welcomed, it should not consume more than a few minutes of time unless it is needed to set up current research. Your advisor should review your slides before the committee meeting.
5. Remind your committee of your career ambitions so that the committee can provide thoughtful advice about achieving those goals.
6. If the student is in year 5 or beyond, a clear 'exit path' and timeline to graduation must be agreed upon by the student and the committee. The path should be clearly articulated and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by the student and their advisor within one week of the committee meeting.

Reminders for committee members:

1. With the exception of the oral exam, committee members should focus on enhancing discussions about the student's research and career goals. To this end, the committee should check in with the student about their future career goals and provide any necessary feedback.
2. There is no gag rule for the PI during regular committee meetings. The PI should provide the student with the opportunity to lead the conversation.
3. The annual committee meeting should include discussion of Rigor, Reproducibility and Transparency.
4. If there are any concerns about student progress, the committee must inform the student and the Graduate Coordinator to initiate discussions of how additional support and direction can be provided.
5. If the student is in year 5 or beyond, a clear path and timeline to graduation must be agreed upon by the student and their committee. The path should be clearly articulated and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by the student and their advisor within one week of the committee meeting.